

US unveils strategy to fight piracy of intellectual property

June 22 2010, by Rob Lever



Counterfeit CD's and DVD's are displayed in Beijing before being destroyed in 2007. The United States unveiled Tuesday a wide-ranging strategic plan on protection of intellectual property ranging from pharmaceuticals to Hollywood films, pledging to confront governments that fail to crack down on piracy.

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"Piracy hurts, it hurts our economy," Vice President Joe Biden said in releasing the 61-page plan drafted by several government agencies.

"It hurts our health and safety. We need to protect our citizens from unsafe products (such as) counterfeit pharmaceuticals."

The initiative aims to crack down on websites that allow illegal downloads of films or [music](#), to "lead by example" in curbing use of pirated [software](#) or goods at home, and according to Biden, to "shine a light" on governments that fail to stop piracy.

Victoria Espinel, coordinator of the intellectual property task force, said China -- which has long been singled out for allowing piracy of software, music and other goods -- would remain under close scrutiny for copyright and patent protection.

"We will initiate a comprehensive review of current efforts in support of US businesses that have difficulty enforcing their [intellectual property rights](#) in overseas markets, with a particular focus on China," she said.

The plan underscores US efforts to protect US products and service from piracy, citing the range of vulnerable items such as pharmaceuticals, [medical devices](#), software, films and music.

"Piracy is theft, clean and simple, it's smash and grab," Biden said. "Theft in every culture should be punished, and intellectual property is no different."

The plan was developed by a several government agencies including the departments of Homeland Security, Justice, State, Commerce, Agriculture, Health and Human Services along with the White House and US Trade Representative's office.

The plan represents a stepped-up effort to crack down on fake or illegally copied goods that could include bulletproof vests, medicines, auto parts or creative works.

"Whether we are talking about fake Kevlar vests... or a bolt that fails on an airplane engine, we cannot afford to purchase fake goods. This is not

just about the new Robin Hood movie," said Biden.

"Perhaps our greatest export.. is America's creative impulse... and criminals are working every day, every day to steal it."

Espinel said that Americans "need to feel confident that they can invest in new innovation and [intellectual property](#), knowing it will be safe from theft. Ensuring that our ideas and ingenuity are protected helps us create jobs and increase our exports."

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