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New Swedish law closes The Pirate Bay and prohibits Linux-distributions from 1st July 2005

LinuxReviews.org

The Pirate Bay is one of the biggest distribution sites for BitTorrent files. The site distributes torrents files who together with a BitTorrent can be used to download everything spanning from Linux distributions to movies and music owned by Copyright holders who prohibit distribution. The new law also prohibits distribution of software capable of circumventing copyright protection, effectively making the sales of Linux distributions illegal.

The extremely popular web site The Pirate Bay as until now been able to operate very freely under the quite liberal Swedish Copyright laws. This will end on 2005-07-01 when a new Swedish law is put to life as a result of EU harmonization. The new law will mean that distribution, uploading, downloading and copying of movies and music you do not own the right to will become illegal.

The Swedish government will from the same date be forced to prevent a huge number of Linux-distributions as a consequence of the new law which prohibits the sales of software or other tools that can be used to bypass copyright protection. Such protection is found on DVD and 'CD' discs. 'CD' discs with copy protection are actually not real CD's at all, the official CD specification from Philips has no room for such protection. This is why modern so-called CDs can not be used in a huge percentage of the CD players sold today. The DVD specification, on the other hand, has built-in protection against copying and therefore also protection against fair use. A DVD can not be used without special software. There are no such legal software available for Linux.

The Movie Industry has numerous times shown that they think Linux-users demand too much when they demand the right to use the DVD discs they have legally bought on their own entertainment systems. Luckily for us, someone quickly managed to create a nice tool that enables fair use of DVD discs on Linux and others non-standard operating systems. The movie industry responded to this by suing the person who made it possible to view my own, legally bought DVDs on my own system. The Norwegian courts dismissed the case and the code for viewing DVD discs on Linux systems are now a standard component in many main-stream Linux-distributions.

This actually means that the sales of Linux-distributions who include media players like Xine and Mplayer will become illegal when the new Swedish Copyright law goes into effect 1st of July 2005.

Next door to Sweden, the Norwegian government will 11. February 2005 propose a similar copyright law that will make the uploading, downloading and distribution of copyrighted material from the Internet illegal there too. Norway currently prohibits uploading and distribution of such files, but downloading is still legal. The leader of the government department responsible for the proposal, Roy Kristiansen at the media department in 'Culture and Church Department' (Norway, like the USA, still has a huge percentage of the population who are blind sheep following some old, outdated and pure stupid religion) refuses to give any details about the proposal until it has been properly presented to the lawmakers. If this law is as stupid and bad as the one Sweden passed then it may actually mean that the official government-sponsored Linux distribution SkoleLinux, must remove several software packages to keep the distribution legal.

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The new Swedish laws will mean that RIAA can sue minors and dead people there too as part of their desperate, already-lost struggle against piracy.

LinuxReviews strongly recommends that Linux-users switch to anonymous file sharing networks like I2P and FreeNet. These programs use tunnels and other techniques which prevents anyone from finding out who is actually doing what on the networks. Both of these prevent anyone from identifying the users (unless they do something stupid, like post their real names or addresses themselves).

There has been many global trials between Freedom Of Speech and Copyright throughout history. Copyright won every round until last years big case of 'Anonymous Peer To Peer' versus 'Big Media Corporations' last year. The introduction of Freenet (and later I2P) finally ended this struggle. Freedom Of Speech won and the technology found in these program have effectively killed Copyright on the Internet. Copyrights only way of appealing this verdict is to make software that enables users to be anonymous illegal. This would, obviously, be a huge attack on Freedom of Speech and Freedom in general and LinuxReviews strongly encourages our readers to ignore any such law if something like that ever gets passed.

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