

Measures to combat hackers are inadequate Interview with Dream general manager

Lünen, 7. May 2007. Alpaslan Karasu, general manager of Dream Multimedia GmbH, airs his views on the topic of Pay-TV piracy. He feels not only the providers of programmes and encryption systems need to take responsibility for the situation, but the German state media institutions have to do their part, too.

Mister Karasu, in Switzerland, André Kudelski, head of the Kudelski Group, which includes the encryption provider NagraVision, is trying to counter the hacking of Cablecom and Teleclub. What do you think of his efforts?

Karasu: Naturally we welcome Kudelski's efforts to counter the illegal reception of Pay-TV programmes. However, I believe he is fighting the wrong parties.

Please explain?

Karasu: His statements suggest the Dreambox is an illegal receiver. That is naturally absolute nonsense.

But the DM 500-C is mentioned constantly when the hacking of Cablecom and Teleclub is discussed.

Karasu: That is not Dream's fault, but the fault of those who abuse the DM 500-C for illegal purposes. Therefore Kudelski should be concerning himself with those who develop illegal software, and offer it for sale on the Internet. That is where the dangers lie for a company such as NagraVision.

So you do not feel you have any responsibility?

Karasu: You might as well blame car manufacturers, and claim they are responsible for accidents caused by speeding or drunk motorists in the highly powered cars.

It is reported that Kudelski has already taken two merchants to court. Is that enough?

Karasu: Definitely not. As so often, these measures are inadequate.

In your opinion, what should NagraVision be doing additionally?

Karasu: The last set of measures designed to counter the hacking of Nagra-encrypted programmes last autumn in Germany simply went up in thin air. For months now, anybody with a hacker Smartcard can currently receive Premiere, