

EU court backs Wi-Fi providers in German copyright case

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The European Union's highest court has ruled that the manager of a business offering free Wi-Fi to customers can't be held liable for copyright infringements by users.

A Munich court sought a judgment from the European Court of Justice in a dispute between the manager of a sound-system shop and Sony's German branch. It centers on a 2010 incident in which music was illegally offered for downloading via the shop's Wi-Fi network.

The Luxembourg-based EU court said Thursday that a service provider such as the shop owner can't be held liable so long as he didn't initiate the offending data transmission, select its recipient, or select or modify the information in that transmission.

However, it said EU rules would allow for an injunction ordering that the internet connection be password-protected as a deterrent.

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