

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

All the versions of the broadcast flag proposals fielded by the large media providers indicate otherwise, that users will not be able to make any copies. A good precedent in this regard is the serial copy management system, which was adopted as allowing consumers to create one copy of the material they owned. As soon as DVD players entered the market, the default changed to not allowing even a single copy. Hence, I cannot make a MD/CD copy of a concert DVD I own to use in my car. I fear that this same mentality will prevail with the broadcast flag. Even if the broadcast industry claims that the flag would allow most programs to be recorded, in the past such promises have proven to be less than trustworthy.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices? The broadcast industry has attempted to stop any DVR features that would allow citizens to do just this. This claim sounds false on the face of it.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

It would only limit consumers' ability to use their existing equipment at full quality/fidelity. A low-quality analog interface may be provided, but intentionally lowering the signal quality is clearly unacceptable.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

Again, it is obvious that any such built-in restrictions limit the things consumers can do with the content they have lawfully obtained, or even created themselves. Furthermore, any licensing or patent arrangements involved would preclude any hobbyist projects or open source development of new technologies, thereby slowing innovation.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

The cost will likely be moderate, but obviously this functionality has to be added to any existing designs, so there would be an additional cost.

Other Comments:

The attempt of the media industry to force users into a pay-per-listen and pay-per-view model is worrisome. Even more worrisome is their attempt to limit customers from transferring content they have purchased on one media to that media, preventing them from making tape copies of DVDs to be used at their summer house, preventing users from making MD copies to be used in a car, preventing users from transferring recorded content from one computer (say, the entertainment center) to another (say, the one within the home office) within the same household. It is clear that it is in the best interest of the consumers, and the citizens of this country, to maintain their existing rights to use and ownership of entertainment/documentary media.