

No copy protection

I am writing in regards to the forthcoming decision on a possible "copy protection" scheme for digital cable TV.

Proponents claim it is needed to protect the TV and film industry. I am doubtful of this; and I think the fact that the movie industry makes more money from VCRs (through rentals) than it ever could have lost from home taping should more than invalidate this claim in EVERY form, for every technology. The industry was so wrong in the past, how can you possibly take the risk of agreeing with them now?

That said, I don't think the viability of the U.S. film industry should even be an issue. One major point missing from these debates is this:

No industry has any a priori right to its revenue streams.

If a business model is unsustainable, businesses must find new models. Under (economic) pressure, they will do this. How the film industry makes money is their problem. The FCC's problem is protecting consumers. And consumers are not protected by mandating controls on their use of technology or by limiting their options.

Digital TV technology has been delayed long enough. Let it not be crippled as well.

Martin