

July 23, 2007

Release concerning amendment SA 2314: Campus-Based Digital Theft Prevention

The Illinois State Digital Citizen Project in written, verbal, and follow-up testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on 21st Century and the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science and Technology has offered that it is too early for wide-spread deployment of peer-to-peer (P2P) technology-based deterrents. The monitoring technologies don't seem to be ready to do what Congress or the entertainment industry wants -- yet.

1 - While technology based solutions which block via protocol are further along, signature based vendors, whose products block or filter based on content cannot supply or service 4,000 college campuses because, in our opinion, they aren't ready. Many of these products were originally developed for other commercial uses but are being adapted to meet this new challenge. Audible Magic, the industry leader, has less than 100 installed campuses. Additional companies like Red Lambda, eTelemetry, Safe Media, and others have few customers of record. We are working with such vendors at Illinois State.

2 - Each and every campus network is different in its architecture, its needs, and its capabilities. Some installations appear to change network settings or registration procedures that can cause chaos on a live network. Also, these systems are costly and labor intensive to install and maintain. There is very little available from these companies in the way of technical support either in documentation, in person, or by phone.

3 - The existing systems that track by individual songs or films cannot find every copyrighted item. Our tests show that even the largest library of electronically-signed media still only captures 33% of the songs (up from 11% two years ago, however) and about 2% of the movies. Campuses cannot catch and block what they cannot find. Until the tracking systems are more universal and comprehensive, the technology will not be as effective as the industry hopes.

4 - A consumer study is desperately needed so side-by-side comparisons, benefits, and features can be determined. Both monitoring systems and legal digital media services need to be evaluated. The consumer study can help the entertainment industry well by providing reliable, tested feedback.

5 - As monitoring systems become better, so will the efforts to get around them. Use of encrypted protocols are on the rise. One of the aspects of downloading that Illinois State University researchers are attempting to capture is how long it takes users to respond and defeat a monitoring system.

6 - Students utilize Illinois State University network resources while on-campus, but approximately two-thirds of our students live off-campus and utilize commercial Internet Service Providers. On most campuses, control and command of University networks impact an even smaller percentage of students' internet connectivity and thus file-sharing activity.



7 - Illinois State University researchers know that students in the K-12 learning environment today are already far more technologically savvy than those that have come before them. Many students learn from their siblings or peers – or even their parents – very early how to download. Our research tells us some learn as early as third grade, but most certainly know how by their junior high years.

8 - Illinois State's researchers are exploring how to make implementing monitoring systems, providing legal digital services, and offering effective education cost-effective. Downloading is an ingrained, cultural way of life for young people today. A lot of factors will have to change as we work on the associated problems.

9 - Technology is not THE answer. What is needed is a comprehensive program consisting of education and ethics on campus and in the k-12 schools, cultural change, enforcement, high quality legal avenues for entertainment, and some sort of positive reinforcement for good digital citizenship. This type of program must be developed and tested for effectiveness.

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The Illinois State Digital Citizen Project, supported by higher education and the entertainment industry, is a multi-year project to impact illegal piracy on campus using a multi-faceted approach to confront pervasive attitudes and behaviors in peer-to-peer downloading of movies, music, and media. By addressing ethical and legal issues involved through K-16 education, public relations, and rewards, Illinois State plans to create a nationally recognized program that is cost-effective, based on comparison and research of the products currently available, and is replicable on other college campuses.

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