

From

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My opinion of the DeCSS/DVD situation. (based on facts, not assumptions)

We live in a society in which the "mainstream" media is for many people the only source of news and information about our world. The news that people see is accepted as fact. But many people fail to realize that the media are not historians. Their job is not to report facts, but to tell stories in order to make money.

For well over a decade the media has been using the term "computer hacker" with great vengeance. The Public now sees computer hackers as vicious criminals with anarchistic vendettas seeking to destroy and steal. Real hackers call these people crackers... but the media seems to like the term "hacker" and uses it to describe anyone who does anything illegal or immoral with a computer.' So when Joe America sits down at 6:00 and turns on the news, what he learns is that some malicious people are trying to screw companies out of their hard earned money. He doesn't hear what the accused say, cause they have no way to represent themselves.

The media is perhaps the greatest controller in the world. They have the power to stop or start wars, incite revolutions, etc etc etc. The major companies which make up the MPAA collectively control every major media industry and company in the world, is attacking a handful of individuals. The individual is the theoretical greatest enemy of a capitalist society. But it is important to note that America, though primarily a state of free enterprise, has borrowed systems from many other forms of government (social security during the depression...etc).

This flexibility of the country is due to the fact that its very foundation, the constitution, is designed to allow it to change as society changes. In the past, feudalism, monarchies, and empires have all crumbled because ideas would circulate and bring about social change-which the

then present system of government could not allow, something that America itself was designed to prevent.

It is in the very spirit of America and its constitution that as we move into time of depended alliance on computers that we take our amendments and philosophies and apply them with full force to the internet. DeCSS is not an issue about a few pirates and harpy-eyed anarchists trying to scam the companies. It is about large corporations trampling the rights of the citizens. This is about free speech. This is about law enforcement running to the aid of the company at the expense of the individual.

The MPAA with its *unlimited* resources has furnished for the judicial system the best lawyers in the country. They are the most influential people in the world. Arguably, they together have more power than the president or congress... or any other branch or office of this or any country's government.

The only people who stand in the way of what they want are a few free speech activists, some computer geeks, and their friends who happen to be in the law business.

The MPAA is suing people because they wrote and *freely* distributed a computer program called DeCSS. CSS is the name of the encryption system that DVD's use. There is a lot of ignorance in society when it comes to encryption. What is it? It is not something that prevents copies from being made. It scrambles the contents of the information on the DVD disk. When I play a DVD on a stand-alone DVD player, or on a computer running WINDOWS or MACOS, the software on the computer or player De-Crypts the DVD disk's information so that the player can understand what it is trying to play. All the encryption does is make people unable to view a DVD. It DOES NOT prevent illegal copying of DVD's. This has been possible BEFORE DeCSS came out.

If it's always been possible to copy a DVD, why haven't people done it before? A DVD file, I'm told, is approximately 3.7 gigabytes in size. In order to distribute over the internet, it would take several days to upload onto a webpage, and then to download onto a computer. And I am not

sure if there is a web provider in existence which would allow someone to have 3.7 gigs of web space! Also, if I was to take the file on one DVD, and try to put it on another DVD, buying a DVD with no data on it to facilitate this transfer would cost about \$50.00, compared with \$10-\$20 that it costs to buy a brand new DVD. Copying DVD's is something that only an imbecile with no wish to gain money would undertake. However, DeCSS doesn't even let you copy a DVD. It lets you watch one.

What is DeCSS? DeCSS is a program that was written so that people who have linux could watch DVD's. Linux is another kind of computer operating system, just like Windows or MacOS. But Linux isn't nearly as popular as windows, mostly because the majority of the public has windows or mac, and is comfortable with that... and the Linux system is created more for the technologically literate, and has been very popular with computer people.

The DVD companies didn't create a player for linux because they think that not enough people use linux to make it worth while to write a program that would allow linux to play DVD's. However, as I have stated before, most people familiar with linux are programmers, system administrators, UNIX programmers, and other people in the computer science fields. These people often like to have the latest technological goodies. One of these is the DVD. So what is DeCSS? A few people in europe who linux users and very smart spent countless hours of their time learning about CSS, the DVD encryption system, in order to figure out how to de-crypt the DVD video and be able to play them on their computers. They succeded, and their program is called De-CSS.

DeCSS DOES NOT ALLOW PEOPLE TO ILLEGALLY COPY DVDS. All it does is allow people to view the DVDs that they have already paid for. How would you feel if you bought a music Compacy Disk or a VHS movie and you took it home and you couldn't see/hear it? If you were very smart, and

technillogically literate, you might consider figuring out a way to watch or listen to what you have just spent your money on. Some people did this, and some other people posted the program (which is basically a DVD player for linux) on the internet, so other people could

use it. This program is being given away free! The creators are making no money on it!

They are

simply helping out their fellow linux user.

So why does the MPAA call this copying, and piracy?

One word, greed. This is citizen kane. This is the big scary company that is lying in order to

have total controll over not only their product, but the ability to use the product once it's been purchased. Either the companies haven't bothered to ask anyone what DeCSS is and are

completely ignorant, or the companies are greedy and hate their customers, not even letting them

use what they have just *bought*.

This is about capitalism at its worst.