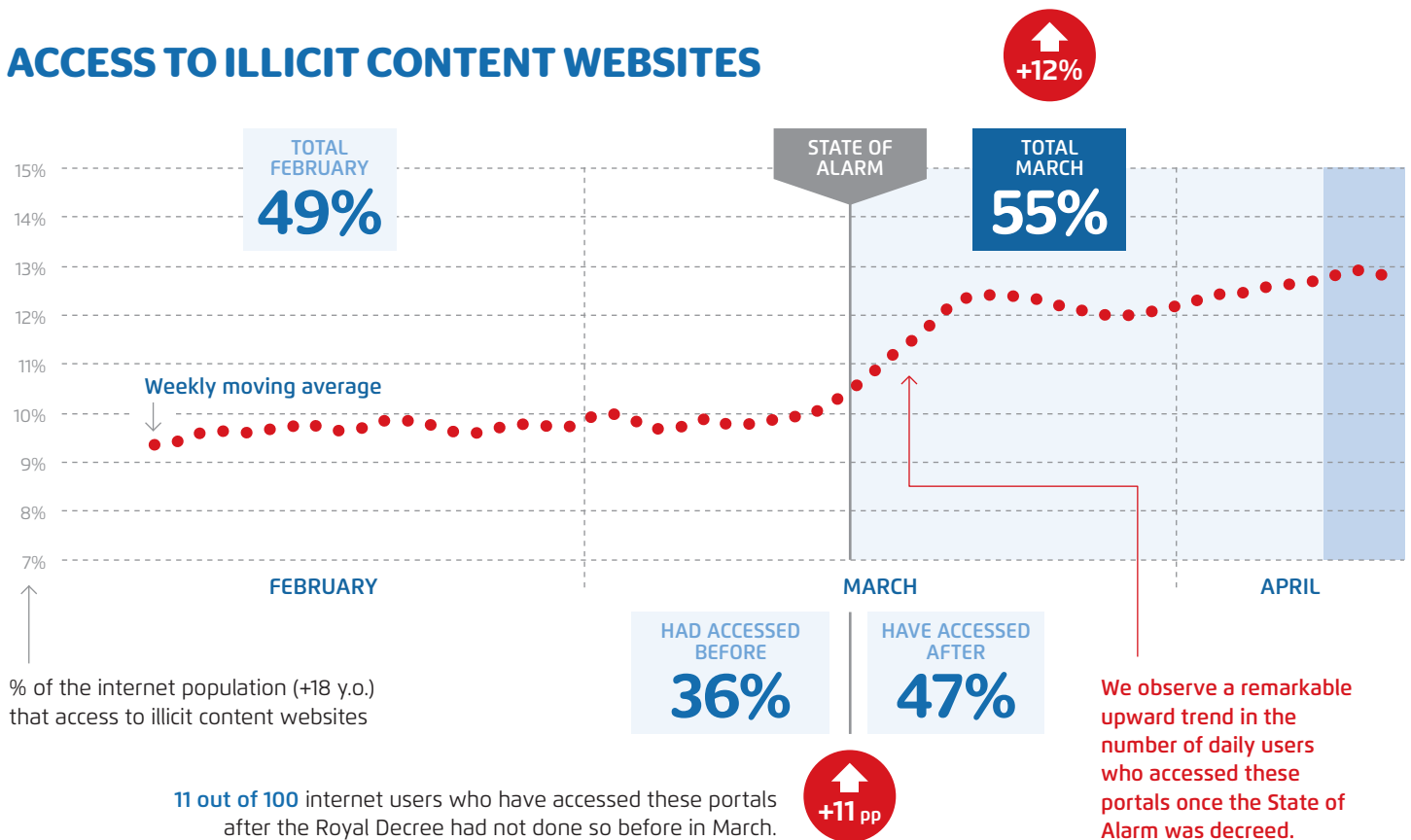# Analysis of the traffic to illegal content portals during the COVID-19 crisis and the return to the new normal
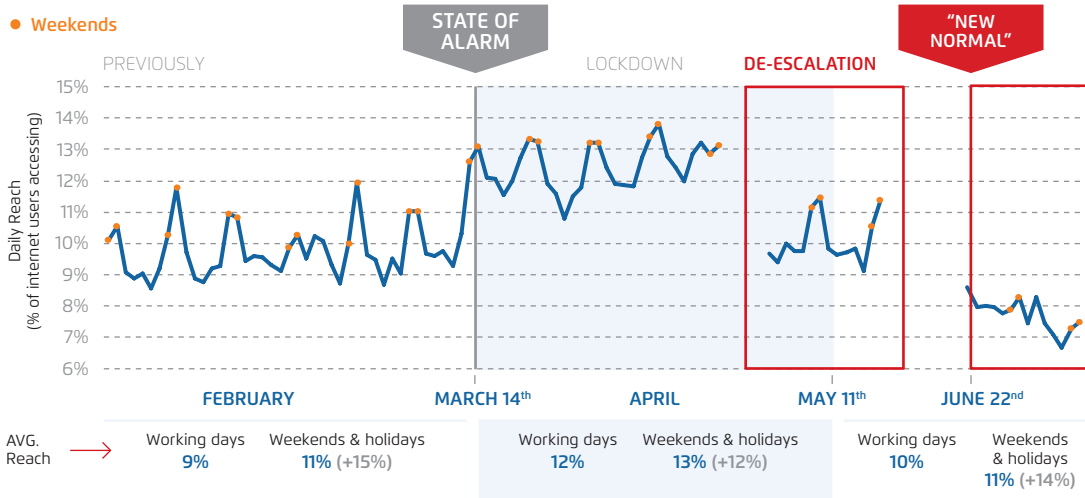
CONCLUSIONS

