

MEDIA RELEASE

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FILM INDUSTRY UNITES TO FIGHT FILM THEFT

The film and video industries today presented a coordinated and united front in the fight against film theft in the UK at an event in London attended by the Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MBE MP, Minister for Culture, Creative Industries and Tourism.

All parts of the UK film and video sectors (distribution, exhibition, home entertainment, retail and rental) have come together for the first time to coordinate and step-up their efforts in combating the increasing threat from film theft in hard copy format and online. Through the work of industry organisations, extra resources are going to be focused on three key strands:

- Education to young people through schools and colleges – through the work of Film Education
- Outreach – both public awareness and cross-industry dialogues with ISPs and others through the efforts of the UK Film Council and the work of the Industry Trust for IP Awareness ('IP Trust')
- Ramping up enforcement activity through the work of the Federation Against Copyright Theft ('FACT')

The UK film and video industry is the most important market outside the US, employing over 40,000 people directly, with UK film production activity worth £842m in 2006. However, the loss to the industry from film theft was £459m in the same year, with much of the counterfeit material being manufactured and sold by UK based criminals, including a substantial involvement from organised criminal networks.

Speaking at the event, held at BAFTA in London, Films Minister, Margaret Hodge, said:
"Last year alone, thieves cost the UK film and TV industry almost £0.5 billion – that's more than five times the cost of the last Harry Potter film or more than eight times Casino Royale's takings at the UK box office.

"We urgently need to reduce the number of illegal downloads and make it much tougher for film thieves to operate. We can only do this through better enforcement and educating the public. I welcome this move by UK industry to unite against the scourge of film theft."

"The latest research shows that acceptance of counterfeit goods is becoming more widespread; and increasingly sophisticated information technology is bringing the ability to download into homes across the country," said MPAA CEO, Dan Glickman. "This requires action now and we at the MPA are delighted that the industry here in the UK has come together to collaborate and step up efforts to implement a regional strategy that could help reduce the impact of film theft in the UK on our film industries. We support the industry's plans to undertake projects which not only seek to enforce copyright laws but also to change opinions about copyright theft, what it means and how it impacts the industry, jobs, the economy and film industries in the UK and elsewhere"

“With an average of 120 films made in Britain per year, responsible for 11% of global film production, the UK industry is making widespread contributions to employment, tourism and exports. Despite this fusion of creativity and enterprise, the sector is still facing a determined attack from various forms of film theft. The UK Film Council Board is pleased that the different sectors of the UK film and video industries have come together with a considered response to this problem and are dedicating further resources to tackling the problem. I believe that it is fitting that this country, a world leader in providing feature film programming should be spearheading the implementation of the latest anti-film theft policies and measures; ranging from education, public outreach and enforcement.” said Stewart Till, Chairman of the UK Film Council