

27 June 2008

Audio books and e-books on The Pirate Bay – English summary of a survey of illegal file sharing.

Since the implementation of the so-called Info Soc directive in 2005, the issue of illegal file sharing has been vigorously debated in Sweden. In 2006, the Swedish government appointed a commission of inquiry to look into the issue of copyright on the Internet. This resulted in a memo where the person in charge of the inquiry observed that the widespread illegal file sharing had had a negative impact on the entertainment industry's capacity and will to develop legal download services. The inquiry focused primarily on music and movies on the Internet, and contained no information about audio books and e-books.

To find out if audio books and e-books are subject to electronic piracy in the same way as music and movies, the Swedish Publishers' Association decided to make a survey of the illegal file sharing through The Pirate Bay (www.thepiratebay.org). The Pirate Bay is one of the world's largest websites for illegal file sharing (a so-called Bit Torrent tracking site), where music, movies, audio books, e-books, computer software, gaming software etc. are made available without the permission of the rightful copyright holders.

An independent party with good technical knowledge and an understanding of the publishing industry was given the task of making a survey of The Pirate Bay. A content scan was made at three different occasions during the spring of 2008. This is a summary of the results.

The survey shows that there are currently **about 1,700 Swedish audio books** and slightly more than **300 Swedish e-books** listed on The Pirate Bay. At each scan, the number of unique titles had increased. In comparison with the degree of illegal file sharing that the international movie and music industry are beset by, the findings of this report may sound rather insignificant. However, it should be noted that while the Swedish market for audio books is relatively new, both supply and demand are increasing steadily. Moreover, as the market is still new and limited in scope, it is undoubtedly more sensitive to negative factors such as illegal file sharing.

In the debate concerning illegal file sharing; it is a common argument that the lack of good and legal download services is one of the main reasons why sites like The Pirate Bay can establish themselves. However, good download services and user-friendly alternatives to copy-protection systems are continuously being developed, and there are already more than 25 different providers offering legal downloads of audio books on the Swedish market. In spite of this, there is still a widespread illegal file sharing of audio books. The conclusion has to be that the lack of legal download sites is *not* the explanation to the extensive electronic piracy of audio books on the Internet. A list of file sharing sites currently offering legal downloads of Swedish audio books and/or e-books is included as an appendix to this summary.

The survey also shows that there are a number of “**talking books**” available through The Pirate Bay. Talking books are not commercial products, but recorded readings intended to provide access to literature to people who, through visual and/or physical disability, are unable to read books. Talking books are produced under a compulsory licence provision in the copyright law, and production and availability is regulated by the government.

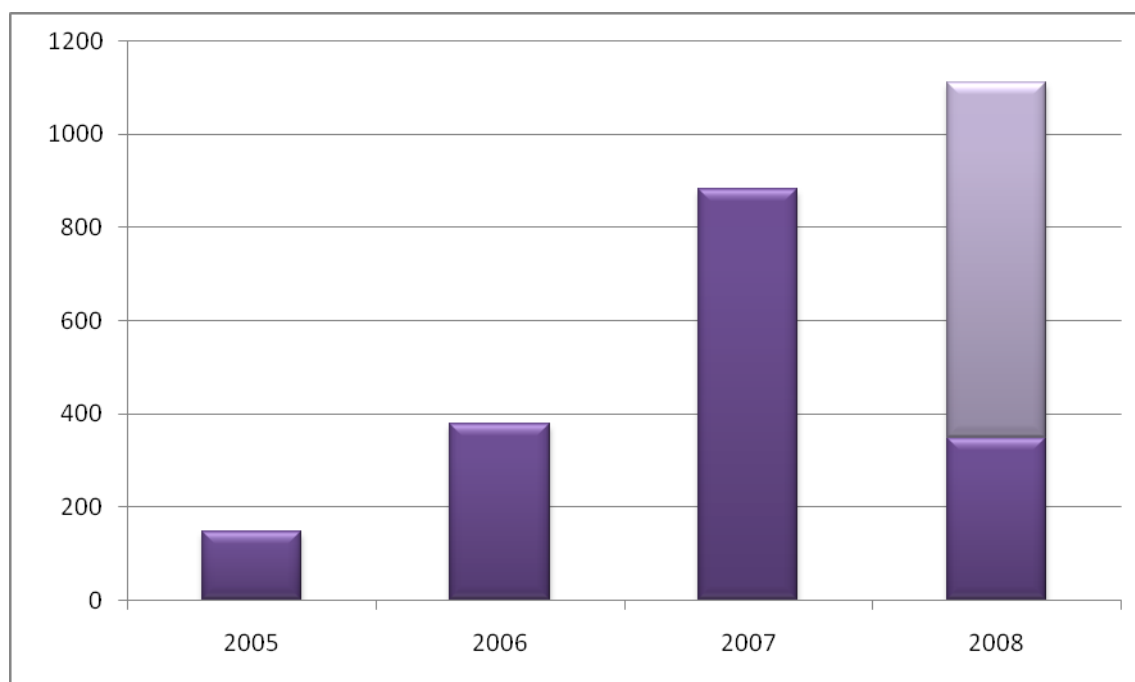
The result of the survey is summarized in a report presented by the Swedish Publishers’ Association. The complete report (in Swedish) is available on request at the Association’s secretariat.

