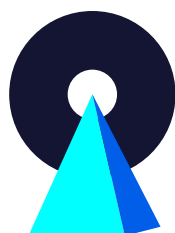


# L'essentiel



## Blocking mirror sites: promising cooperation between Arcom and audiovisual rightholders in an effort to step up the fight against piracy

Since 5th October 2022, cooperation between Arcom and film / audiovisual rightholders has allowed the Authority to update the series of measures that the courts had already brought in to block infringing services.

Between October 2022 and April 2023, rightholders referred around 40 cases to Arcom, resulting in a total of 166 domain names that were notified to the relevant Internet service providers (ISPs) and effectively blocked, in addition to the services that had been banned under an initial court ruling.

In the last six months, 38% of Internet users who engage in illicit practices admit that they have already been confronted with blocked access to a service offering infringing films or audiovisual content. In response to this situation, 7% of the Internet users concerned claimed that they had switched to a legal platform, while 46% gave up searching. However, 6% tried to circumvent the blocked access and 41% jumped to another illegal service.

### 15% of Internet users claim to have watched illegally streamed films or series over the last six months

In April 2023, 15% of Internet users aged 15 and above said that they had watched illegally streamed films or series over the web. Such illicit practices are especially prevalent among Internet users in the 15-24 age bracket (38%) and to a lesser extent in the 25-34 age

bracket (30%). Conversely, 35 to 49-year-olds correspond to the average (14%), while only 5% of 50 to 64-year-olds say that they have watched infringing content over the last six months.

### More than half of Internet users are aware of the blocking measures

More than half of Internet users (53%) claim to be aware of the measures aimed at blocking illegal websites offering audiovisual and film content. More specifically, Internet users who engage in illicit practices are the most familiar with this means of tackling piracy, with 75% saying that they are aware of such measures.

this figure is 67% for 26 to 34-year-olds. Only the over-50s are less aware of these blocking measures than the average Internet user (48% among 50 to 64-year-olds and 38% among the over-65s).

This is also true of young Internet users: 72% of 15 to 24-year-olds are familiar with the blocking measures, while

65% of people in the higher income bracket also claim to be aware of the blocking measures.

## 38% of online users watching illicit audiovisual content have come across a blocked site during the last six months

Among the online users who watch illicit films or audiovisual content, **38% claim that they have directly experienced**

**a blocked site during the last six months**, while 29% know someone who has come across a blocked site.

**Figure 1: experience with blocked sites** (base: Internet users aged 15 and over who have watched infringing films or audiovisual content during the last six months)



## 7% of infringing Internet users have switched to a legal platform after facing a blocked site.

When confronted with a blocked site, **almost half of all infringing Internet users (46%) abandon** the idea of watching the content that they were trying to see, while **6% attempt to circumvent the blocking measures** by sharing code, using an alternative DNS or a VPN, or looking for other free and potentially illegal solutions.

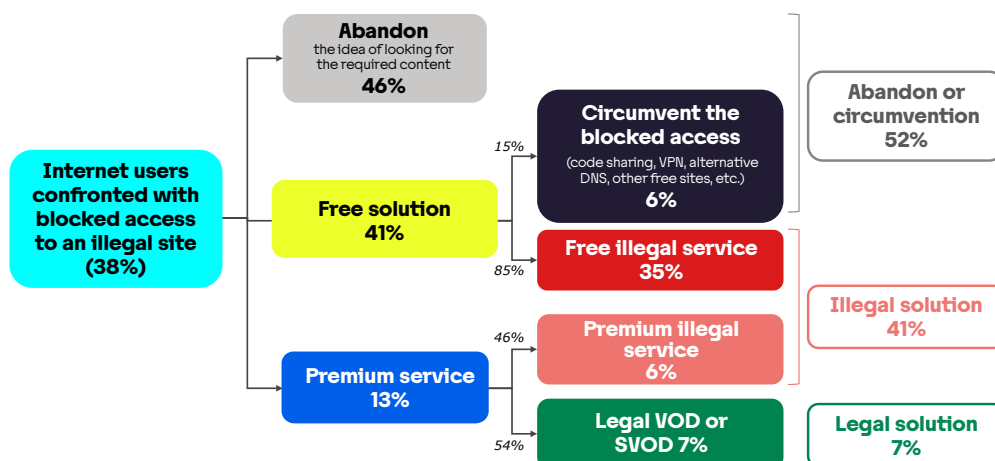
infringing users faced with blocked access) **or a premium illegal service (6%)**.

**Ultimately, 7% of infringing Internet users switch over to a premium legal platform.**

On the other hand, **four out of ten Internet users (41%) continue their illegal practices**, with most of them resorting to **another free illegal site (35%)** of

Therefore, blocking measures are having a real effect by prompting infringing users to switch over to legal platforms.

