



PRESS RELEASE

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PROLIFIC EBAY PIRATE JAILED FOR 6 MONTHS

Yesterday at Bradford Crown Court a prolific DVD pirate was jailed for 6 months. Peter Spencer, 39, of Oakhall Park, Bradford had been trading on eBay since 2002 selling counterfeit DVDs and making over £39,000 in less than two years from his illegal activities. In just one day in January 2004 Spencer had over 950 pirate DVDs listed for sale on eBay.

Spencer pleaded Guilty to the importation and distribution of counterfeit DVDs. The discs had been produced in pirate DVD plants in the Far East and had their region coding removed so that they would play in any DVD player worldwide.¹ Pirate copies offered for sale included major titles such as Lord Of The Rings, Kill Bill, School Of Rock, Peter Pan and Matrix Revolutions.

FACT's investigation started in 2002 when its Internet Investigations Team detected the pirate DVDs on sale on eBay. A large number of items were removed from eBay but Spencer then relisted them using other usernames. He is believed to have used over 500 identities to trade on eBay over a two year period.

Sentencing Spencer, Recorder Poots said:

"I accept that your personal circumstances are very substantial mitigation. However, offences of this kind are viewed extremely seriously. This was not at the lowest end of this type of case. It was a substantial operation operating over a long period of time. This case crossed the custody threshold and whilst I take into account what has been said on your behalf, custody is inevitable." She added: *"There is an element of deterrent in the sentence."*

Raymond Leinster, FACT Director General said:

"We are pleased that this prolific pirate DVD trader has been awarded a term of imprisonment and that the Court has recognised that film piracy is a crime of significance. I would also like to thank West Yorkshire Police for their assistance in bringing Mr Spencer to justice. The sale of pirate DVDs online is a growing problem but FACT polices auction websites and other internet sites to ensure that those making substantial criminal gain from such activities can and will be traced and prosecuted. Additionally, Spencer also received a large number of complaints from people who had sent him payment for discs that they allegedly never received. I would remind members of the public that they should exercise caution when buying DVDs and other film product from sites such as eBay to ensure that they are not purchasing pirate copies."

Additionally a forfeiture order was granted for the computers and other associated equipment used for the pirate operation.

Confiscation proceedings are pending.

- Ends

¹ When the DVD player was first introduced, the players themselves would only play a DVD for the region it was intended for. Players sold in the UK would only play region 2 DVDs. Players sold in the USA and Canada would only play a region 1 discs. There are now, however, many models available that will play all regions, so you are able to view product from around the globe.