IFACT-GC

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION AGAINST COPYRIGHT THEFT – GREATER CHINA

For Immediate Release
June 15, 2009

HONG KONG CUSTOMS TAKES DOWN UNDERGROUND PIRATE TOPSITE

Two Key Members of Release Group Arrested and Four Servers Totalling 11.6 Terabytes Capacity Seized

Hong Kong – On June 9, officers from the Anti Internet Piracy Teams of Hong Kong Customs & Excise Department (HKC&ED) raided two residential addresses and confiscated the FTP servers of a major Hong Kong based underground pirate topsite. The raid also seized another FTP server belonging to a prominent pirate release group associated with the topsite. The names and other identifying particulars of the site and release group are being withheld as investigations remain ongoing.

Two men aged 23 and 35 were arrested and are under investigation for criminal copyright offences. Three high speed servers and one computer were seized, totalling 11.6 terabytes in size used to store and distribute thousands of movies, music titles, TV shows, computer and console games. The topsite servers were housed in one of the suspect's residence, and both suspects are core members of the associated pirate release group. The associated pirate release group is well-known amongst the Greater China underground Internet communities as one of the more prolific and active groups, particularly for their releases which come with Chinese subtitles.

The topsite was used by several release groups to leak pirated content onto the Internet including copyrighted content belonging to MPA member companies, HD TV series, Japanese animation titles, Bollywood movies, movies from China and Hong Kong and content from a wide range of other rights owners including Discovery, BBC, MTV and Xbox, PS2, PS3, NDS, and Wii games.

Forensic investigations are ongoing but investigations to date have revealed that the topsite contained titles infringing the Motion Picture Association (MPA) member companies copyright including *"12 Rounds"*, *"Dragonball Evolution"*, *"Fired Up!"* and *"Star Trek"* as well as popular TV series *"Lost"* and *"Prison Break"*. Infringing copies of the popular "Gundam Series" title belonging to a member of Content of Japan Mark Committee (CJ Mark) were also found in the FTP server of the pirate release group.

The raids were the culmination of an intensive investigation operation initiated in March 2009 by the International Federation Against Copyright Theft – Greater China (IFACT-GC) representing the MPA and the CJ Mark of Content Overseas Distributors Association (CODA) in Hong Kong. IFACT-GC staff worked closely with the HKC&ED during the

investigation phase of the operation and will provide logistic support to ongoing investigations and any resultant criminal proceedings.

“This is a groundbreaking operation by the HKC&ED’s Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau, being the first criminal operation against both an underground pirate topsite and a popular pirate release group with physical infrastructure in the Asia Pacific region,” said IFACT-GC Executive Director and General Manager Sam Ho. “The range of content they have infringed and their role as the initial source of pirated content for the filesharing community underscore the damage topsites wreck on rights owners’ and associated distribution and service industries. We also thank HKC&ED for taking action against the pirate release group thereby countering the distribution of pirated content targeted at Chinese Internet users.”

Topsites represent the pinnacle of the filesharing piracy food chain and are made up of high speed FTP servers used by release groups to store, trade and distribute illegal content. Boasting high storage capacity (1TB equals approx. 250 movies), topsites are where most pirated content first make their way on to the Internet. Piracy release groups are responsible for the video ripping, converting, subtitling of movies and TV shows. Subtitling facilitates distribution to different language markets and increases the popularity and proliferation of the pirated titles.

# # #

About the IFACT-GC: The International Federation Against Copyright Theft – Greater China was established in 2006 by the Motion Picture Association to protect the film industry in the Greater China region from the adverse impact of copyright theft. IFACT-GC works closely with its supporters, government and enforcement authorities to protect the Greater China film and television industry, retailers and movie fans. For more information about the IFACT-GC, please visit www.ifact-gc.org.

For more information, contact:

Karri Ho
IFACT-GC
852-2785-0363