AUDIO BOOKS

The number of audio books available

At the time of the first content scan, there were a total of 4,669 audio books available through The Pirate Bay, and 1,590 of those were Swedish titles. At the third and last scan, there were a total of 5,484 audio books available, and the number of Swedish titles had in two months increased by 10% to 1,751.

	Total number of audio books	Number of Swedish audio books
Content scan 1	4,669	1,590
Content scan 2	5,093	1,645
Content scan 3	5,484	1,751



This bar graph shows the number of Swedish audio books available through The Pirate Bay at the time of the third scan, distributed by the year they were uploaded (or “seeded”). For the 2008 bar, the number of expected uploads for the rest of the year has been added. The extrapolated data is calculated on the assumption that the uploading will continue at the same rate as during the first quarter of the year.

Bestsellers

We made a special study of the titles that are included in the trade journal Svensk Bokhandel's list of bestselling audio books. At each content scan we looked at, among other things, how many of these titles were available for downloading through The Pirate Bay. We found that 85% of the bestselling audio books were available for downloading.

Active seedings and downloads

We have examined the number of active seedings and downloads of audio books at each content scan. By "active" seeding/download we mean current seedings/downloads at the exact moment the relevant web page on The Pirate Bay was scanned. We are not referring to "completed" downloads.

	Active seedings	Active downloads
Content scan 1	5,418	1,892
Content scan 2	4,385	1,306
Content scan 3	4,419	1,431
Average per scan	4,741	1,543

