



Pirates of the Oscars: Trends in Piracy Among Oscar Nominated Films

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Introduction

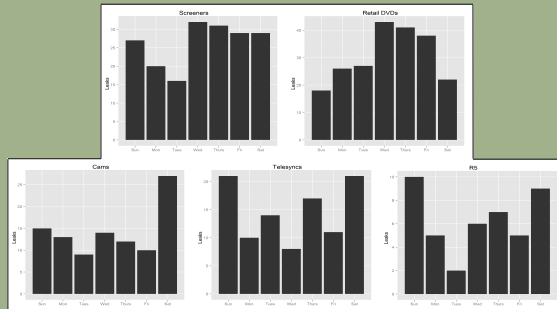
With the 83rd annual Academy Awards just around the corner, we sought to study the piracy trends in movies that have received Oscar nominations in the years since 2003. With slightly over thirty films nominated each year, our data set gave us 245 movies. The following are the types of leaks we studied:

- R5: Low quality screener
- Cam: Video camera in movie theater
- Telesync (TS): Same as Cam recording but sound is directly connected to source
- Screener: Pre DVD sent to critics and other professionals prior to release

Data

The data we based our analysis on contains information concerning leak dates and piracy information, and was taken from http://waxy.org/2010/02/pirating_the_2010_oscars/. To supplement this data, we combined it with a data set from <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/>, which contained data about the 150 top ranked movies per year, production studios, and box office numbers. Combining these two data sets by title, we found that there was still quite a bit of information missing. Only 168 movies from the box office data set matched with the movies from the piracy data set. This indicates that some Oscar nominated movies possibly weren't as popular in the United States, as ranking was determined by total box office gross.

Leak Frequency by Day of the Week

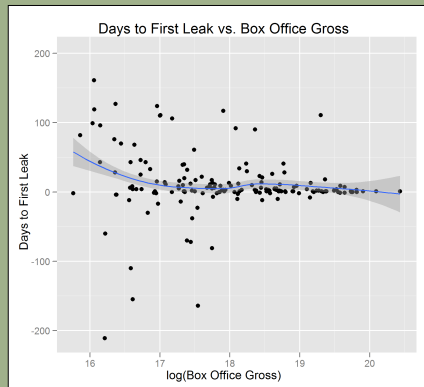


- Screeners leaked most often on Wednesday, decreasing monotonically each day until Tuesday
- Retail DVDs are also most often leaked on Wednesday, however they only decrease in frequency until Monday, after which the leaks start increasing again.
- A significantly large number of Cam leaks occur on Saturday, which isn't surprising as that's the day after Friday, the day of the week on which the vast majority of movies are released.
- Telesyncs and R5 leaks don't have immediately evident patterns, though both do tend to occur quite often on the weekends.

Relationship Between First Leak and Box Office Gross

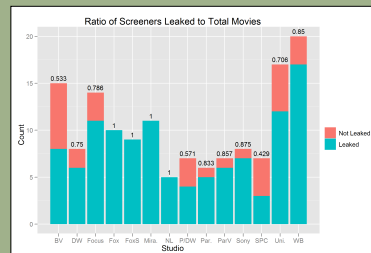
Gross

- Not surprisingly, the movies that make more money at the box office (presumably the more popular ones) tend to be leaked faster than those that don't do as well, which is likely due to the higher public demand associated with these films.
- Despite this trend, the movies that are leaked before they even reach theaters tend to be the ones that don't make as much money when they are released (maybe because people have already seen them?).

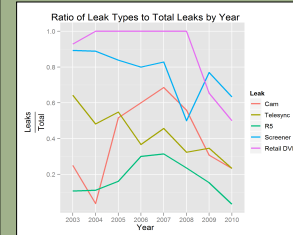


Screener Leaks For Different Studios

- Screeners are probably directly sent from the production studio so screeners being leaked is most likely due to the human screeners.
- This plot only includes studios that have produced more than 5 movies.
- Two studios only have about half of their screeners leaked, Buena Vista and Sony Classics, which are both subsidiaries of bigger brands
- Studios like Fox, Miramax and New Line (WB) have consistently had all their screeners leaked, and WB has quite a high leak ratio

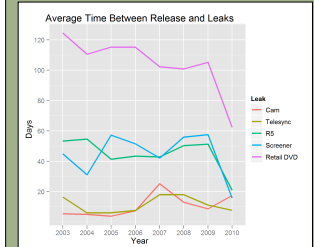


Temporal Trends



- Prior to 2008, all nominated movies had their retail DVD's leaked before Oscar Night for several years in a row.
- 2007 seems to have been the peak in number of leaks per year, of all types, and since then there has been a steady downward trend of that ratio.
- Steady decline in ratio of leaks may be effective intervention on the part of the government or perhaps the film studios.

- Cam and Telesync leaks are released the fastest because they are created as soon as the first person watches the movie in theaters
- Retail DVD leaks take the longest to appear because it is usually a few months after a movie stops playing in theaters that the DVD is released.
- Despite the apparent proclivity towards fewer movies being leaked, in 2010, the movies that were leaked were leaked much faster in comparison to previous years.



Conclusion

- Many leaks tend to occur on the weekends, except for the Screener and Retail DVDs, which tend to be leaked most often on Wednesdays.
- Movies that are more popular at the box office tend to be leaked faster, however, movies that manage to be leaked before they're even released tend to not do as well. It could be that there is less effort put into protecting them because they are not quite as hyped, or even that people don't see them because they've already seen it by the time it comes out.
- Some studios do a better job than others protecting the screeners that are sent to Academy members, but it is still the case that the majority end up being leaked.
- In general the number of movies that are leaked prior to Oscar Night has been decreasing since around 2007, possibly as a result of intervention by the film studios and the government, yet there has more recently been a trend towards faster leaks for the movies that do slip through the cracks.

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