

# UK Internet providers lose copyright court battle

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The High Court has endorsed Britain's new copyright rules, siding with the music industry over Internet providers in a battle over online filesharing.

The Digital Economy Act - similar to rules already in place in France and Ireland - forces Internet service providers to send an escalating series of warnings to users suspected of illegally swapping movies and music. Eventually, service providers can suspend repeat offenders' access to the Web.

The controversy over the British rules has mirrored debates over online copyright enforcement in the United States and elsewhere. Film studios, [record labels](#) and other creative groups argue that the rules are needed to stanch the flow of illegal content flooding the Internet; while service providers and civil liberties groups fear that the regime will choke off free expression.

Leading Internet companies BT Group PLC and the TalkTalk Telecom Group PLC took their case to [court](#), arguing that the act would be unnecessarily expensive and invade users' privacy. A lower court rebuffed BT and TalkTalk, and on Tuesday a three-judge panel at London's Court of Appeal endorsed the earlier judgment, to the delight of entertainment lobbying groups.

"Once again the court is on the side of the almost two million workers in the creative industries whose livelihoods are put at risk because creative

content is stolen on a daily basis," said Christine Payne, who leads actors' union Equity.

David Puttnam, the president of the Film Distributors' Association, said he hoped the judgment would bring an end to "a long chapter of uncertainty," saying he hoped the Digital Economy Act could help alert consumers, particularly young people, to "the damage piracy inflicts on the whole of the creative community."

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