

Popular File-Sharing Website Megaupload Shut Down Indefinitely

Friday, January 20, 2012 | MATTHEW BARAKAT, Associated Press

McLEAN, VA. — One of the world's most popular file-sharing sites was shuttered Thursday, and its founder



and several company officials were arrested of facilitating millions of illegal downloads of films, music and other content. An indictment accused Megaupload.com of costing copyright holders at least \$500 million in lost revenue. The indictment was unsealed one day after websites including Wikipedia and Craigslist shut down in protest of two congressional proposals intended to make it easier for authorities to go after websites with pirated material, especially those with overseas headquarters and servers.

Megaupload is based in Hong Kong, but some of the alleged pirated content was hosted on leased servers in Ashburn, Va.,

which gave federal authorities jurisdiction, the indictment said. Before Megaupload was taken down, it posted a statement saying allegations that it facilitated massive breaches of copyright laws were "grotesquely overblown." Megaupload was unique not only because of its massive size and the volume of downloaded content, but also because it had high-profile support from celebrities, musicians and other content producers who are most often the victims of copyright infringement and piracy. Before the website was taken down, it contained endorsements from Kim Kardashian, Alicia Keys and Kanye West, among others. The company listed Swizz Beatz, a musician who married Keys in 2010, as its CEO. According to the indictment, Megaupload was estimated at one point to be the 13th most frequently visited website on the Internet. Current estimates by companies that monitor Web traffic place it in the top 100.

The five-count indictment, which alleges copyright infringement as well as conspiracy to commit money laundering and racketeering, described a site designed specifically to reward users who uploaded pirated content for sharing, and turned a blind eye to requests from copyright holders to remove copyright-protected files. Users received cash bonuses if they uploaded content popular enough to generate massive numbers of downloads, according to the indictment. Such content was almost always copyright protected. The site boasted 150 million registered users and about 50 million hits daily. The Justice Department said it was illegal for anyone to download pirated content, but their investigation focused on the leaders of the company, not end users who may have downloaded a few movies for personal viewing.

Megaupload is considered a "cyberlocker," in which users can upload and transfer files that are too large to send by email. Such sites can have perfectly legitimate uses. But the Motion Picture Association of America, which has campaigned for a crackdown on piracy, estimated that the vast majority of content being shared on Megaupload was in violation of copyright laws. T. Shelton, a copyright lawyer at the Cozen O'Connor firm in New York, said opponents of the legislation are worried the proposals lessen the burden for the government to target a wide variety of websites.

1. In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the pros and cons of the Justice Department authorities pursuing charges against owners and ultimately seizing control of Internet websites. Thoroughly explain your reasoning and provide specific artifacts and evidence not limited solely to passage above to support your response. Create and illustrate a Venn Diagram to effectively explore relationships and patterns and to make arguments about relationships between sets. **(LA.910.3.2.2; LA.910.1.6.2; MA.912.D.7.2; MA.912.A.10.1)**
2. Define a variable and write an algebraic expression representing two unique phrases from the passage above. In addition, write an algebraic equation to model two situations above. **(MA.912.A.10.1; MA.912.A.2.13; MA.912.A.3.5)**
3. Identify, apply, and model the distributive, associative, and communicative properties of real numbers based upon the passage above. **(MA.912.A.2.13; MA.912.A.3.2; MA.912.A.10.1)**
4. Write an equation to model a situation as described in the passage above. Solve each equation. Check your answer and justify each step via explaining the property adjacent to each step. **(MA.912.A.10.1; MA.912.A.2.13; MA.912.A.3.5)**
5. Megaupload Headquarters are located approximately 8,136 miles from their servers leased out of Ashburn, VA. Taiwan is located on the eastern route about 1/5 of the total distance whereas the Pacific Ocean represents a majority of the commute. Draw a sketch to represent this situation. Find each segment length and tell whether they are congruent. Label the locations appropriately and determine the distance between Taiwan and Ashburn, VA. Is the solution reasonable in the context of the original situation? **(MA.912.G.8.2; MA.912.G.8.3; MA.912.G.1.1)**
6. Using contextual clues only, define the following italicized words: *facilitating*, *indictment*, *grotesquely*, and *infringement* as obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to demonstrate further comprehension. **(LA.910.1.6.3; LA.910.1.6.1)**
7. **SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY WORD-OF-THE-WEEK** Create a concluding paragraph aligned with the passage above using the following italicized word: *imperious* (*adj.*) Commanding or domineering. **(LA.910.1.6.1; LA.910.1.6.5)**

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards adapted from floridastandards.org. Standards specifically addressed in this edition are strategically aligned with state standards and annotated adjacent to the respective inquiry.

Copyright 2011. *The Daughtry Times*® Education through Integration™ All rights reserved. www.daughtrytimes.com
Contents of this document excluding the article itself, may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed in whole or part without the express written permission through a licensed agreement and is restricted to teacher-student use only.