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February 19, 2007

Putting Copyrighted Content Back into the Bottle



Given Hollywood's growing anxiety over the amount of unauthorized copyrighted content that appears online, this *New York Times*' [piece](#) by Brad Stone and Miguel Helft is a welcome, albeit abbreviated, primer on the state of video "fingerprinting" or content-recognition technology. On the heels of MySpace's announcement last week that it will implement filters to identify copyrighted works, and amid YouTube's delayed action to put up its own filtering system, tech companies are seizing on the ability to fill a market need.

But it's not an easy task. Video filtering systems have to take into account far more variables, and a lot more content, than do audio filtering systems, which are fairly well advanced.

Audible Magic has stepped into the breach with what many believe is a killer filtering system called Motional Media I.D., and one start-up, MotionDSP, changed its business model recently to develop products that provide online video identifications. And many online video sites, such as Guba, have developed their own content-filtering systems.

But, as the article suggests, competing filtering systems could create havoc, or at least slow-down the evolution of the web-based video market. In all likelihood, one system may ultimately prevail at the end of the day. The MPAA, for one, is in the midst of reviewing proposals

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for just such a system that the trade group can recommend to its studio members.

Posted by Cynthia Brumfield at [1:36 PM](#) | [Print](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)



State A.G.s Hate Bud TV



Anheuser-Busch's bold [experiment in pitching beer](#)

via an online video network, called [Bud.TV](#), has

drawn fire from 21 state Attorneys General,

according to this Ad Age piece. The A.G.s sent a

letter to the beer maker lambasting it for too-easily

allowing minors to access the site, despite the company's efforts to bar minors from accessing the site through a series of questions that attempt to prove drinking age.

Arguing that as both producer of the content and owner of the site Anheuser-Busch has a "higher" responsibility to ensure that minors don't gain access, the A.G.s said "We fail to see how your use of age verification on the Bud.tv site is a genuine attempt to keep youth from accessing the site's content."

They want Bud.TV to have stronger controls in place, such as follow-up phone calls or direct mailings (the cost of which would presumably make Bud.TV a money-losing folly) or software that ensures that multiple users can't log in under one legitimate i.d. They also raise another interesting point: Bud.TV videos can be downloaded and sent via email, defeating the purpose of any age-screening mechanism.

The real question is whether the A.G.s, who have the power, of course, to sue the pants off Anheuser-Busch, will take any further steps if the beer company doesn't implement some changes to its registration and content distribution system. As the article points out, it was a group of

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state A.G.s who brought about the [master settlement](#) agreement with the country's four largest tobacco companies.

Posted by Cynthia Brumfield at 1:03 PM | [Print](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)



Opening the Justice System via Web Video in Madrid



Web-based video is now [providing a direct view](#) into one of the highest profile trials in the world, thanks to a Spanish company called [Datadiar](#). Spain is trying 29 men in the deadly train bombings that shocked the world in 2004.

Security is tight and visitor seats are, I suspect, non-existent, but thanks to an alliance that Datadiar formed with the tribunal, the Audiencia Nacional, video of the trial is broadcast every day on the web, captured by five cameras placed in the courtroom — four posted at various angles in the court and a fifth for capturing images of evidence. Datadiar also has 43 microphones throughout the room.

The coverage features no commentary, a la C-SPAN. The judge overseeing the case is, if not web-friendly, then journalism friendly — he wrote a manual for legal journalism called "Lifting the Veil." When asked why he opened the proceedings to the world on the Internet, Judge Javier Gomez Bermudez said because "there are so many victims, and they can't all fit in here."

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