



FAQs on Streaming Devices

Android Boxes, Amazon Fire Sticks, Roku Boxes and Kodi Boxes

1. What is a streaming device?

A streaming device enables end users to stream content on the Internet for viewing on a television set. A popular example of a streaming device is the “Android box”. Some other examples of streaming devices include Amazon Fire Sticks, Roku Boxes and Kodi Boxes.

Typically, android boxes are sold at a “one-off” price, with no recurrent fees and, in many cases, are advertised as a replacement for cable television. When special software is installed on this device, for example Mobdro, Kodi etc., consumers can stream content on the Internet for viewing on a television set.

2. Is the Android box a legal device?

While the Android box and other streaming devices (e.g. Amazon Fire Stick, Roku box) are widely available, copyright infringement is facilitated when these devices are pre-installed or are modified with software which provides the user with access to unauthorised (pirated) content. Pirates upload content on the internet without the authorization/permission of the content owner which is a copyright infringement.

3. I can access online content on my mobile phone or tablet, how are these devices different from the Android box or any other streaming device?

Software which provides access to unauthorised content can be installed on any device thereby facilitating copyright infringement.

Focus is placed on Android boxes and other streaming devices as these are sold pre-installed with the software allowing easier access to unauthorised content. Advertising and marketing strategies employed suggest that the primary purpose of these devices is to facilitate copyright infringement by providing access to unauthorised content.



4. Is streaming legal?

Streaming is a method of transmitting or receiving data (especially video and audio material) over a computer network as a steady, continuous flow, allowing playback to start while the rest of the data is still being received. It is an alternative to file downloading which is a process in which the end-user obtains the entire file for the content before watching or listening to it. Either way, whether streamed or downloaded any content received by the end user without the permission of the creator of such content, is intellectual property theft.

Based on international precedents streaming is viewed as copyright infringement. This is evidenced by a ruling made by the European Court of Justice that streaming without the consent of the copyright holder is illegal.

5. If content is readily available on the Internet, how can I determine if the content is unauthorised?

If you are accessing content either free for which you would ordinarily have to pay or at a considerably lower price than you would normally have to pay through a subscription with your cable provider or at the local cinema, these are indications that the content available via the Internet is unauthorised.

6. Is Netflix illegal?

Netflix is a paid subscription service and is not considered illegal as copyrighted permission has been attained for distribution of content to viewers.



7. Who is being impacted by internet piracy?

When content creators and those employed in the entertainment industry are not compensated for their work this reduces the incentive to create and could eventually lead to a reduction in the amount of content, as well as the variety of content that is currently enjoyed. People should be paid for their work.

8. What are the risks and consequences associated with accessing unauthorised content on streaming devices?

Accessing unauthorised content exposes you to online risks and makes you vulnerable to malware (e.g. spyware, viruses, Trojan horses). This may result in:

- Theft of your identity, and confidential or financial information
- Hijacking of your device
- Spying and monitoring of your online activity

9. What are the consequences associated with the importation, sale and distribution of streaming devices used for accessing unauthorised content?

A person who makes, imports, sells, distributes, rents or advertises for sale a fully loaded streaming device will be committing an infringement of copyrights and neighbouring rights contrary to the Copyright Amendment Act No. 14 of 2020. As a result, importers and retailers of these devices can be subject to enforcement action by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) or the Customs and Excise Division.