Taking a Stab in the Dark

Jan. 21 2012 | 10 comments | Posted by Monica Tackitt

With the online blackout just a few days behind us, it is safe to say the opposition of SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) and PIPA (Protect IP Act) has been gaining monumental support. As heavyweights like Google, Wikipedia, and Craigslist continue to voice their opinions and taking strong stands participating in such protest. Companys are virtually taking a stab in the dark, in attempts to reach their millions of faithful users to voice their disapproval and contact their local representatives. Now, for those not familiar with SOPA/PIPA, they are bills proposed to expand the ability of U.S. law enforcement to combat online trafficking in copyrighted intellectual property and counterfeit goods; thus allowing the US government and copyright holders the ability to censor or block such material, which could levy litigation.

First things first:

Just the thought of threatening our freedom of speech and prohibiting users from the right to create, discuss, read, watch, link and share information with others seems unheard of, but is exactly what SOPA/PIPA passing into legislation will do. Although, we can take a sigh of relief, (at least for now) as SOPA/PIPA have been put on the back burner; thanks to the websites who participated in the blackout and over 4 million signatures attached to a petition against the anti-piracy legislation. The war in cyber space is not over. The bills supporters hope to gain momentum when there is more widespread support. Boiling down to, some sort of backlash if they don't decide to completely pull the plug on this mother of all cyber-smack-downs.

What it means for you:

At Instra we provide domain name services to our clients. Our clients use our services to establish their own websites, with content that is searchable through the internet. SOPA/PIPA would be that creepy relative looming in the background, watching your every move; subjecting your website to censors, filters, and even blocking your site entirely! Now what kind of hosting provider would we be leaving our clients uninformed?

Believe or not some people looking at SOPA/PIPA at face value might agree, it is a good way to combat foreign piracy acts and prohibit international companies from capitalizing on counterfeit goods. The flip side to this argument is that not only do they want to eliminate copyright infringement but target user-content sites like youtube, and search engines like Google,

which direct traffic to your site— forcing these servers to completely block such links and videos. End result? To hinder one's ability when using the internet. Not only is it a form of censorship across the board, it's a direct conflict to what the internet is suppose to provide, which is information transmitted and accessible through the "world wide web".

The Aftermath:

What we know now is the looming threat of censorship and blackouts like the one that took place Jan.18, 2012 can become a common occurrence. Even though supporters of such legislation might not see the damaging effect it can have on users, online shoppers, browsers, or social networking, as a whole— maybe they should point and click their mouse's to this site, a full list of blackout participants.

Can you imagine a place without sites like Facebook or youtube? Visualizing the implications that such legislation purposes, to make the "world" wide web a better place is unimaginable. Those sites contribute to our internet experience, and prohibiting such content is just one of the many ways you can see why SOPA/PIPA would do more harm than good. The advantages of these influential sites are the backbone of the web, quintessential to what a society thrives on, technology's innovative potential, providing a platform that reaches billions of users across the globe!

Missing Link:

Now that were all up to speed, who else feels like this SOPA/PIPA thing is just another way for the government to monitor, track and outright control what goes on in cyberspace. Specifically, targeting consumers, their websites, and our overall ability to connect users globally, to accessible information via the web. Better yet, the next time you hit that search button, click a link, or pull up a chair to watch a streaming video of those monkeys behaving badly, hold on to your purse strings—'cause it could cost you!