

Sun Micro announces open-source DRM project

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Created 21/08/2005 - 10:55pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Sunday 21st of August 2005 10:55:50 PM Filed under [Sci/Tech](#) [1]

Sun Microsystems Inc., weighing in on the fractious issue of protecting copyrighted digital content, on Sunday announced a project it calls the Open Media Commons initiative aimed at creating an open-source, royalty-free digital-rights management standard.

The issue of digital-rights management, or DRM, has spurred a number of plans to protect content, ranging from standards for mobile phones, digital music players, CDs, DVDs and other media, available from InterTrust, Microsoft Corp., Apple Computer Inc., Sony Corp. and others.

Sun is now throwing its hat in the ring, and Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Schwartz argues that the growing number of rival DRM standards that are incompatible with one another could stifle innovation and economic growth.

To lay the foundation for the Open Media Common initiative, Sun will immediately share its internal Sun Labs program Project DReaM, what it calls "DRM/everywhere available."

The recording industry and a number of partners identified the incompatibility issue about a year and a half ago, but still were not close to finding a solution, because of a lack of coordination among technology companies.

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