

## Entrepreneurs & VCs Tell The White House To Focus On Innovation, Rather Than IP Enforcement

Mike Masnick, Fri, Aug 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 11:55am

As promised, below is what I filed today with the White House in their request for comment on the upcoming "Joint Strategic Plan on Intellectual Property Enforcement." After talking it over with a number of top entrepreneurs and venture capitalists, we decided to file the comment jointly, as a group. Among those signing on to this statement are Evan Williams (Founder of Twitter), Dennis Crowley (Co-founder and CEO of Foursquare) Erik Martin (General Manager of Reddit), Alexis Ohanian (Founder of Reddit & Breadpig), Ian Rogers (CEO of TopSpin), David Ulevitch (Founder & CEO of OpenDNS), Ben Huh (CEO of Cheezburger), Drew Curtis (CEO of Fark) and many others.

The key to our filing is to point out that if the White House really wants to deal with infringement, the absolute best way to do so is to encourage and enable greater innovation. Innovation to provide new ways to create, to promote, to distribute and to monetize content has time and time again been shown to be the *only* consistently successful path to reducing infringement. Legal enforcement has *never* been shown to be a successful long-term strategy. And that's because infringement is, almost always, a situation where the business models and the services have not yet caught up to what the technology allows, and what the public would like to be able to do. Encouraging new tools and services to close this gap takes away the incentives for infringement.

Unfortunately, most of the focus to date, instead, has been on increasing the power of law enforcement, which actually is *counterproductive* in that it tends to have massive collateral damage in terms of both potential attacks on free speech, but more importantly by creating chilling effects on the very innovation that is needed to respond to widespread infringement. Similarly, we are equally worried about the nature of attempts at regulatory change (SOPA/PIPA, ACTA, TPP) developed in backrooms with little to no input from the innovation community, which will again lead to stifling of innovation.

If you have not yet filed your own comments with the White House, ***please do so today*** before they close comments (either 5pm ET or midnight ET depending on which page you believe -- so I'd assume 5pm to be safe). You just need to go to this form, where you can file a short (2,000 character) comment directly, or you can upload a longer filing if you have more to say. If you want another example beyond what we filed, also check out this detailed filing from CDT. Once all the filings are in, we'll look at highlighting a few of the more interesting ones if we get the chance next week.