**Figure 2: reactions among infringing users when confronted with blocked access** (base: Internet users aged 15 and over who have watched infringing films or audiovisual content during the last six months)



## Insight: Arcom's intervention and cooperation with rightholders

On 1st January 2022, Article L. 331-27 of the French Intellectual Property Code created a mechanism allowing holders of copyrights or neighbouring rights, who are parties to a court decision to block or delist an online public communication service, to call on Arcom to update the said court decision where a new service "fully or substantially" reproduces the content of the service that was initially held to be infringing.

Cooperation between Arcom and rightholders, through the ALPA (Audiovisual Anti-Piracy Association), now allows film and audiovisual rightholders to refer such cases to Arcom.

Cooperation began on 5th October 2022 and has resulted in **166 domain names being notified to the relevant ISPs and subsequently blocked, in addition to the services that were blocked as part of an initial court decision.**

Now that the modus operandi is firmly in place, the fight to take down mirror sites will be ratcheted up a notch during the second quarter of 2023.

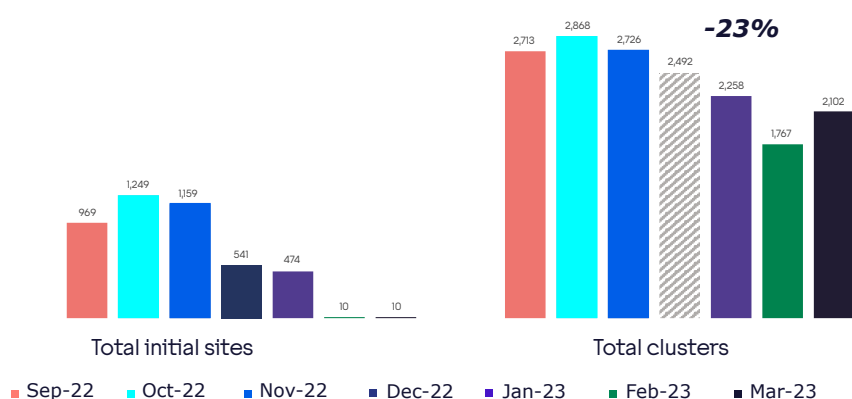
## Blocking the initial sites reduced the audience of the targeted clusters by 23% between October 2022 and March 2023

An analysis of the trends in traffic for the sites targeted by the blocking decisions in October 2022 shows that these decisions practically wiped out their audience between September 2022 (before the initial blocking decisions) and March 2023.

When looking at the effects on "clusters" (a cluster is defined as **the initial site and its mirror sites**, namely all the sites operating under the same brand or name), i.e. taking account of the changes in audience for the initial

sites and their blocked mirror sites, **their audience fell by 23% between September 2022 and March 2023.** Blocking the initial sites in response to a court ruling on the cases brought by rightholders is playing a major role in driving down traffic, while the main clusters targeted are managing to maintain the audience of their mirror sites.

**Figure 3: Trend in audience for the initial sites targeted in the court orders and the clusters blocked** (audience in thousands of unique monthly visitors - Internet users aged 2 and over)



*Note: due to a technical error, the result for the clusters in December has been estimated.*

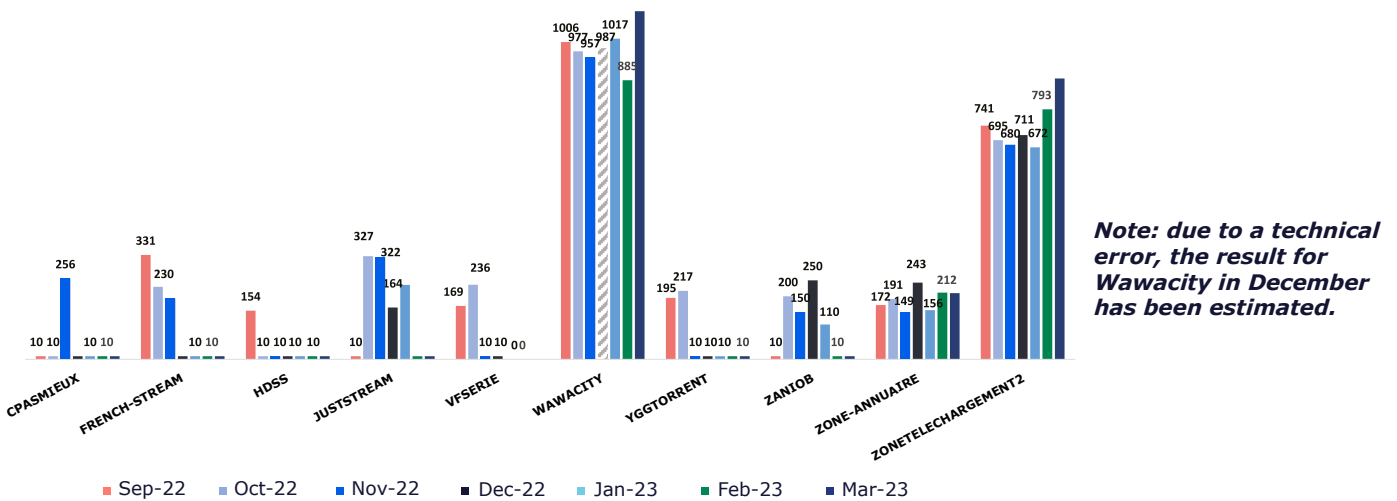
Source: Arcom based on data from Médiamétrie.

