

Tekst 3

EDITORIAL

The Web and the law

HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS filed lawsuits last week accusing 286 people of sharing movies online without permission. The point of the latest claims, as with the hundreds that preceded them, was twofold: to punish those who violate a copyright, and to educate the public at large about the legal boundaries of downloading.

(1) As an educational tool, this type of lawsuit leaves something to be desired. Only a fraction of the people sharing songs and movies online illegally are sued, weakening the preventive effect. At the same time, because so many claims have been filed (more than 13,000 by the movie and music industries over the last two years), they no longer attract much attention. Another problem is that studios and labels do not know the identity of a defendant when they start pressing a claim; the lawsuit eventually lands on the person whose Internet account was linked to pirated files. As a result, defendants have included a 12-year-old girl, several grandparents and at least one dead person.

(2) The resulting publicity hasn't brought in much sympathy for the labels or their cause. And critics of the lawsuits are right to argue that such actions aren't a long-term solution to the wide-spread piracy that the Internet enables.

(3) 6, there are a couple of important principles that the lawsuits advance. First, they show that the right way to protect copyrights is to focus on people who are violating them, not on the public at large. By contrast, some of the major record companies are also trying to combat piracy by switching to CD technology that resists copying even for



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legal purposes. This approach forces restrictions on *all* CD buyers in the name of stopping abuses by an unknown fraction of music fans.

(4) Second, the lawsuits make it clear that paying \$40 a month for high-speed Internet access does not entitle users to free copies of everything they might want. Unfortunately, that point is still lost on many people, especially young people. Numerous defendants have been parents who either ignored or tolerated what their kids were doing on file-sharing networks, only to find themselves paying a fine for the hundreds of illegally downloaded songs stored on a family computer. The labels typically demand \$3,750 to \$4,500 to settle a case, although copyright law allows them to seek up to \$150,000 per illegal copy.

(5) Clearly, these lawsuits inflict some additional damage, not just on the industry but on notions of fair play and the law. When huge media corporations sue thousands of individual Internet users, they fuel the argument that copyright law is just a tool for the powerful, not a means to improve society by encouraging creativity and innovation. But like anyone else, the studios are entitled to defend their rights. You can moan about how blunt the instrument is, but you can't fault Hollywood for using it.

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- “this type of lawsuit leaves something to be desired” (paragraph 1, first sentence)
- 1p 5 Which of the following statements about this type of lawsuit is/are true according to paragraph 1?
- 1 It does little to tackle the copyright issue.
 - 2 It has little effect on the general public.
- A Both 1 and 2 are true.
B Only 1 is true.
C Only 2 is true.
D Neither 1 nor 2 is true.
- 1p 6 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 3?
- A Consequently
B For example
C Moreover
D Nevertheless
- 1p 7 Which of the following is in line with paragraph 4?
- A Adults break copyright laws far more often than children do.
B Downloading would not be attractive if legal CDs were cheaper.
C Many parents turn a blind eye to their children’s downloading activities.
D Paying for an Internet connection should give users the right to download.
- “The labels ... illegal copy.” (eind alinea 4)
- 1p 8 Leg (kort) uit wat deze zin duidelijk maakt over de “labels”.
Let op: een vertaling van de zin zelf levert geen scorepunt op!
- 1p 9 What conclusion does the writer reach in the last paragraph?
Media corporations
- A are so powerful that it is no use trying to fight them as an individual.
B are wrong to take people to court for violating copyrights.
C have the right to take legal steps when their products are used without permission.
D will ultimately not be successful in their efforts to stop worldwide downloading.