1 From the State of alarm, we observed a significant increase in the **number of users** who accessed websites with illegal content. 11 out of 100 of Internet users accessed these portals and had not accessed in the days before to the month of March.

2 In addition, **these users accessed a greater number of illegal websites** (25% accessed 3 or more websites in the first week of strict lockdown, compared to 19% in the previous weeks), diversifying their consumption in more websites of those that they previously visited.

3 They also viewed **a greater number of pages** on these websites with illegal content (+ 15%, up from 56 to 65 on average per week), which most likely translates into a greater number of content consumed and / or downloaded content.

4 During the **lockdown**, we observed important **changes in the consumption habits** of illegal content: more users, more number of different websites consumed, and also that **consumption was more constant throughout the day**, unlike what was going on before the State of alarm was decreed, where a significant concentration of consumption was observed between 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. In addition, during lockdown stage, greater access is still observed during weekends, but the difference with working days is not as pronounced as in the previous situation of normality.

5 Coinciding with the **return to the new normality**, the consumption intensity **indicators** (portals and pages) return to the **levels prior** to the alarm state, and the number of users is considerably reduced, with the **minimums** for the whole period under analysis.

ACCESS TO ILLICIT CONTENT WEBSITES

+12%

TOTAL FEBRUARY
49%

STATE OF ALARM

TOTAL MARCH
55%

Weekly moving average

15%
14%
13%
12%
11%
10%
9%
8%
7%

FEBRUARY   MARCH   APRIL

% of the internet population (+18 y.o.) that access to illicit content websites

HAD ACCESSED BEFORE
36%

HAVE ACCESSED AFTER
47%

We observe a remarkable upward trend in the number of daily users who accessed these portals once the State of Alarm was decreed.

11 out of 100 internet users who have accessed these portals after the Royal Decree had not done so before in March.

+11 pp

WHAT ABOUT THE RETURN TO THE "NEW NORMAL"?

