DRM dilemma?

There are no proposed restrictions on rights holders incorporating DRM (digital rights management) into their works. But will consumers be clearly informed about what is and is not DRM protected when they purchase a work?

Other copyright exceptions

The consultation also seeks responses on amendments to other copyright exceptions such as:

- Proposals to allow educational establishments to make broadcasts and excerpts of published works available remotely to distance learning students and to allow these excerpts to be communicated through interactive whiteboards.
- Proposals to extend the private copying exception for research purposes to cover all forms of content, not just literary, artistic, dramatic and musical works.
- Proposals to allow libraries to make copies of sound recordings, broadcasts and films as well as literary, dramatic and musical works for archiving and preservation purposes.
- Proposals to introduce a new copyright exception for the purpose of caricature, parody or pastiche.

Deadline

The government has set a deadline for responses of 8 April 2008.

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Television: Modernised TV directive

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AVMS passed

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMS) has been passed by the European Parliament. It is aimed at extending the former TV Without Frontiers Directive (TVWF) to keep pace with technological advances, particularly web-streamed television services.

TV on-demand

TV on-demand is covered by the AVMS (although it is not subject to the advertising restrictions), but the AVMS will not affect sites

such as YouTube where the media service provider does not have effective control over both the selection of programmes and their organisation.

Controls

Controls on advertising and product placement

In addition to modernising the TVWF and reasserting some key European values (such as the country of origin principle), the AVMS introduces new controls on the level of advertising and product placement in television services.

To strengthen consumer protection, the AVMS limits the number of commercial breaks permitted for films, cinematographic works and news programmes to one every 30 minutes and places a cap of 12 minutes of advertisements every hour.

Product placement is also banned during current affairs programmes, documentaries and programmes providing advice. Where programmes contain product placement, clear signs must indicate the start and end of those programmes as well as the end of commercial breaks.

Protection of minors

One key concern addressed by the AVMS is the protection of minors:

- advertisements will only be permitted during children's programmes of over 30 minutes
- product placement during children's programmes will be prohibited
- member states will be required to encourage media service providers to develop a code of conduct towards children.

Two years for implementation

Member states have been given up to two years for full implementation of the AVMS.

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Internet: Financial promotions fall short of standards

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After a year-long review, the FSA (Financial Services Authority) has announced that firms are failing to meet financial promotion requirements on the internet.