

Content Protectors: Instant Access Key to Preventing Piracy

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UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. — Video pirates, meet Alex Terpstra, Jan Steenkamp and Yangbin Wang.

They and their companies make sure content owners know where pirated material comes from. They were also at the Entertainment Content Protection Summit Dec. 8 to suggest to content owners how they could turn pirates into law-abiding consumers.

"I think we've realized that all pirates don't necessarily want to be pirates," said Steve Weinstein, moderator of the panel and president and CEO of MovieLabs. "They want access to content."

If content is made easily available — and in an attractive manner — piracy can become less of an issue, panelists said.

"This early window idea is a good example," said Terpstra, CEO of content watermarking company Civolution, which has been able to routinely identify where content was illegally recorded, even if it was just with a handheld video recorder in the theater.

He said a post-theatrical, pre-disc VOD offering of content for a premium price is a good idea.

"If it's a one-click experience, people would be willing to spend money on this," he said.

Sometimes, all it may take is offering more quality content to prevent piracy, Steenkamp suggested. His software security company — Irdeto — protects content on a variety of platforms.

"If you increase the experience, more people would be willing to pay," he said.

He pointed to Netflix and its streaming model, and its "instant gratification."

"The way consumers consume media must be one click," he said.

Wang, founder and CEO of content identification company Vobile, added, "The industry over the years has come to a [question] when they find this content online: Do we kill it all, or do we find [a way] to make money?"

First-run films and live sporting events are examples of where content owners should strive to block all pirating, Steenkamp said. But content in later windows should be treated with more finesse, he argued.

"We're moving from a rigid, controlled environment to a new model where the consumer is in control," he said.

Terpstra said the ad-supported model for online content continues to be an attractive one for content owners, allowing for them to capitalize on content later in its life.

"We have to make the ad-supported model more interesting," he said. "[And] the concept of adding more value, by linking to the content, it's going to grow in the next year."

Content owners must address piracy, panelists and speakers at the conference agreed. Consumers are going to seek out what they want, and, increasingly, they want it now.

"We know what people are doing, and we continue to fail to give them what they want in a viable format," concluded Larry Kenswil, a former Universal Music Group executive.

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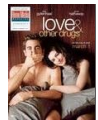
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