



If The RIAA Wants To Talk About Misinformation Campaigns, Let's Start With The RIAA's Misinformation Campaign

[Overhype](#)

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from the *misinformation-works* dept

We already [walked through](#) the ridiculousness of RIAA boss Cary Sherman claiming that the reason SOPA/PIPA were defeated was because of a "misinformation" campaign on the part of some tech companies. Tons of folks who have followed the RIAA for years probably broke out in open laughter when we saw this statement from Sherman:

Misinformation may be a dirty trick, but it works.

Because, if anyone knows that "misinformation works," it's Cary Sherman, who is famous for his ability to run vast misinformation campaigns to get bills passed.

Thankfully, Ernest Falcon, over at Public Knowledge decided that if Sherman wanted to open the door to discussing "misinformation campaigns" concerning SOPA/PIPA, we might as well focus on the biggest one of all: [the claims by the MPAA and RIAA that DNS blocking was no big deal](#):

During the legislative hearing on SOPA, House Homeland Security Subcommittee Chairman on Cybersecurity [Rep. Dan Lungren](#) (R-CA) questioned MPAA Exec. Vice President Michael O'Leary about the cybersecurity problem. In response he received the standard misinformation campaign line of there was no cybersecurity problem and that this type of activity "occurred all the time." To bolster their misinformation campaign, the content lobby worked hard to [manufacture the "truth"](#) by highlighting the work of the very small number of individuals (a grand total of three) who wrote "technical rebuttals." These were not so much rebuttals as they were [well orchestrated advocacy pieces](#) that ignored the engineering and [distorted the studies](#) they utilized in order to [dupe Members of Congress](#) to believe the legitimate concerns were in fact unsupported.

Part of the RIAA and MPAA misinformation campaign centered on the argument that DNS filtering and secure networks (DNSSEC) could both exist in the same network. This was despite the fact that [top experts in the field](#) provided an extensive explanation why that would not be technologically possible (a couple of these individuals actually [saved the Internet](#) in the past). In the end, when Comcast (a SOPA supporter) announced they had to shut down [anything that filters DNS traffic](#) when they activated [DNSSEC](#) and the [White House Cybersecurity Coordinator](#) stated that the bills “pose a real risk to cybersecurity,” the jig was up.

Lastly, claiming that censorship concerns in regards to DNS filtering were misplaced completely ignores the fact that SOPA and PIPA moved America closer to censorship oriented regimes. If these bills were enacted into law, American broadband providers would have been required to install the same filtering technology used in China, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Armenia, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Bahrain, Burma (Myanmar), Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. This reality triggered the outpouring of opposition from the [international human rights community](#) who fight censorship overseas every day and point to the United States as the model. Summing up the well informed reasoning behind their opposition, [Julian Sanchez with the Cato Institute](#) points out that enacting SOPA and PIPA would mean the “only difference between the United States and China is what's on the blacklist.”

Part of the RIAA's favorite tactics is to pull out all the dirty tricks in the book... and any time people call them on it, to accuse the *other side* of using the dirty tricks that were really being used by the RIAA. It's a classic DC-insider move, but in this day and age, where the internet can route around lies, it's going to backfire, as it did here. All you have to do is look at the comments on the original Sherman NY Times piece, where upwards of 90% of the comments call Sherman out for his ridiculous claims. Sherman has the old playbook, the one where those who knew the truth couldn't speak back. If he had paid attention at all to what happened in the SOPA/PIPA debate he would have know that playbook doesn't work any more. But, it's all he knows. If the major labels were smart (don't laugh), they'd dump Sherman and put someone in place who actually gets the internet.