The impact that Arcom's blocking measures are having on the mirror sites alone reveals the mixed effects of those actions, depending on the categories of sites targeted:

- **Mirror streaming sites are affected by the blocking measures:** there are no strong "brands" among illegal streaming sites, and once blocked, they are unable to regenerate their audience by setting up new sites due to the successive blocking measures taken. The combination of the courts' blocking decisions and Arcom's blocking measures is highly effective and has helped stop the activities of the targeted streaming services, such as frenchstream and cpasmieux.

- Direct downloading sites, which tend to be aimed at more tech-savvy Internet users, are replicating fast; driven by strong brand names, for several years they have been able to create new mirror sites and spread the domain name almost immediately after being blocked. For the time being, blocking measures are still proving inadequate against such direct downloading services as wawacity, zoneannuaire and zonetelechargement.

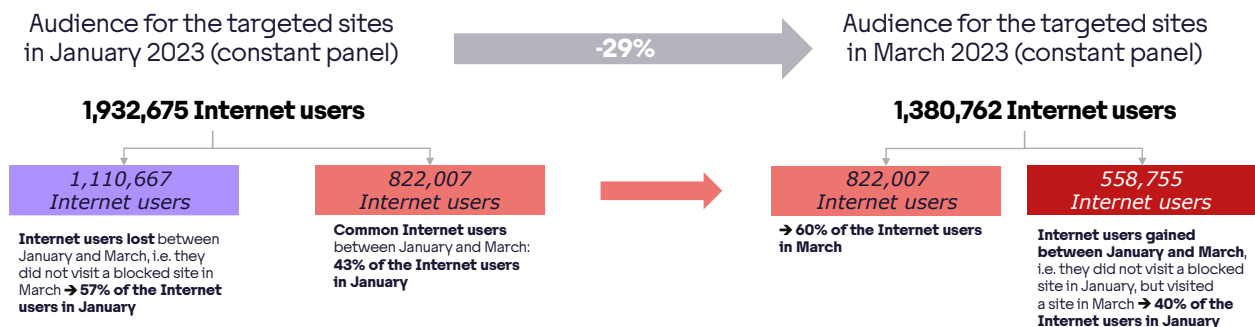
**Figure 4: Trend in audience for the mirror sites targeted in the court orders** (audience in thousands of unique monthly visitors - Internet users aged 2 and over)



Finally, an additional analysis into the shifts in audience that were examined for a constant panel of 120 domain names from the clusters targeted by court decisions and Arcom's

actions between January and March 2023 reveals a **29% fall in the audience for those blocked sites between January and March 2023.**

**Figure 5: audience shift between January and March - sites targeted by blocking measures** (number of unique monthly visitors - Internet users aged 2 and over)



### Key takeaways

- 38% of Internet users who illicitly engage in watching infringing films or audiovisual content have been confronted with a blocked site during the last six months.
- 46% of Internet users engaging in illicit practices who were confronted with a blocked site abandoned their search, and 7% switched to a premium legal platform.
- 41% of them switched to another infringing platform.
- Between October 2022 and April 2023, Arcom notified Internet service providers (ISPs) of 166 domain names to be blocked.

### Methodology: a two-part study

- Audience shift study carried out by Médiamétrie based on the Médiamétrie // Netratings audience data according to a panel of 25,000 individuals representative of the French population aged 2 and over (three-screen viewing). Measurement of the audience between January and March 2023 for 120 mirror sites offering audiovisual or film content and subject to a blocking decision by Arcom.
- Quantitative study carried out online from 30th March to 25th April by Médiamétrie on a representative sample of 2,000 Internet users aged 15 or over (representativeness ensured by the quota sampling method: gender, age, income bracket, city size and region of residence in five categories), supplemented by an extra sample of 500 users illicitly watching infringing films or audiovisual content.

**For further reading: [www.arcom.fr](http://www.arcom.fr)**

Publication Director:  
Roch-Olivier Maistre  
© Communication Department - Arcom

@Arcom

@Arcom\_fr

@ArcomFR