Dear Sir,

I am writing to give you my opinions on DeCSS and the DMCA. Although I
live in the UK, I hope that you will take the time to read this as the
effects of the DMCA go far beyond the borders of the USA.

From what I can tell, CSS (the encryption algorithm used to "protect"
DVD videos) isn't designed to prevent copying. It is designed to make
money. In order to play DVD videos, you must buy a DVD video player, and
in order to write a player, you must pay $10,000 for access to the CSS
algorithms. This is great for the people who make DVD video playing
software, because they don't have to compete with Open Source software.

Also, CSS has regional codes, which prevent you from playing DVD videos
purchased in other countries. I really don't see any point in this,
other than to charge higher prices in the UK and in Europe. I don't see
how that can prevent copying.

Apparently, you do not need to decode DVD video to duplicate a disc. You
can copy bit for bit (although you cannot do this with normal DVD
recorders, pirates can probably afford expensive burners), or you can
use video capture, for example. If you're making a video CD, you can
probably get away with pointing a camcorder at the screen, or copying it
at a cinema -- I don't know. Various tools apparently exist which can do
these things, but I doubt that they are user friendly.

AFAICS, DeCSS is meant for playing DVDs -- not for copying them. CSS is
not meant to prevent copying. It is meant to stop the people who don't
pay the $10,000 from making players. Apparently, the DMCA states that
you may not break encryption that prevents the access of a copyrighted
work. I can't see a single good reason why it should say "access"
instead of "copying"...

Also, I don't understand why the MPAA think that they should be able to
stop people from linking to a web site. This is taking away people's
right to freedom of speech.

In the UK, I think that it is legal to copy a DVD video to tape, so that
you can put it in the VCR. I certainly don't see why anybody in the USA
should get to decide upon the rights of people in the UK.

So basically, I think that the DMCA is taking away people's right to
watch the DVD videos that they purchased fairly. DeCSS is harmed by the
DMCA. The Open Source community is harmed by the DMCA. The free world is
harmed by the DMCA.

I think that DeCSS should be considered legal -- CSS it next to useless anyway, so I can't think of a good reason not to allow the usage and development of DeCSS.
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Yours Faithfully,

Stuart Brady