

Protection management, copy control

By *srlinuxx*

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"This week, in Dublin, the Digital Video Broadcasting Project held its annual meeting to discuss progress on its latest set of specifications for digital television. Much of its work has to do with technical details such as codecs and data formats, but a key section called Content Protection/Copy Management (CPCM) is about controlling how high-definition digital broadcasts may be recorded, copied, or redistributed.

Since the DVB's standards are typically adopted by broadcasters worldwide, how they finally design CPCM is likely to dictate whether you, in your home, will be able to record, pause, rewatch, store, or copy not just TV programs but tomorrow's high-definition DVDs and other commercial content.

You get the strong impression that most of the pressure for CPCM is coming from rightsholders ? folks like the MPAA, Disney, and the Home Box Office, all of whom were here. It was a week of culture clashes. My favorite was when one of the Disney people asked two Flemish public TV broadcasters whether having their content redistributed online wasn't a problem for them. Most surreal was the man from the MPAA talking about "social justice" with respect to pay TV subscriptions."

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