

For Immediate Release

Canadian Library Association Disappointed with New Copyright Legislation

(Ottawa, June 12, 2008) – Today, the Canadian Library Association (CLA) expressed disappointment with the government's newly announced copyright legislation, Bill C-61.

Bill C-61 is a missed opportunity and demonstrates that the government did not consult adequately with the user community, and did not listen to the concerns of Canadians. Overall, the Bill is extremely complex and will need more detailed study, but there are many glaring problems. Fundamentally, the Bill circumvents user rights.

One example is the missed opportunity on perceptual disabilities, where the Bill allows users to circumvent digital rights management (DRM) software, but does not allow them to import the technology to do so.

Another example is desktop delivery of interlibrary loan. Bill C-61 ignores the fact that the 2004 CCH Supreme Court Judgment already allows Canadian libraries to do desktop delivery of interlibrary loan. The provisions in Bill C-61 require libraries to lock up interlibrary loan with DRM, something that most libraries would not have the resources to accomplish. This would force many libraries back to delivering interlibrary loan via paper copies.

There is also a clear problem with criminalizing the circumvention of DRM. For a teenager, the criminal risk involved in shoplifting a CD would be safer rather than circumventing DRM on a CD they purchased to put it on their iPod. "Bill C-61 attempts to provide balance, but misses the boat for ordinary Canadians and over 21 million library users," stated Rob Tiessen, Chair of the CLA Copyright Committee.

The Canadian Library Association (CLA) is Canada's largest national and broad-based library association, representing the interests of public, academic, school and special libraries, professional librarians and library workers, and all those concerned about enhancing the quality of life of Canadians through information and literacy.

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