

Informed Users and the DRM Marketplace



David Sohn

CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY & TECHNOLOGY

Overall Theme

- ▣ The kinds of uses that private sector DRM enables/permits will depend largely on what kind of pressure is exerted in the marketplace.
- ▣ If the public is well informed about DRM, it can exert pressure on DRM developers for more choices and more flexibility.

Assumptions

- ▣ Like it or not, DRM is not going away any time soon.
- ▣ The form that DRM takes matters; different DRM technologies can result in different capabilities for users.
- ▣ The form that DRM takes will be determined in the market, not by government.

Key Factors for Comparing Different DRM

- ❑ Public discussion about the specifics of different DRM technologies
- ❑ Key role for product reviewers, technology analysts, consumer advocates

Key Factors for Comparing Different DRM

▣ Transparency / Disclosure

- ▣ Initial (pre-purchase)
- ▣ Ongoing -- usage status reports, DRM renewals/upgrades/revocations

Key Factors for Comparing Different DRM

- ▣ Information about usage parameters of different DRM
 - ▣ Personal uses -- e.g., time shifting, place shifting, backup/archival copies, lending/reselling
 - ▣ Interoperability
 - ▣ Accommodating end user creativity
 - ▣ Risk of unexpected loss of access

Key Factors for Comparing Different DRM

- ▣ Collateral Impact -- separate from effect on DRM-protected content
 - ▣ Privacy
 - ▣ Computer security
 - ▣ Other impact on devices

Other Factors

▣ Apparent Purpose of DRM

- ▣ Seem reasonably necessary for facilitating new business model?
- ▣ Or consumer lock-in?

▣ Comparison with Non-DRM Scenario

- ▣ Compare capabilities to what law-abiding citizen could do with networked computer and open-format media
- ▣ Shows technical tradeoffs/choices