

Stolen 'X-Men' flick leaps onto Internet

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Actor Hugh Jackman jokes about his Wolverine character. A stolen copy of the film "X-Men Origins: Wolverine" has leapt around the Internet being downloaded from file sharing websites

A stolen copy of the film "X-Men Origins: Wolverine" has leapt around the Internet being downloaded from file sharing websites.

An incomplete, early version of the film purloined late Tuesday was posted illegally at websites, according to Twentieth Century Fox Films studio spokesman Chris Petrikin.

The movie is slated to open in theaters worldwide in just under four weeks.

"It was without many effects, had missing and unedited scenes and temporary sound and music," Petrikin said of the version of the film put online.

"We immediately contacted the appropriate legal authorities and had it removed."

Fox forensically marks digital films to better track them and, in this case, figure out who made it available online and those that downloaded copies.

The "X-Men" film, based on the eponymous comic book characters, was evidently spread with BitTorrent file sharing technology that lets people share large data files virally between computers in a fashion called peer-to-peer.

"The source of the initial leak and any subsequent postings will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," Petrikin said in an email response to an AFP inquiry.

"We are encouraged by the support of fan sites condemning this illegal posting and pointing out that such theft undermines the enormous efforts of the filmmakers and actors, and above all, hurts the fans of the film."

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