

Hollywood studios in Australia take action against pirate site

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Leading Hollywood movie studios have joined forces to launch legal action in an Australian court against piracy website solarmovie.ph

Leading Hollywood movie studios joined forces Thursday to launch legal action in an Australian court against a piracy website, as they flagged future moves against others that give access to infringing content.

Australia media company Village Roadshow said it was spearheading the lawsuit against solarmovie.ph—a large video-streaming website offering free access to movies and television shows—in the Federal Court, together with major studios Paramount, Universal, 21st Century Fox, Disney, Sony and Warner.

The push came as governments worldwide and the movie and [music industry](#) fight back against file-sharing websites, where a global community of online sharers download the latest blockbuster releases.

The industry has described such downloads as theft that cost them billions of dollars in revenue.

The studios involved in the Australian legal case are applying to have the court force Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to block the website, Village Roadshow's co-chief executive Graham Burke told AFP.

"Up until now, piracy and pirates have had open slather," Burke said, adding that the claim was made possible by Australian government changes to copyright laws last year.

"It's theft... at the end of the day there will be no television or film production in Australia if the product is given away.

"We select Solarmovie for the first case... as they're probably amongst the most vicious and evil in the world and they have been taken down by courts in other jurisdictions in the UK, two days ago in Singapore and I'm told in Italy, Romania and a number of other countries."

Burke said other websites that allowed the online sharing of movie and music content would also be targeted in the future.

Consumer advocates have said blocking websites which host file-sharing

links was shown to be ineffective, as users could circumvent restrictions through the use of virtual private networks (VPNs) and other means.

Advocacy group the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) said it supported action against piracy but warned such measures could be costly for Internet users.

"A [cost benefit analysis](#) was never done on these website-blocking measures and if the international examples are anything to go by, website blocking is an expensive game of 'whack-a-mole'," ACCAN's Luke Sutton said in a statement to AFP.

Consumer lobby groups have also said distributors needed to provide affordable and timely access to new content to help lower piracy levels, which Burke acknowledged, noting that studios needed to win consumers' "hearts and minds".

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