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TV Signal Theft - Robbing Canadians

By News Canada

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by: News Canada

(NC)—According to some recent ads, there's no such thing as 'free' cable or satellite TV.

The bottom line message: television signal theft is just that, theft.

It's all part of a recent campaign program by Canada's broadcasting industry to try and educate the Canadian public to the serious problem of signal theft.

The reason is simple: Hundreds of thousands of Canadian households are estimated to be illegally accessing television services, resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars being siphoned out of the Canadian broadcasting system each year.

That translates into lost income and revenue for Canadian actors, writers, directors, producers, technicians, distributors, broadcasters, advertisers and many others employed in the production and airing of Canadian television programming.

It means, simply, less money in the system, fewer productions production, less investment and fewer jobs. Those millions could be going to Canadian companies, paying for Canadian jobs, producing quality Canadian programming and helping drive Canada's economy.

The most direct result of signal theft is seen in its impact on the Canadian Television Fund. Every time revenue drops for Canada's broadcasting industry so does the 5 per cent of revenues the industry contributes to support production of Canadian programming through the Canadian Television Fund. It amounts to \$4 to \$7.5 million lost annually. That's \$4 million to \$7.5 million fewer dollars available to support the production of Canadian drama, children's programming, documentaries and variety and performing arts programming.

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The loss of funding is critical. It comes at a time when the Canadian Television Fund should be striving to increase the number of hours of programming it helps create and focusing on initiatives that attract and build Canadian audiences - not scaling back.

Yet the law is clear on satellite signal theft. In the spring of 2002, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously ruled that unauthorized reception of satellite signals is illegal. Since the ruling, the broadcasting industry, led by companies like Bell ExpressVu, has worked closely with the Government to stop signal theft. Illegal equipment has been seized, charges have been laid, and dealers supplying illegal equipment have been shut down.

But it will take more than just law enforcement to solve this problem.

It will take a change in perception on the part of the Canadian public and an understanding that just like shoplifting, signal theft is not a victimless crime.

More information on the issue can found by visiting:

– News Canada

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The Motion Picture Association Of America And Copyrights

By Charles Weber

The MPAA

The MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) is the national voice of anti piracy laws. The MPAA defines copyright theft as: signal theft, theatrical print theft, digital picture theft (from the internet),

unauthorized public performance of copyrighted work, and optical disc and videocassette theft. In the recent years the MPAA has played a major role in identifying and filing lawsuits against people who are liable for these kinds of thefts.

Some people may ask: "what constitutes these kinds of thefts?" or "does the MPAA really go after the small fries?" The truth is that the MPAA considers any kind of illegal duplication or performance of copyrighted pieces of material theft punishable to the full extent of the laws broad arm. And yes, they will go after the "small fries" as well as the big profiteers.

Here are some definitive answers to what constitutes some kinds of actions considered thefts by the MPAA:

- Theatrical print theft: Stealing the physical film from an authorized showing establishment, or straight from the studio. This form of theft is serious because it allows the thief to make high quality duplicates of the film for personal use or to resell for profit.
- Signal theft: when someone illegally taps into cable TV systems and receives programs usually paid for by the viewer at no cost. Many thieves have made substantial amounts of money selling devices specially designed to tap into cable or receive unauthorized satellite transmissions.
- Digital picture theft (via the internet): the internet can be easily utilized to download stolen or decoded movies. Some people are unaware that this kind of action is a theft! These things are considered a theft because they are taken from the internet without prior consent to the copyright owner. Just because money was exchanged (which many internet download sites and programs may ask of you to do to trick you into thinking it is a legitimate service) DOES NOT mean that it is legitimate. Even illegally hosting and streaming music for others, who did not purchase the music, is considered illegal.

The MPAA goes through great efforts to catch and prosecute offenders. Besides, how would you feel if you spent millions of dollars and thousands of hours producing a movie to sell to the public and instead of seeing profit for your hard work and time spent, you see nothing? This is why the MPAA considers such acts as those stated above as stealing.

Charles Weber is an upcoming writer who researches various topics concerning the internet, media production, and other current events topics. Content should be taken as information and not legal advice. His website with more information about copyrights can be found

. Must include link.

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