

# Major file-sharing bust in Europe targets P2P admins

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## Police in 14 countries today raided locations across the continent after two ...

by Nate Anderson <sup>[1]</sup> - Sept 8 2010, 2:52am AUEST

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Sweden's Frederick Ingblad is a specialized intellectual property prosecutor, and this morning he made a very specialized announcement <sup>[2]</sup>: at the request of Belgian authorities, Ingblad and Swedish police had just made a series of coordinated raids on ISPs and universities. Their target: "The Scene."

For two years, Belgium has been looking into the online operations that obtain, crack, and distribute software, games, and media, operations collectively referred to as The Scene. Ingblad targeted several ISPs, Umeå University, and sites in Malmo and Eslöv. The ISP raids were to gain information on particular IP addresses (Sweden has a recent law requiring ISPs to retain more information on their users for just such cases), but some of the other raids were actually made to scoop up individuals. Four people have been detained, along with servers and personal computers.

PRQ was one of the targeted ISPs. "At 9:00 this morning, five policemen were here," PRQ's Mikael Viberg told the file-sharing news site Torrentfreak <sup>[3]</sup>. "They were interested in who were using two IP addresses from 2009 and onwards. We have no records of our clients but we're handing over the e-mail addresses for those behind the IPs. However, it's rare that our clients have mail addresses that are traceable."

The new investigation goes beyond the "Whac-A-Mole" approach to online infringement, in which the authorities hammer one site only to see content migrate immediately elsewhere. In this case, the idea is more like rounding up all the top mole agitators at once.

Beyond Ingblad and his work in Sweden, 14 other countries were involved, including Norway, the UK, Germany, and Italy. Movies were a special focus of the investigation, which is attempting to cripple all the key "top sites" and the administrators that compete to obtain and

distribute the newest cinematic fare, much of it appearing even before its official theatrical release. The targets, in other words, don't appear to be mere distributors and trackers, but those that supply the initial content—a relatively small number of people and sites.

Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten* <sup>[4]</sup> says that one Norwegian man was taken into custody after the Belgians provided an IP address that was eventually traced to an address in Rogaland (southwest Norway). The man allegedly participated in The Scene through a IRC (Internet Relay Chat) network and apparently served up his material from a fiber connection to his home. A criminal case looks likely to follow.

Sweden's Pirate Party, which is facing elections in the next two weeks, was "highly critical" of the raids and blasted the decision <sup>[5]</sup> to "criminalize an entire generation." PRQ also hosts some Wikileaks servers, and the Pirate Party was hugely critical of the "American pressure" to shut down that site. Prosecutor Ingblad confirmed today, however, that Wikileaks was not targeted in the crackdown.

While the current strategy targets movies and involved Belgian investigators infiltrating the release networks, the music industry has shifted a similar model. Rather than suing individuals, going after the major distribution channels has become the preferred legal strategy. Last month, music's international trade group was boasting about a record-setting bust in Bulgaria, a country where the piracy rate is "almost 100 percent," and which shut down four sites and secured "servers containing more than 120 terabytes of unlicensed content, the equivalent of more than 200,000 CD-Rs."

1. <http://arstechnica.com/author/nate-anderson/>
2. <http://www.aklagare.se/Media/Nyheter/Tillslag-mot-fildelningsnatverk1/>
3. <http://torrentfreak.com/police-in-file-sharing-raids-across-europe-wikileaks-host-targeted-100907/>
4. <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article3800935.ece>
5. <http://press.piratpartiet.se/2010/09/07/piratpartiet-kritiserar-pagaende-polisrazzia/>