When Information Week ran an article about movie piracy in Fall 2003, I was interviewed as the expert on what kids were doing. I, in turn, asked *my* experts, my teenangels (Teenangels.org, *note that teenangels.com is a porn site*.) I had no idea, until then, how prevalent movie piracy was. We all know about the movie pirates selling DVDs on the corner in Chinatown and at flea markets. But few of us know about movie piracy, how it is done and where files of that size can be stored without crashing our systems. I was in that group.

I confidently asked a group of my Teenangels during one of their training sessions if they had ever heard of kids downloading movies online. All hands went up. I then asked them if any of them had ever downloaded a motion picture. That's when I was stunned as several of my elite teens, trained by the FBI, decided to look out the window, under the table and into their laps. They looked everywhere but into my eyes. I sat down in shock. I was truly stunned.

It wasn't the first time, and certainly won't be the last time that my Teenangels have surprised me. But this was a new abuse issue that had gotten in under *MY* radar. That doesn't happen often. But I was blindsided. The teens admitted to downloading the latest Harry Potter movie before it had even hit the movie theaters. And they didn't have those shadowy, shot by a home video camera in the movie theater versions. They had studio prints, as good as the copy of that same movie we will be able to buy, years later.

After making them all swear that they would never ever ever ever do it again, I asked them how they did it. Most downloaded them on P2P networks, as they do music. They burn them to DVDs and store them on the enormous hard drives they all seem to have these days. And more importantly, they got them from their older brothers and sisters, cousins and friends in college.

So I went to our TeenAngels alumni, all of whom were now in college and asked them about the problem. They told me that many college kids are downloading and sharing motion pictures online. They have the new releases early enough to avoid having to pay the $10 and more per person to sit in a movie theater. And while many of the movies are shadowy in-theater shoots, many more are studio prints, director's cuts and review copies.

They don't have to resort to burning expensive DVDs either, since the college servers are so enormous and most college students have access to large unallocated server space.

They also briefed me on the extensive efforts being expended by universities to stem piracy of music, movies and software. Acceptable use policies were rewritten warning them of the consequences of illegal downloads and media piracy. They were educated on copyright and other intellectual property issues. They had to sign agreements not to pirate or misuse media as a condition to being given access to the university networks. And some students were expelled when they violated those agreements.

All of this was the result of an educational and awareness campaign launched by the MPAA and the RIAA. But, apparently, it wasn't terribly effective. When forced to choose between rising movie theater ticket prices and stealing a movie for your nearest and dearest 100 dorm-mates, from a college student's perspective, there isn't much of a choice.

The upcoming lawsuits might make a difference here. My informal polls of teens and college students shows me that many will stop pirating movies if they think they will be sued. The real problem we face is that most don't think it will happen to them and play the odds.

So, we need to find a way to get the message across to them that the MPAA means business. They know what they are doing is illegal (see, "Movies are Different"). But it's important that they know they could face the consequences of their actions. It's time to get their attention.

But lawsuits alone are not the answer. The MPAA knows this and has delayed their lawsuits for many years in an attempt to educate young people. They see the lawsuits as an important, but small part of their overall campaign to stop movie piracy online.

They have several educational programs they have developed, including "You Can Click, But Your Can't Hide." They have delivered messages as trailers in movie theaters about the real people impacted by movie piracy. They sat back and watched as the RIAA used privacy-invading methods to force ISPs to turn over the identity of their subscribers.

It's a great start. But we need to do more to get the kids involved. We need to get them to internalize the message of responsible technology use and respecting intellectual property rights. We need to capture their attention before they get to college and while movie piracy is still an exception not the rule. We need to use methods to get them involved in the solution, instead of only threatening them with the results. Carrots, not just sticks, need to be included in the package.

I have proposed a campaign for children, teens and college students to deliver their own anti-piracy messages in video format. After delivering our intellectual property education, they would find the message that resonates with them and their friends. (We have learned that finding the right message on anti-piracy is like ordering from a Chinese restaurant, one form column A and two from column B. No one message speaks to all kids.) Large competitions could be judged by the motion picture studios and the winning videographers could be invited to Hollywood and their videos featured as trailers on upcoming DVDs. Electronic manufacturers and retailers, video rental outlets, and the motion picture industry unions can all get involved in the campaign. We need to make it as "kewl" to stop piracy as it is to pirate a new movie. If we reward them for their creativity, they will be more likely to respect the creativity of others.

There is some good news, at least for the motion picture industry. While several of my Teenangels had pirated at least one movie before I had confronted them, interestingly

enough, many of the others weren't even aware that motion pictures *could* be pirated online. It's mainly an age factor. And we are finding that boys tend to pirate movies earlier and more frequently than girls. (We suspect it's related to the amount of tech skills, which often comes along with computer gaming. The younger girls who admitted to pirating movies tended to enjoy computer games and were more technologically-skilled than other girls of the same age.)

This tells us several things. It tells us that we still have time to turn motion picture piracy around, even is music piracy is an almost lost cause. It also tells us that young kids still believe in right and wrong.

I just ran a program for a small private school in New York, after returning from a larger event with several hundred 4th graders in Wichita, Kansas. Both groups were appalled that their older counterparts were stealing movies online. One 10 year old even lectured me on the large damages that could be recovered in a lawsuit. (He was close. He said they could recover $250,000, but the real amount for a willful piracy of a movie is $150,000. As you may have guessed already, this boy was from New York and I suspect, a future lawyer. ☺)

We need to get to the kids while they are young and still believe in right and wrong. We need them to remind each other of their ethical obligation as cybercitizens not to abuse the power of the technology. There's still time to stop movie piracy and teach young people and adults alike that we should be responsible in our technology use. We should all learn to obey the law even when we think we can get away with breaking it. And our children need to be taught this as soon as possible and take this with them as they grow into, hopefully, responsible adults.

That's the real challenge. And all of us should be supporting efforts like Peers2Peers.org and InternetSuperheroes.org, that get kids involved in creating and delivering their own messages of responsible intellectual property use.

There's more to anti-piracy than lawsuits. And unless we do something about this soon, the motion picture industry and this generation of our kids will be lost. We need to get the kids on board. And if we catch them young enough, we can.