

U.S. Moves Against Online Pirates Associated Press

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WASHINGTON -- Undercover investigations into Internet piracy identified more than 100 people in the United States and abroad involved in the theft of more than \$50 million worth of music, movies and software, U.S. authorities said Thursday.

More than 120 searches were conducted in a 24-hour period in 27 states and 10 countries in an effort to dismantle organizations known by such names as Fairlight, Kalisto, Echelon, Class, Project X and APC, officials said.

The initiative, known as Operation Fastlink, has resulted in the seizure of more than 200 computers, including 30 that served as storage and distribution hubs containing thousands of copies of pirated material. One server seized in the United States contained 65,000 separate pirated titles, authorities said.

No arrests were immediately announced.

"Intellectual property theft is a global problem that hurts economies around the world," Attorney General John Ashcroft said in a statement announcing the crackdown. "To be effective, we must respond globally."

Among the countries in which FBI searches have been conducted are Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, the Netherlands, Singapore, Sweden and Great Britain.



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