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Another voice of opinion on the whole DeCSS/DVD Encryption issue.

Although I am not a resident of the United States, I feel very strongly on this issue as it affects everyone in the world in possession of a DVD. Although reading the specific section of US law on the matter and realising that the breaking of the CSS is illegal, I feel the moral implications and the implementation of this law, especially against 2600 magazine, are totally unjust.

The idea that the owner of a DVD is only allowed to watch that DVD on certain operating systems, i.e. not UNIX or flavours thereof, is totally unethical. It is paramount to saying that a video can only be watched on a certain make of video player and if the person in question managed to build themselves a system to play videos they would be in violation of the law. I realise that the concept of decrypting the video is not in question, but it serves as an analogy. The fact of the matter is that people, particularly those in the UNIX/Linux community are natural inquisitive and resourceful. It has always been this way. If they need to perform a task and the software is not available to do so, they set about to make it available. The production of DeCSS is just another example of that. If the purpose of DeCSS was to pirate DVDs for redistribution over the net, the author would not have had a working DVD player for Linux available in less than a week. The whole purpose was to allow the owners of DVDs to watch them on the system of their choice.

The fact that the CSS does not need to be broken to copy a DVD makes the whole case even more of a farce. The idea of copying a DVD and making it available on the Internet is even more contemptable, given bandwidth and file size that would be needed, making the whole idea completely unfeasible.

In a final point, DeCSS is now so widespread that it can never be contained again. I plea that the law finds it in itself to come to a conclusion based on common sense and decency, not to blindly persecute people for interest in a system and its workings, for being naturally curious and resourceful. These people are the ones who make changes to the world for the better, not the worse. If anyone should be persecuted for this it should be Xing, for failing to encrypt their key in an effective way.

I hope the voices of public reason will be heard.

Stuart Gibson.