- **Weekends**

STATE OF ALARM · **"NEW NORMAL"**

PREVIOUSLY · LOCKDOWN · DE-ESCALATION

Daily Reach (% of internet users accessing)

15% 14% 13% 12% 11% 10% 9% 8% 7% 6%

FEBRUARY · MARCH 14th · APRIL · MAY 11th · JUNE 22nd

AVG. Reach →

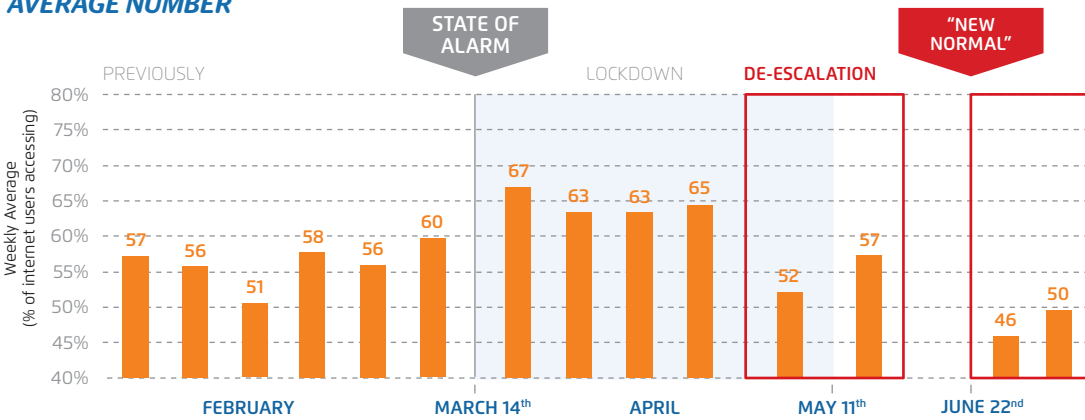| | Working days 9% | Weekends & holidays 11% (+15%) | Working days 12% | Weekends & holidays 13% (+12%) | Working days 10% | Weekends & holidays 11% (+14%) |

With the arrival of the "new normal", access to portals of illegal content are drastically reduced, reaching the minimum so far this year.

If we analyze the daily reach of these portals, we observe how during the first two weeks of "new normal" a clear decreasing trend can be seen, registering the lowest levels of the whole period.

Access to illegal content diversified during confinement, taking place in a greater number of portals. With the return to normality, in addition to drastically reducing the number of accesses, these are concentrated in a smaller number of portals.

PAGE VIEWS PER USER ON ILLEGAL WEBSITES
AVERAGE NUMBER

STATE OF ALARM · **"NEW NORMAL"**

PREVIOUSLY · LOCKDOWN · DE-ESCALATION

Weekly Average (% of internet users accessing)

