
LETTERS

Defoe lambasted 'pyratical printers'



Defoe: deplored MegaUploads of his day

From Mr Terry Jones.

Sir, In respect to "Parameters shift in online piracy battle" (January 24) it may be helpful to bear in mind an observation by Daniel Defoe writing in November 1709 of the MegaUploads of his day, the London printers of Black-Fryars who regularly reproduced a

writer's authorised work within days of its being printed by an authorised printer: "By this Practice, a Man, who has study'd several Years to perform the most elaborate Work...has his Labour destroy'd, his Expenses lost, and his copy reprinted by sham and pyratical Booksellers and Printers, who eat the Gain of the poor Man's Labour..."

It was only one year after Defoe deplored the abuse of the creative producer by the technology distributor that the English parliament adopted the "Act For The Encouragement of Learning", the first modern copyright act. Perhaps today's media companies (the Daniel Defoes of our age) can get relief from the Black-Fryar "printers" of our age – Google, Facebook and other allegedly "pyratical" technology companies – before those media companies lose all the "Gain" of their "Labour". There is a solution out there; let's find it now.

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