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Open source group: copyright bill will hurt innovators

Canadian Software Innovation Alliance comes out against Bill C-61

Ottawa, June 16, 2008

The Canadian Software Innovation Alliance (CSIA), a coalition of Canadian open source businesses and supporters, worries that Bill C-61, An Act to Amend the Copyright Act, introduced by the Conservative government on June 12, threatens the open source business model.

“The law should target bad behaviour, not neutral technologies,” says CSIA member Russell McOrmond of Flora Community Consulting. “The bill rejects virtually every recommendation of the CSIA’s December 2007 White Paper, ‘Software Innovation, Copyright and the Dangers of Anti-Circumvention Legislation.’ That White Paper called for a moderate approach to digital copyright that respects the interests of open source developers. The open source model depends on freedom of access, and C-61 eliminates that freedom.”

“The proposed legislation’s ‘anti-circumvention’ provisions propose to make illegal a range of legitimate computer software tools and techniques just because they might be used to bypass the digital locks,” states Bob Young, CEO of Lulu.com and co-founder and former CEO of Red Hat Inc., and a CSIA member. “It is very similar to banning screwdrivers and pliers just because they can be used to commit crimes such as burglary. Bill C-61 will make it harder for technology innovators to do business in Canada.”

- 30 -

About the Canadian Software Innovation Alliance

The Canadian Software Innovation Alliance (CSIA) is a coalition of businesses and professionals that develop, maintain and depend on open source software. The CSIA advocates public policy and law reforms that will foster innovation and fair competition in the Canadian software industry, promote Canada’s competitiveness internationally, and uphold the rights of Canadian software users.

The CSIA’s website, which includes a White Paper outlining their position on copyright policy, can be found at www.softwareinnovation.ca.

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