Obama backs Silicon Valley by Annamawrick

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As the US Congress debates two laws that aim to deal with the problem of online piracy, comments from Barack Obama seem to suggest that he backs the opinion of the technology companies over the concerns of media organizations.

While Congress is considering the Stop Online Piracy Act and the Protect Intellectual Property Act, both of which would make internet companies responsible if their sites provided links to sites offering illegal downloads, a blog post from the White House appeared to be backing the stance taken by technology firms such as Google and Facebook. They claim that any attempt to control the content of internet sites by government legislation amount to censorship and would prevent the billion-dollar computer industry from developing new innovations.

Unsurprisingly, the world's biggest media organizations have hit back at the Obama comments, with Rupert Murdoch, the owner of FOX News, ironically using his newly-opened Twitter account to criticize the comments. In his angry post, Murdoch accused the White House of being bullied by Google lobbyists into protecting those sites that engage in and promote illegal downloads, costing the movie and music industry millions of dollars every year.

Meanwhile, a UK student who maintained a website which provided links to sites offering downloads has lost his battle to avoid being extradited to the US to face charges. The family of Richard O'Dwyer, who set up the TVShack site while he was still a teenager at High School, are angry that while the UK police have decided that he has not actually committed a criminal offence, the US authorities are demanding that he faces charges in the US, despite never having set foot here.

O'Dwyer maintains that he was not profiting directly from piracy, which would need to have happened in order for him to have committed a criminal offence, as he only collected links on the TVShack site which allowed others to go to other websites and download movies and TV programs. However, the university student was making around Â£15,000 ($23,000) a year from the site through advertising revenue and this is why the US courts believe he can be charged with a crime.

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