

To whom it may concern,

I am disturbed by recent legislation regarding the DVD/DeCSS issue. It seems clear to me that digital video is a natural progression of modern technology and the ability to produce digital video needs to be an ability held by all citizens, not just big businesses who can afford to pay the licensing fees. A video artist should be able to produce and distribute copies of his work in digital format for free if he so desires, without having to pay more than the cost of physically producing the disks. Likewise, those who receive his work should not have to pay for software to view it. If encryption law stands as it is, big business will have too much control over the ability of budding artists to produce their works in the format that is increasingly becoming the format that the average person owns viewers for.

As one whose operating system of choice is Linux, I am further disturbed by the impact on DVD in Linux. As digital video is becoming the standard, it seems natural that Linux should be able to be distributed for free with software capable of viewing digital movies that the user has properly purchased. Current law makes this impossible.

To me, this is much more than whether some business is allowed to encrypt their data with proprietary encryption schemes. This is about the future of digital video, a very fundamental medium, and whether it will be freely available to be used by all or whether its use will be controlled by big business. I have no problem paying for video cameras and video disk drives, but I don't feel I should have to buy software if I want to make videos of my family or friends and view them on my operating system of choice.

As I have grown up and become politically aware, I have become increasingly disappointed at how much control big business has been allowed to hold over the lives of American citizens. This is not democracy.

Sincerely,

Stephen Markacs