

[PlanetLab-PIs] Re: potential copyright infringement

Larry Peterson [llp at CS.Princeton.EDU](mailto:llp@cs.princeton.edu)

Thu Jul 31 10:15:26 EDT 2008

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I want to keep everyone informed on what we've learned. A slice allocated to NTHU deployed BitTorrent and participated in the distribution of copyrighted material, including Warner Bros. "Dark Knight" movie.

As a consequence of Princeton's compliance officer being contacted, we learned of the situation and immediately suspended the slice. At this point, no additional distribution of the material was possible. We have since preserved the on-disk state for the slice on those nodes for which a complaint was officially filed. We will not release the slice, but are instead in the process of deleting all state associated with it (and hence, all potential illegal files on PlanetLab nodes).

We also contacted both the responsible users and the PI at NTHU for an explanation. Their response was that they wanted to evaluate the performance of a proposed BitTorrent cache system, and so they joined some popular BitTorrent swarms to operate under realistic conditions. While the intent appears to be motivated by research objectives, this is an experiment design that is bound to run afoul of the DMCA, and so it cannot be allowed to run on PlanetLab.

At this point, the site has been disabled, and the PI will need to appeal to the PlanetLab Consortium to have it re-enabled. I will need assurances that the appropriate oversight will be enforced in the future. Moreover, until I can be convinced that the experiment can be safely run, it will not will not be allowed back onto PlanetLab.

I consider the issue resolved. I would only add that this is a good opportunity to remind PIs that you are responsible for the behavior of your users. Please impress upon them the importance of using PlanetLab for only legitimate research purposes. If you happen to have research experiments related to BitTorrent, which can certainly be legitimate, please contact me for guidance as to how you can do such work without violating the DMCA.

Larry

On Tue, Jul 29, 2008 at 2:42 PM, Larry Peterson <[llp at cs.princeton.edu](mailto:llp@cs.princeton.edu)> wrote:

> Dear PI and Technical Contacts,

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> A potential copyright infringement claim has come to our attention. (It
> specifically involves Warner Brothers' "The Dark Knight".) Your site's
> DMCA compliance officer may also be receiving such a notice in the
> near future, and contacting you about the PlanetLab nodes you host.

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> This is to alert you that we are aware of the situation, and have suspended
> the slice in question pending further investigation. Please assure your
> local compliance officer that using PlanetLab nodes to serve copyrighted
> information is against the PlanetLab Acceptable Use Policy, and that all
> necessary steps will be taken to ensure that your nodes do not participate

> *in the distribution of such material.*
>
> *Larry*
>

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