The Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) is a proposed bill that has had the online world torn for almost a year. If passed, this act, proposed by Lamar Smith, would allow the United States government to shut down any websites that endorse copyrighted material. Online piracy is a problem in some cases, and this proposed act attempts to eradicate piracy completely and if passed, would most likely succeed. However, SOPA goes about the problem in a ridiculously over-the-top fashion. Under this act, if a website, such as YouTube, Wikipedia, Google, and Reddit were to upload any form of copyrighted material onto their websites, the government would have permission to issue a court order which could shut the websites down. Also, under this act, any person that illegally uploads copyrighted content could face up to 5 years in prison. The hacker group Anonymous, a very well-known opponent of this act advocates for “anti-cyber-surveillance” and “anti-cyber-censorship”. Since this group is very illegal, they hack whomever they please in order to make a point. Anonymous hacks into government and personal information of people they dislike and broadcasts their information on forums and message boards all over the internet. This effectively raises awareness of the downsides of SOPA, that it will do much more harm than good if put into effect. Piracy is currently illegal the same way that theft of actual objects is, but the proposed methods of curing piracy under SOPA are both excessive and outrageous.

The Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) is a proposed bill that has had the online world torn for almost a year. If passed, this act, proposed by Lamar Smith, would allow the United States government to shut down any websites that allow stolen or pirated material to be broadcasted on their websites. It is illegal to download a song or movie off the internet without permission from the creator, the same way it is illegal to steal a CD or a DVD from a video store, but there are far fewer actions being taken to stop online piracy than there should be. As of right now there is no online police force to put a stop to illegally downloading music, movies, and other online content. However, under SOPA, the government would be allowed to take action against the websites that endorse these acts. Under the current laws, it is essentially impossible to stop individual people from illegally downloading content. But under SOPA, the websites that endorse these acts, such as YouTube and Wikipedia, would be forced to investigate the content they upload in order to check for legitimacy, thus turning the sites themselves into quality controllers. One big proponent to SOPA is the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). Music has the highest rate of piracy, so it is understandable that the RIAA would support this bill, as much of their income is lost to piracy. Piracy is a big problem in the internet world, and SOPA will allow for internet piracy to significantly decline and creators of content can claim what they rightfully deserve.

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