

Court bars streaming of TV programming online

February 22 2011, By JOELLE TESSLER , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- In a key victory for television broadcasters, a federal court has ordered a Seattle start-up called ivi Inc. to stop distributing broadcast signals over the Internet without their consent.

The U.S. District Court in New York issued a preliminary injunction against ivi on Tuesday barring the company from streaming copyright-protected broadcast programming online.

Ivi captures over-the-air broadcast signals from stations in Seattle, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles and delivers them to subscribers who have downloaded its ivi TV player, which costs \$4.99 a month.

The company is being sued for copyright infringement by the big broadcast networks, local stations in New York and Seattle, public broadcasters, several large movie studios and Major League Baseball.

Ivi said it will shut down its broadcast channel offerings while it appeals the court ruling.

"The oppressive big media networks must open their doors to innovators or they will inevitably fall," the company said in a statement. "People want responsible choice, not the one-size-fits-all television offerings imposed by powerful media interests."

In court, ivi has argued that it is entitled to the same rights to distribute broadcast programming that federal copyright law automatically grants

cable TV operators.

Tuesday's court ruling rejected that reasoning, concluding that ivi does not qualify as a cable system.

The National Association of Broadcasters said it welcomed the decision.

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