

Letter from the Chair

As part of the inaugural edition of the Indiana University Journal of Undergraduate Research, one student author posed a research inquiry capturing the dynamism and relevance of work in the social sciences. In the submission, “Stealing is Stealing: A Cross Cultural Analysis on the Perception of Criminality for Physical Theft Versus Illegal Downloading,” author Alexius Babb explores often disregarded legal boundaries amidst the shifting norms of consumer culture in a new technological age. Although the Internet is a revolutionary tool in communication and convenience, the ease of access in obtaining digital content, as well as the lack of tangible punishments in response to illegal downloading, presents a social dilemma far removed from the typical perceptions of criminality encountered in physical theft. The research conducted by our student author illustrates the significance of such a gap, further illuminating readers of potential factors that could account for distorted perceptions of criminality within the ever-relevant social issue of piracy.

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