

# Copyright laws discussed at Chamber of Commerce lunch

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Canadians who currently use a personal video recorder (PVR) to record their television shows are breaking the law.

Chris Gray, director of the Canadian Intellectual Property Council and Innovation Policy (an umbrella organization under the Canadian Chamber of Commerce), says that is one of many ridiculously outdated laws that needs to change.



Gray

Gray was the guest speaker at a lunch-and-learn event organized by the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday.

"PVRs are actually illegal right now. It's technically illegal under Canada's copyright act," Gray said in an interview with The Guardian.

Gray expects that to change if and when Bill C-32 passes in the House of Commons. Bill C-32 aims to update and modernize the copyright act, which hasn't been upgraded in 25 years.

Gray's talk to the local chamber centered on what the Canadian arm of the organization has been doing on intellectual property rights, policy and how it is trying to move the ball forward for its members.

He also hit on problems with counterfeiting and piracy and how prevalent it is in Canada.

"A lot of people think it's just luxury goods but it goes far broader than that."

He also focused on small- and medium-sized businesses, often the driving force behind innovation. Their innovative and creative capacity, however, is not always fully exploited, as many small- and medium-sized businesses are not aware of the intellectual property system or the protection it can provide for their inventions, brands and designs.

"It is sometimes a difficult concept to grasp so we're trying to boil it down. It's important to big business but it is equally, if not more important, to small businesses that they protect their trademarks and patents right from the get-go."

In terms of counterfeiting, the lack of legislation (called ex-officio authority) prevents border agents from so much as stopping coun-

terfeit goods from crossing into Canada.

"What they do is they close it up and send it on its way which is something that is very remarkable right now."

Gray said the Canadian Chamber of Commerce estimates counterfeit goods in Canada is estimated to be about a \$30-billion problem annually to the economy.

"Everyone thinks of counterfeit goods as luxury goods (such as Louis Vuitton purses, music and movies. It goes far broader than that. It's brake parts in cars, it's parts on airplanes, it's counterfeit medicine that has killed people in Canada and around the world.

"A couple of years ago there was a brand-name toothpaste that was found in dollar stores that was found to have bad things in it so this is something we really need to focus on."

Before the federal election Monday night, only the NDP promised to bring in anti-counterfeit legislation, Gray said, while the Liberals and Conservatives both hinted at it.

"It's silly that it hasn't happened yet. To me, it falls well within the Conservative government's law and order (campaign)."