

ISPs must play part in online copyright clampdown, EU court says

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A picture taken on March 15, 2013 in Paris shows the screen of a computer connected on the internet and displaying a webpage

Internet service providers can be legally required to deny their customers access to websites which infringe copyright, a European Union court ruled on Thursday.

In a decision with implications for European Internet service providers

(ISPs), the Court of Justice of the European Union upheld the decision of an Austrian [court](#) to compel an ISP to deny its customers access to a website.

The Court found that Austrian ISP UPC Telekabel could be ordered to steer Internet [users](#) away from content which had been posted illegally, even if the ISP had no financial connection with the website behind the publication.

Asked by the Austrian Supreme Court to interpret the EU Copyright Directive and basic rights enshrined in EU legislation, the EU court found that an injunction against ISPs to deny access to websites was within EU laws and regulations.

However, the Luxembourg-based court found ISPs must ensure that blocking access to websites not deprive users "of the possibility of lawfully accessing the information available."

UPC Telekabel had argued that the injunction was unreasonable because at the time it had no business relationship with the website publishing the material, kino.to, and any attempt to block users from visiting the site would be expensive and ineffective.

The court found that copyright and intellectual property outweighed the "freedom to conduct a business" which ISPs had argued protected them from acting on court injunctions.

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