

For Immediate Release

## **Open Source Group Weighs in on Copyright**

Canadian Software Innovation Alliance highlights need for careful copyright reform

Ottawa, June 3, 2008

A new coalition of Canadian software businesses and supporters is concerned about how reforms to Canadian copyright laws might affect the open source business model. The Canadian Software Innovation Alliance (CSIA) represents over 20 businesses that specialize in open source software. In response to rumors of a new copyright bill set to hit the House of Commons before the summer recess, the CSIA today announced the public release of their White Paper. The CSIA has provided the White Paper to Industry Minister Jim Prentice and Heritage Minister Josée Verner in an open letter jointly addressed to the two Ministers.

The CSIA is particularly concerned about potential changes to copyright law, such as making it illegal to tamper with technological protection measures (TPMs), the 'digital locks' - when it is the intentional theft of copyrighted material that should be illegal. In everyday language the proposed legislation is similar to making the use and ownership of screw-drivers and pliers illegal because they can be used to commit crimes such as burglary. Similar laws in other countries, such as the *Digital Millennium Copyright Act* in the United States, have caused problems for consumers and businesses alike. "[T]he history of these laws in other countries demonstrates that they are ineffective at protecting content and pose a barrier to competition and innovation," says Bob Young, CSIA member. Mr. Young is CEO of Lulu.com, and a founder and former CEO and director of Red Hat, Inc. "The effect of these laws is to prevent legitimate use by law-abiding businesses and citizens."

Open source software is an alternative to the conventional software business model in which developers freely distribute the source code to their creations. This allows others to freely use, examine, modify and distribute the software. Open source software is used by over half (52.7%) of public institutions and over a third (37.3%) of large businesses in Canada, as well as powering the majority of the world's internet servers. Open source consumer software includes freely available products such as the Firefox web browser, the OpenOffice productivity suite, and the Linux operating system.

## **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. 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.

CSIA's website, which includes both the letter to the Ministers and the whitepaper, can be found at [www.softwareinnovation.ca](http://www.softwareinnovation.ca).

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To review the Canadian Software Innovation Alliance White Paper, see:  
<http://www.softwareinnovation.ca/index.php/csia-white-paper/>

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