

Film theft

Extract from UNIC's annual report 2010-2011

UNIC

Union Internationale des Cinémas
International Union of Cinemas

Film theft

UNIC recognizes that the losses to the industry from film theft – whether through films being recorded in cinemas, copied from legal content or illegally shared online – mean that many of those working in the industry do not get rewarded for their efforts and the funding available to go back into the production of new films is significantly reduced.

During the last year, UNIC held regular discussions on movie theft with NATO and the MPA in Cannes, CinemaCon and Paris. The organization also circulated the latest European camcording incident reports prepared and circulated by the MPA, this information then being circulated to the various exhibitor federations and appointed partners.

Exhibitors continue to play their full part in improving public awareness and reinforcing security in movie theatres both through better staff training, staff incentives and the use of technology such as night vision goggles.

A number of countries, including France and the UK, now have in place legislation to deal with the illegal sharing and downloading of film material online. However UNIC strongly believes that this issue cannot be fought only by punishing those responsible.

The Norwegian Government is currently considering legislation which will make it easier for rights-holders to identify the IP-addresses of those who steal their films and allow for the blocking of Internet sites responsible for the largest volume of illegally-shared content.

In recent months, Austrian and German film producers, with the support of the Anti-Piracy Association (VAP), have taken legal action in a test case against a particular Internet provider, where they successfully persuaded the Commercial Court of Vienna to prevent that company from allowing customers access to a particular infringing website, in this instance based in Russia. This case confirmed that Internet providers cannot evade responsibility for the content their users download on their system and that where they receive notification that their services are being misused for specific copyright violations, they must adopt specific counter-measures.

The organization also strongly supports and will contribute to initiatives aimed at improving public awareness of the impact of film theft. Education - particularly of young children who are the most receptive to these messages - is key.

Although in many European territories a large legal film 'offer' already exists in terms of the number and diversity of films available, UNIC also looks to other parts of the film industry to do more to increase this further, on the Internet and otherwise, although not of course at the cost of theatrical exclusivity