

## Dish Network Scores Early Victory in Copyright Litigation

After filing a number of lawsuits, Dish's effort to combat the piracy of its satellite TV programming is starting to pay off.

Just days ago, the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts issued a permanent injunction and awarded Dish \$400,000 from a Massachusetts man who was intercepting its broadcasts. As the federal court explained in its order, Dish transmits its programming to satellites that then relay an encrypted signal back down to Dish's 14 million subscribers. The resulting TV shows, motion pictures, and sports broadcasts—which Dish's authorized equipment unencrypts—are all copyrighted works, whose owners have granted Dish the authority to protect from unauthorized reception and viewing. Here, the individual defendant was able to watch Dish Network for free by joining an online pirating service called DSSLegends, which offers control words to decrypt Dish's signal without having to subscribe for its service.

The court found the defendant had violated both the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and the Federal Communications Act by trafficking the control words to access and view Dish Network's programming. In doing so, the Court permanently enjoined him from the practice and awarded Dish statutory damages of \$10,000 for each of the defendant's 40 violations, resulting in a final judgment of \$400,000 plus interest and costs.

Although judgment was entered by default because the defendant failed to answer and defend the suit, Dish's 6-figure recovery should serve as a deterrent for any similar acts of copyright piracy.