

SOPA For Dummies

by memcpy

Before I begin I'd like to discuss my qualifications. I am a student majoring in Computer Science, and I have completed (and am certified for) the following courses by Stanford University:

Human Computer Interaction
Computer Science 101
Machine Learning
Cryptography
Computer Security
Design and Analysis of Algorithms I
Networking I
Networking II

Now that we've got that out of the way, lets begin:

SOPA is disguised as an anti-piracy bill. Any first year CS student knows better. The bill is, in actuality, designed to obliterate free speech on the internet and allow media publishing companies to commercialize everything.

SOPA explicitly states that companies will be liable for everything their users post. Sites like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Reddit, Wikipedia, or any sites that allow user generated content CANNOT exist under these laws. Immediately after this bill is passed, you will see the media mafia (MPIAA, RIAA, etc) replacing websites like Wikipedia with commercialized encyclopedia software. Mainstream media outlets will not cover this bill because they are the ones lobbying for it.

"I don't really know much about the internet, but we should pass this bill" — Congressman Walt

If you're not fond of the internet you may even think it will increase jobs or help the economy like they claim. It will do none of these things. The media industry has been the least impacted by the recession in terms of jobs, and it contributes hardly anything to our economy.

(Understanding Media in Economic Development <http://www.peterleeson.com/Kyklos--Media.pdf>)

You may say "well, it will stop piracy at least, won't it?" The issue is it can't.

"Instead of closing down and arresting everyone in a crack house, it's like changing all the street signs and roads so that it's a lot more difficult to find the crack house. But it's still there, and if you try hard enough, you can find it. It also messes everyone else up, making places much hard to find for everyone else." — U.S. Representative Jared Polis

Domain Name Servers are a lot like street signs. Each individual Domain Name record is assigned to the IP address of a website, and perhaps a markup address. It's very simple.

[google.com](#) forwards to—> 74.125.159.99

Browsers, by default, interact with any IP or domain name they are given on port 80, via the Hyper Text Transfer Protocol. It makes no difference whether you type the domain or the IP. This bill targets DNS only, ending nothing but your ability to type “google.com” instead of “74.125.159.99.”

There’s more than 1 protocol on the internet. There are thousands of well established protocols. This bill only targets HTTP, while more than 95% of all piracy occurs over the BitTorrent protocol, which utilizes neither HTTP or DNS. This bill does nothing to stop piracy and has a catastrophic impact on the structure of the internet which currently allows the free exchange of information.

You probably think this is ridiculous, and that there’s no way it could pass. If only I was that naive. Lets take a look at a [U.S. Supreme Court Case](#) (City of Ontario v. Quon) in which Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. was lacking a bit of knowledge:

“What is the difference between an email and a pager?” - Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.

Kennedy asked what would happen if a text message was sent to an officer at the same time he was sending one to someone else:

“Does it say: ‘Your call is important to us, and we will get back to you?’” Kennedy asked.

These are the people making important decisions about the fate of the internet.

Politicians have been brainwashed to believe that copyright infringement is the same as physical theft. Congressman Walt likened it to walking into a store, stealing a video game, and ignorantly remarking that someone could be harmed in the process. You may think so too if you don’t fully understand copyright infringement, which is nothing to be embarrassed about. It’s a complicated subject, however, the U.S. supreme court has recognized the distinction between copyright infringement and theft, noting that “nothing was stolen because the original was never removed or modified.”

(reference: [Dowling v. United States \(1985\)](#))

The only way you are going to change their minds is if their constituents outweigh the hundreds of thousands of dollars they have received in lobbying. It currently racks in (12/25/2011) at over 100 million dollars. They were advised to take the advice of experts and one of them (the name plates weren’t visible) snidely remarked “I don’t need an experts opinion to know this bill is good.”

CBS VIACOM, Microsoft, and Disney [all distribute uTorrent, Kazaa, Limewire, Frostwire, and other popular copyright infringement software on their websites](#), then turn around and sue people for it. CNET even has a search engine specifically designed to find MP3s (and offers embedded download links) - CNET is owned by CBS VIACOM. This bill isn’t designed to eliminate piracy, it is designed to give them control of the internet, the pesky free speech tool that has crippled their obsolete business model.

I won’t give you a sales pitch for my social networking mediums but I’ll provide them in case you want to

ask me questions:

[Twitter](#)

[Website](#)

In a nutshell...

