



## Jeff Geiger Counters

# Don't Tread on my Internet

*By: Jeff Geiger. Tuesday, February 7th, 2012*

Regulation of the Internet is almost always in vogue. The Luddites are scared of the technology and the politicians want to control it. Recent proposed legislation has attempted to address copyright holders' concerns over piracy of their digital content. Specifically, the **PROTECT IP** and the **Stop Online Piracy Acts** aim to enhance powers for both businesses and the government to combat online piracy of digital content. No one agrees that theft of property, tangible or intangible is right. Yet, opponents against the acts are far from the fringes and, as you may recall, launched an online protest in January.

Here's my fundamental problem with the proposed legislation: is it even needed given the numerous laws and enforcement tools already on the books? While there are doubtless tweaks that can be made, adding layer upon layer of new laws and regulations adds nothing more than complexity, uncertainty and steep legal fees. Not to mention, it sends a signal to the world that it is okay to control further the Internet. Take that, China!

While the Senate version of the legislation is **currently on hold**, don't be surprised when it gets raised again. I recently had an opportunity to provide an **ever so brief video and print commentary on the legislation** for the **Richmond Times-Dispatch** and welcome your comments and thoughts as well.

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