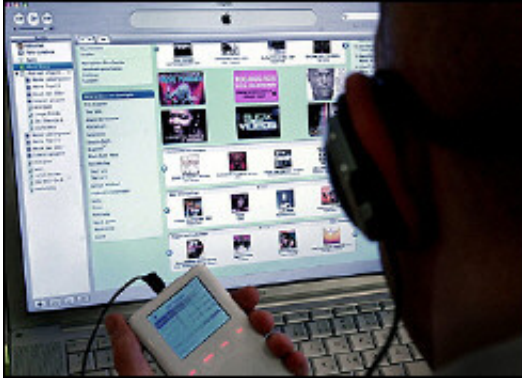


Trouble for iTunes in France?

March 15 2006



France hopes consumers will use legal software to covert digital content into other formats by forcing companies including Apple to comply via revised digital copyright law.

Currently, only iTunes music is able to play on iPods, and if pushed to open its online music store, could mean that the mega giant may close its store in France.

The legislation, to be voted on Thursday, marks a pivotal time when digital rights management, piracy, and consumer rights continue to be debated.

This could also affect other online music store companies including VirginMega.fr, OD2 France, e-compil.fr, fnac.com, and Sony Connect

but spells trouble for artists and recording houses.

However, the law will also provides penalties for those breaking the law, fining people who make files available illegal for download 150 euros and those illegally downloading music 38 euros. While, those found creating or distributing software illegal software face 300,000 euros and up to three years in prison.

While proponents of the draft law say that it will promote legal downloading, observers say it may signal weaker penalties in the fight against persistent piracy problems.

The law follows suit, after a year's of strong feelings from French consumer groups claimed companies including Apply and Sony forced consumers to purchase products tied together and lacked interoperable DRM.

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