

The Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT) has evidenced the way in which organised criminal networks have made film piracy a crime type of choice

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**T**he Serious Organised Crime Agency's 2006/7 UK Threat Assessment lists film piracy as one of the biggest growth areas for criminals and a recent industry survey estimated the criminal gain in 2005 alone was £278 million – over a quarter of the total market for counterfeit goods. The traditional perceptions of film piracy no longer hold true, as organised criminals have adopted it as a crime type of choice. The associated harm and negative social impact this is bringing to communities across the UK is now appreciated within law enforcement and eroding the traditional view that this is a victimless crime.

FACT was established in 1983 to protect the film industry from theft and illegal copying and the organisation has undergone a transformation over the past two years as it has come to terms with the changing nature of piracy in the UK. Key to this was adopting the methods of law enforcement and the National Intelligence Model.

In addition to a sizeable increase in staffing and resourcing in key areas, the establishment of an Analytical Unit was seen as a crucial step. The Unit uses law enforcement compatible software (i2) to identify the criminal networks and principal individuals, with a new emphasis on the criminal

networks sustaining film piracy.

"The landscape of film piracy is constantly moving and FACT now has the capacity to communicate and collaborate with law enforcement to ensure that film piracy is regarded as a crime type of significance," adds Raymond Leinster, FACT Director General. "The vast majority of pirate DVDs are now produced within the United Kingdom, with raids on three major illegal 'factories' alone showing 'profits' of over £9 million a month for the criminal organisations running them. This is a highly lucrative crime."

He adds, "Key to our ongoing strategies is the core issue of the abuse of commodity for financial gain and we are grateful for the support of the Assets Recovery Agency and its recognition of the substantial illicit gains being made by those using film piracy to fund affluent criminal lifestyles."

**FACT is now best placed to be a valuable partner in the investigation and prosecution of film piracy**



Further evidence of this commitment by FACT and the film industry to address the serious nature of the problem led to the establishment of the Film Piracy Unit within the Metropolitan Police Service. Funded by FACT, this Unit comprises a highly experienced team of accredited financial investigators who are targeting the criminal networks and individuals making substantial criminal profits from the manufacture and supply of pirate film material."

As the primary motivation for those involved in film piracy is the attainment of easy and risk-free profit, it is a strategic imperative that effective remedies are targeted at the criminal gain to act as a deterrent measure.

FACT has also recently produced a Police Guide to Film Piracy Offences in notebook form which provides officers with a quick means of identifying the legislation and procedures when dealing with film piracy offences. The Guides have been distributed across English, Welsh and Scottish Police Services and have been very well received as a valuable additional resource.

**FACT continually gathers evidence to prove that film piracy is linked to other criminal activities, from benefit fraud to violence, to show that it is a crime type of significance across the whole of the UK. Film piracy is also increasingly linked to organised criminal networks. These Case Studies are detailed on FACT's website and are updated regularly.**

Film piracy is endemic throughout the UK and there is now an increased realisation across all sectors of law enforcement that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. FACT is now best placed to be a valuable partner in the investigation and prosecution of film piracy and the creation of an effective deterrent to film piracy in the UK. ■

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