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Green Party condemns ISPs play against piracy

"Draconian measures" threaten internet access

by Katie Scott published on 1 August 2008

The UK Green Party has condemned a new ploy amongst ISPs to track down people illegally downloading content from the Internet.

The party says that the deal struck between six UK ISPs and the record industry body, the British Phonographic Industry, will result in "draconian measures" that could threaten internet access for vulnerable people.

Under the government-brokered deal, the BPI will monitor internet users visiting file-sharing websites like LimeWire and then pass on their details to their ISPs to take action.

This action could include blocking content to certain users or limiting the download speed of their internet connection.

But Tom Chance, the Green party's intellectual property spokesman, said: "Net users everywhere should be worried by this memorandum of understanding between the BPI and the six largest ISPs in the UK. Faults exist at every level".

"The first stage gives the BPI the right to track file-sharers, and pass their details onto ISPs. That's an attack on civil liberties in itself, but the true folly of the scheme rests in what those ISPs can do next."

"Their new powers run in two halves. Initially, they merely send warning letters to suspected file-sharers. If these fail to deter them, the ISPs threaten to slow or cut off their internet connections. This is a hugely disproportionate response."

"It would not matter who had done the sharing. It



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would not matter if it was someone else in the building. It would not matter if your machine had been assaulted by malware and used without your knowledge. The ISPs will target suspects, which means that many people on shared internet connections will be cut off under these rules."

He said that this risks "cutting many vulnerable people off from their livelihoods and their means for engaging as a citizen".