



MPAA: Net Neutrality Could Hurt Antipiracy Tech

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Hollywood hasn't decided what it thinks about the whole "Net neutrality" debate, but it knows one thing: Any rules that would stunt roll-out of the next new whiz-bang filtering technologies or encourage unfettered sharing of copyrighted works over peer-to-peer networks would be very, very bad.

That's the gist of [the 9-page comments \(PDF\)](#) that the Motion Picture Association of America filed with the Federal Communications Commission this week. Monday was the deadline for comments for [an FCC inquiry into "broadband industry practices,"](#) and most of the some 27,000 filings focused on the thorny issue of Net neutrality--that is, whether the FCC should impose a new policy prohibiting network operators from making special deals with content providers for priority service.

Whatever the FCC decides on that front, the MPAA said it's "crucial" not to take any steps that would inhibit the development and rollout of new technologies like [watermarking](#), deep packet inspection, acoustic fingerprinting and other forms of filtering--all of which are still in the early stages and are far from perfect.

"Any policy efforts relating to Net neutrality must promote the protection of intellectual property," MPAA lawyer's wrote. "It is crucial that FCC policies not interfere with the efforts of broadband companies and content providers of all kinds to solve problems of free riding."

A prime example of such "free riding," the MPAA said, is the "unauthorized" swapping of massive amounts of copyrighted materials via peer-to-peer networks. The group argued such activities pose a triple threat: to the copyrighted content creators, to the consumers who actually pay for the works and to the "light" Internet users who may be indirectly forced to pay for the high bandwidth use of those file swappers.

"It would be Pyrrhic indeed to adopt a set of principles asserting that consumers have a right to a cornucopia of excellent content, but fail to provide an environment in which such content can actually exist," the movie industry concluded.

This filing, which was [noted Wednesday night by Ars Technica](#), isn't first to evoke copyright issues in this proceeding. The general counsel of NBC-Universal has already suggested the FCC should [require broadband providers to be more proactive](#) about filtering copyrighted content that traverses their networks. About a dozen public-interest

and consumer advocacy groups [hit back at those comments](#) this week, arguing such a proposal is not only technologically impractical but could also threaten fair use and free expression rights.