

US seizes websites linked to pirated phone apps

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A reporter uses a cell phone to take a photograph of Google Android 3.0 Honeycomb OS being used on a Motorola Xoom tablet. US authorities have seized three website domain names involved in distribution of pirated Android phone apps, in the first such action involving mobile app marketplaces.

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The [Justice Department](#) announced late Tuesday that they acted under a court order in coordination with international law enforcement, including Dutch and French officials, against [applanet.net](#), [appbucket.net](#) and [snappzmarket.com](#).

Visitors to the sites will now find a seizure banner that notifies them that

the domain name has been seized by [federal authorities](#).

"Cracking down on piracy of copyrighted works -- including popular apps -- is a top priority of the (Justice Department) criminal division," said Assistant Attorney General Lanny Breuer.

"Software apps have become an increasingly essential part of our nation's economy and creative culture, and the criminal division is committed to working with our law enforcement partners to protect the creators of these apps and other forms of intellectual property from those who seek to steal it."

During an investigation, FBI agents downloaded thousands of copies of popular copyrighted mobile device apps from the alternative online markets suspected of distributing apps without permission from the [software developers](#) who would otherwise obtain commissions.

In most cases, the servers storing the apps were being hosted in other countries, and the FBI was able to get help from international law enforcement in obtaining or seizing evidence stored on these servers.

Nine [search warrants](#) were also executed in various parts of the United States as part of an effort by the US Task Force on Intellectual Property.

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