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Digital Britain report empowers Ofcom to fight digital piracy  
UK Department for Culture Media and Sport

## [UK ISPs Required to Reduce Piracy by Seventy Percent](#)

*According to proposals made in the Digital Britain report*

The newly [released](#) Digital Britain report, which is to stand as basis for upcoming changes in UK's telecommunication legislation, suggests giving the Office of Communication (Ofcom) several powers to fight digital piracy. These involve imposing technical restrictions on Internet service providers that fail to cut illegal file-sharing on their network by 70% during the first year after the law comes into effect.

At the moment, ISPs are required by law to provide personal information about their customers to copyright owners who obtain a court order. According to the new proposal, upon being notified by rights-holders about users who participate in illegal file-sharing, providers will also be forced to warn their customers to stop engaging in such activities.

If these warnings do not reach their expected goal of reducing digital piracy by 70% on the network of a particular ISP during the first 12 months, Ofcom can force it to impose technical restrictions on repeated offenders. These can vary from port, protocol, URL and IP address blocking to bandwidth limiting and content filtering.

"The government considers online piracy to be a serious offence. Unlawful downloading or uploading, whether via peer-to-peer sites or other means, is effectively a civil form of theft. This is not something that we can condone, or to which we can fail to respond," the report says.

Representatives of the Music industry, who were pushing for an Internet access suspension punishment, have expressed their disappointment over the proposed measures. "Evidence shows that the government's 'write and then sue' approach won't work. And government appears to be anticipating its failure by lining up backstop powers for Ofcom to introduce technical measures later," Geoff Taylor, chief executive of the British Phonographic Industry (BPI), commented for [The Register](#).

The proposals in the report are going to be subjected to consultations with both the ISPs and the representatives of the creative industries, which have failed to reach common ground on their own until now. For example, the providers are unwilling to support the costs implied by keeping records of offenders and sending out letters. Meanwhile, the government still hopes for cooperation between the parties, which will eventually lead to the creation of a non-governmental industry body responsible with drafting codes of practice.