

Hollywood, Silicon Valley need unity, leader says

April 24 2012, By CRISTINA SILVA , Associated Press

(AP) -- Chris Dodd, the head of the Motion Picture Association of America, said Tuesday that Hollywood and Silicon Valley must work together to protect intellectual property.

Silicon Valley has likely succeeded in killing anti-piracy legislation at least until after the 2012 elections, said Dodd, whose remarks came at CinemaCon, a Las Vegas convention for theater owners.

Instead, reform must come by improving Hollywood's relationship with [Silicon Valley](#) by stressing the havoc pirated films can wreak on consumers, creative leaders and the many blue-collar workers who make up the [movie industry](#), Dodd said.

"Content needs technology, technology needs content, and the idea that somehow there is a loser in all of this, it's beyond my imagination why people are insisting on that," Dodd said.

A massive campaign by Web giants [Wikipedia](#) and [Google](#) and their millions of users saw Congress indefinitely postpone legislation in January to stop online piracy of movies and music costing U.S. companies billions of dollars each year. The move was largely seen as a victory for Silicon Valley over Hollywood.

The two bills sought to allow the Justice Department and copyright holders to seek court orders against foreign websites accused of [copyright infringement](#). They also would forbid search engines from

linking to such sites.

Opponents said the reforms would result in [censorship](#) and stifle innovation.

The MPAA, which represents the major film studios, has been a leading advocate for anti-piracy legislation. Dodd joined the MPAA last year after representing Connecticut in the U.S. Senate for 30 years.

In Las Vegas, Dodd said the number of illegal videos taken of movies in theaters declined by 50 percent since 2007, but noted that consumers in the U.S. and Canada need constant incentives to see films on the big screen and not in the comfort of their homes.

"One third of the public in the U.S. and in Canada no longer goes to the movies," he said. "We need to bring them back."

Dodd said proponents of anti-piracy legislation should have done a better job of talking about the consequences of copyright fraud, such as identify theft.

"The truth is that neither the content nor the technology industries could survive without strong protections for intellectual property," he said.

The film industry needs to stress the commonalities between tech-savvy consumers and studios that want to protect their products, Dodd said. He claimed people with multiple gadgets on average go to theatrical productions more than once a month, compared with average consumers, who go fewer than four times a year.

"People with technology love access to content and going to that theatrical experience, with that surround sound and big screen, it's another gadget in a way," Dodd said.

John Fithian, president of the National Association of Theatre Owners, said anti-piracy laws in the U.S. and incentive programs encouraging theater employees to combat bootleggers helped reduce domestic movie pirating. But that means the market has shifted to countries where the rules aren't as strict, such as Russia and Mexico.

"There are millions and millions of jobs at stake," Fithian said.

To lure in consumers, some theater owners are experimenting with variable pricing that would allow them to sell more expensive tickets to new releases and then lower the price once the film has been out for many weeks, Fithian said.

Even so, going to the movies remains one of the nation's most affordable pastimes, especially compared to professional sports games, Fithian said.

"It's possible that 2012 may be the year where we all work together to grow the pie instead of fighting over the pieces," he said.

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