80% 75% 70% 65% 60% 55% 50% 45% 40%

Values: 57, 56, 51, 58, 56, 60, 67, 63, 63, 65, 52, 57, 46, 50

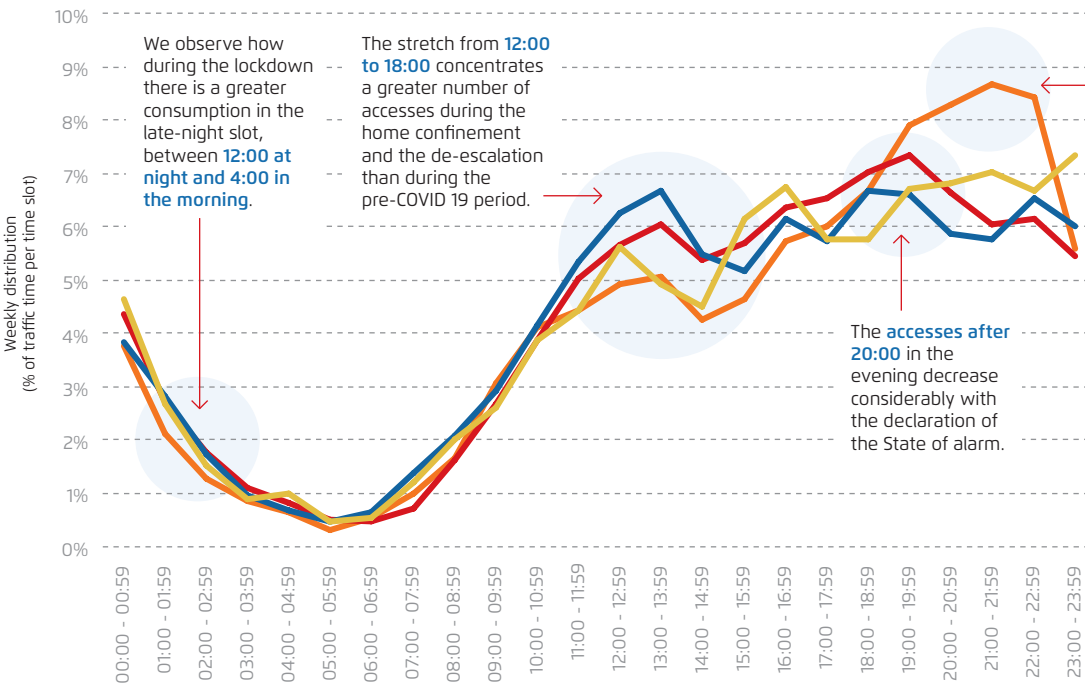FEBRUARY · MARCH 14th · APRIL · MAY 11th · JUNE 22nd

We noticed that with the beginning of the State of Alarm, not only there is more traffic (unique users) to these websites as we have previously seen, but also that this traffic is more intensive, which is likely to mean a greater number of content consumed per user.

With the de-escalation, consumption is focused on fewer websites.

It is also relevant how the consumption of these contents has been diversified in terms of portals: with the declaration of the State of alarm we observe how users begin to consume content from a greater number of different websites.

DISTRIBUTION OF BROWSING TIME BY SLOTS

Weekly distribution (% of traffic time per time slot)

10% 9% 8% 7% 6% 5% 4% 3% 2% 1% 0%

We observe how during the lockdown there is a greater consumption in the late-night slot, between 12:00 at night and 4:00 in the morning.

The stretch from 12:00 to 18:00 concentrates a greater number of accesses during the home confinement and the de-escalation than during the pre-COVID 19 period.

The accesses after 20:00 in the evening decrease considerably with the declaration of the State of alarm.

Time slots: 00:00 - 00:59, 01:00 - 01:59, 02:00 - 02:59, 03:00 - 03:59, 04:00 - 04:59, 05:00 - 05:59, 06:00 - 06:59, 07:00 - 07:59, 08:00 - 08:59, 09:00 - 09:59, 10:00 - 10:59, 11:00 - 11:59, 12:00 - 12:59, 13:00 - 13:59, 14:00 - 14:59, 15:00 - 15:59, 16:00 - 16:59, 17:00 - 17:59, 18:00 - 18:59, 19:00 - 19:59, 20:00 - 20:59, 21:00 - 21:59, 22:00 - 22:59, 23:00 - 23:59

Prior to the State of Alarm, a significant part of the traffic to portals with illegal content was concentrated in the evening (from 19:00 to 23:00).

In the context of the "new normal", the curve seems to return to the previous situation (pre-COVID).

After the declaration of the State of Alarm, it can be seen how this traffic is distributed in a much more homogeneous way throughout the day.

- **Pre-COVID** *(Feb 2020)*
- **Lockdown** *(16 mar - 12 apr)*
- **De-escalation** *(11 - 17 may)*
- **"New normality"** *(22 jun - 5 jul)*

Unlike what happened prior to the state of alarm (where access to illegal content soared after 8:00 pm), during strict confinement and even during the different de-escalation phases, these accesses dropped significantly at that time. This may be due to the digital saturation of surfing the internet all day and looking for a moment of disconnection, of sharing with family...).