

Largest-Ever Haul Of Game Copying Devices Seized In UK

Camden business raid reveals the largest-ever seizure of illegal game copying devices yet

Monday 2nd February 2009/... Business premises in Camden were raided last week, resulting in the largest ever seizure of illegal game copying devices in the UK. The company, which cannot yet be named for legal reasons, continued its illegal trade online, despite receiving seizure notices from HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs).

The raid was carried out on Thursday 29 January by officers of Camden Trading Standards, accompanied by the Metropolitan Police and an investigator from ELSPA (the Entertainment & Leisure Software Publishers Association). The raid resulted in the discovery of more than 50,000 illegal game copying devices, along with counterfeit games console peripherals for the Nintendo Wii™, Xbox 360 and PlayStation®3. The seized items have now been sent for forensic examination by ELSPA.

Investigators had exposed a fully operational production line. Mail sacks were filled with packages containing illegal game copying devices awaiting despatch to customers across Europe. The company continued to trade despite seizure notices issued by HMRC detailing the copyright and trade mark infringements for each consignment seized over the last year.

Prior to the raid, several covert test purchases were made from the company's website by ELSPA investigators as part of their ongoing activity against IP theft.

The business is believed to have imported more than 38,000 illegal game copying devices, some 32,000 of them imported since December 2008.

Michael Rawlinson, Managing Director of ELSPA, said today: "Our investigators are out in force working with Trading Standards Departments across the UK, combing everything from Sunday car-boot sales to auction websites in search of counterfeiters. The devices found in Camden are highly illegal and offenders caught trading such items face criminal prosecution. ELSPA would like to thank Camden's Trading Standards department and all other attending authorities for their efforts in stamping out this criminal activity which ultimately threatens thousands of jobs in the country's games industry."



Ends.

EDITORS NOTES

About ELSPA - <http://www.elspa.com>

ELSPA (The Entertainment & Leisure Software Publishers Association) was founded in 1989 to establish a specific and collective identity for the computer and video games industry. Membership includes almost all companies concerned with the publishing and distribution of interactive leisure software in the UK.

ELSPA's activities include: Official Chart and Industry Reports, Anti-Piracy UK and EU, PR and Communication, Events. More information on all these activities can be found at <http://www.elspa.com>.

ELSPA's IPCU (Intellectual Property Crime Unit) includes a team of investigators around the country. Software Piracy has a negative impact on both consumers and industry. ELSPA estimates criminal gain through computer and video games piracy sits at approximately £600 million. Piracy/counterfeiting is illegal and punishable by fines and jail sentences. The illegal copying of software poses the very real threat of criminal prosecution and a criminal record, as well as the risk of massive personal financial loss under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Consumers have no recourse under law for faulty pirated games, which can damage hardware. Local and national jobs are lost as result of pirate operations.

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