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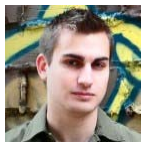
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Paul Tassi, Contributor

I cover when video games and business collide.

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The ESA Supports SOPA, and the Rest of the Industry Follows

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Yesterday it was made official that the Electronic Software Association (ESA) has [thrown their full support](#) behind SOPA, the controversial censor-the-internet-to-kill-piracy bill currently in the Senate, with its similarly minded counterpart, Protect IP, in the House.

In recent days companies like [Sony](#), [Nintendo](#) and EA have reportedly withdrawn their



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support for SOPA, under fire from angry consumers, but they are all members of the ESA, which boasts most of the biggest brands in the industry. As long as the ESA supports SOPA, that essentially means all of these brands do as well, no matter what they may be saying publicly.

The ESA gave an official statement which details their support for the bill. An excerpt is below, which will give you a general idea of their rationale.

“As an industry of innovators and creators, we understand the importance of both technological innovation and content protection, and do not believe the two are mutually exclusive. Rogue websites — those singularly devoted to profiting from their blatant illegal piracy — restrict demand for legitimate video game products and services, thereby costing jobs.”

“Our industry needs effective remedies to address this specific problem, and we support the House and Senate proposals to achieve this objective. We are mindful of concerns raised about a negative impact on innovation. We look forward to working with the House and Senate, and all interested parties, to find the right balance and define useful remedies to combat willful wrongdoers that do not impede lawful product and business model innovation.”

It's frustrating to see the ESA take this position, as they recently were championing the cause of video games by winning a landmark case in the Supreme Court that officially declared games an art form and therefore entitled them to first amendment free speech protection.

But now they're the new bad guy of the industry in tech-savvy consumers' eyes, and protest campaigns are being mounted already. Usually internet rabble rousing has little effect on giant companies or conglomerates, but protestors have had unusual success with SOPA, and a number of brands have publically distanced themselves from the bill after threats of boycotts and having their names dragged through the mud. Just ask GoDaddy how that feels.

Again, I'll point to Valve's Steam distribution service as the best way the video game industry has to deal with piracy. They embody the famous sentiment that piracy is a "service problem" and you win the war by providing a better product in a better fashion than the pirates. You don't win by censoring the internet, or handing the whole thing over to entertainment companies who can sue whomever they please into oblivion for even the most minor of violations.

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