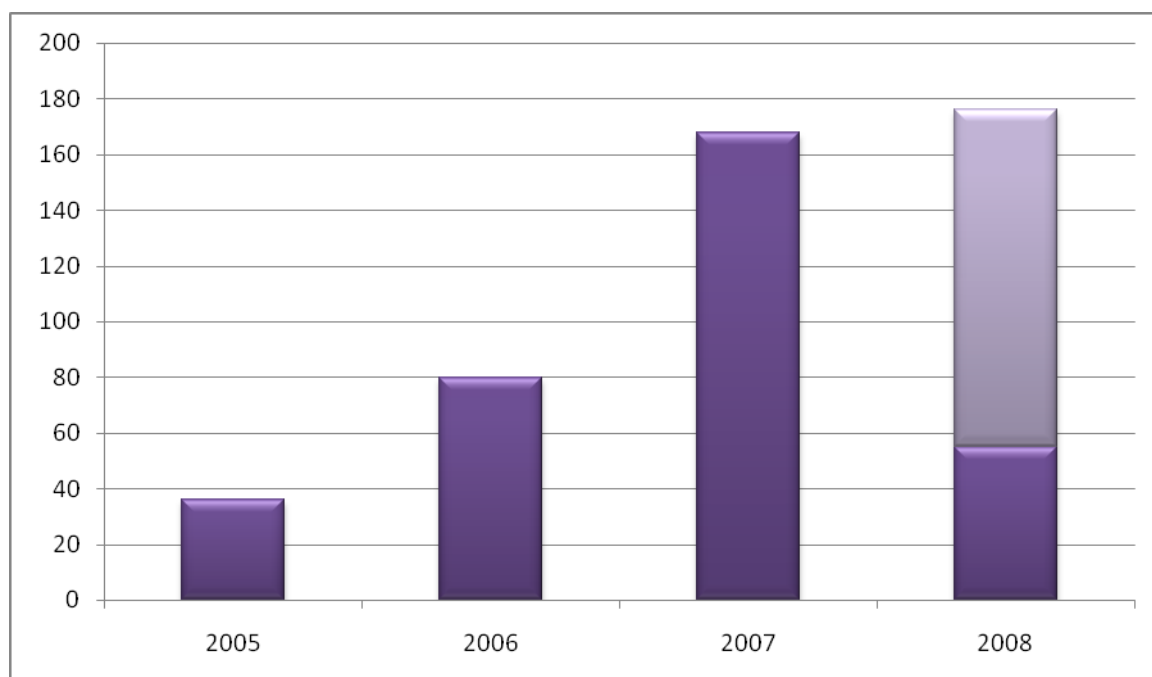
E-BOOKS

Total number of e-books on The Pirate Bay

Most of the e-book titles available through The Pirate Bay belonged to the categories user guides, manuals, magazines, comic books, and daily newspapers and tabloids. Among the published books we found textbooks (e.g. for law studies), non-fiction, classics, and cookbooks.

The first content scan found a total of 17,126 e-books listed on The Pirate Bay, and 313 of those were Swedish. At the last scan 339 of the 18,087 e-books were Swedish, which means that the number of Swedish e-books available through The Pirate Bay had increased by 8% in two months.

	Total number of e-books	Total number of Swedish e-books
Content scan 1	17,126	313
Content scan 2	17,525	326
Content scan 3	18,087	339



This bar graph shows the number of Swedish e-books available through The Pirate Bay at the time of the third scan, distributed by the year they were uploaded (or “seeded”). For the 2008 bar, the number of expected uploads for the rest of the year has been added. The extrapolated data is calculated on the assumption that the uploading will continue at the same rate as during the first quarter of the year.

Active seedings and downloads

We have examined the number of active seedings and downloads of e-books at each content scan. By “active” seeding/download we mean current seedings/downloads at the exact moment the relevant web page on The Pirate Bay was scanned. We are not referring to “completed” downloads.

	Active seedings	Active downloads
Content scan 1	309	76
Content scan 2	356	68
Content scan 3	339	58
Average per scan	334	67

Appendix 1 File sharing sites currently offering legal downloads of Swedish audio books and/or e-books

AdLibris – <http://www.adlibris.com/>
Akademibokhandeln – <http://www.akademibokhandeln.se/>
Barnbolaget – <http://www.barnbolaget.com/>
Bibliotek (BTJ) - <http://www.btj.se/md>
Bibliotek (Elib) - <http://www.elib.se/bibliotek/>
Biblos böcker - <http://www.biblo.be/>
BTJ - <http://sob.btj.se/btjcgi/eshop/index.cgi>
Bokus - <http://www.bokus.com/se/>
Böckernas klubb - <http://www.bockernasklubb.se/>
CD-bokklubben - <http://www.cdbokklubben.se/>
E-boksbutiken - <http://www.elib.se/shop/default.asp?shop=87>
Ginza - <http://www.ginzadownloads.se/>
Handdator - <http://www.handdator.se/>
Internetbokhandeln - <http://www.internetbokhandeln.se/>
Litteraturbanken - <http://litteraturbanken.se/>
Ljudboken - <http://www.ljudboken.se/>
Load2hear - <http://www.load2hear.se/>
Mobook - <http://www.mobook.se/>
Muntligt - <http://www.muntligt.se/>
MP3-Boken - <http://www.mp3-boken.se/>
OnOff - <http://download.onoff.se/>
Språkbutiken - <http://www.sprakbutiken.se>
Univerb - <http://www.univerb.se/>
Webbhallen - <http://downloads.webbhallen.com/>

Other book services, no downloads:

Audiobox - <http://www.audiobox.se/>
Projekt Gutenberg - <http://runeberg.org/>
Storytel - <http://www.storytel.se/>

Audio book distributors:

BTJ - <http://www.btj.se/>
Elib - <http://www.elib.se/>
Ztorm - <http://www.ztorm.se/consumer/>