

Comments on the DMCA, Copyright, Reverse Engineering

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Dear Sirs,

I am writing you to share thoughts on the DMCA and the Exemption to Prohibition on Circumvention of Copyright Protection Systems for Access Control Technologies, as included in the DMCA.

I am a computer scientist with over 20 years experience. I am employed by a very large Government contractor. I develop software and hardware for various customers, including the U.S. Government. I hold a clearance and work in the DC area. I am NOT a crackpot, a member of the ACLU, nor an extremist.

I implore you to consider the implications of an act as far reaching as the DMCA. I am seeking the continued protection of fair use, reverse engineering and other rights as established by over 100 years of copyright law.

Preventing reverse engineering would prevent:

- 1) Universities and security firms from determining the true security of closed solutions, and would prevent them from notifying parties of security holes or threats in software, systems, protocols, or applications
- 2) the development of software designed for the interoperability of closed systems with third party systems, such as the networking of open systems with those developed by a monopoly

The DMCA would prevent the fair use of copyrighted material including:

- 1) the fair copying of copyrighted material for personal use (as upheld in the Audio Recording Act)
- 2) the ability to play and/or view legally purchased material on a legally purchased player on the platform of choice
- 3) the ability to make a backup copy of a legally purchased DVD or other copy protected media
- 4) the ability to copy legally purchased DVDs

to archive media or a future technology
when DVD becomes obsolete (as all technologies
eventually do, especially since DVD has a
VERY long shelf life)

- 5) the ability to copy portions of a DVD under
fair use for reporting, teaching, or research

My platform of choice is Linux for its security,
stability, and flexibility. My laptops have up-times
of months. I control servers with up-times of near
a year. All are running Linux. My browsing, word
processing, software development, etc. is all under
Linux for its flexibility and stability.

I would like to play my legally purchased DVD media
under Linux. I have a legal copy of Windows 98,
however I have to shut down EVERYTHING I am doing
and reboot, just to play a DVD. The only reason
I have Windows 98 is because of playing DVD's.
Because of DECSS, I *may* be able to play my DVDs
under Linux, unless DECSS is rendered illegal
per the DMCA.

Thank you for your consideration.

My comments may be published.

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W. Wade, Hampton IV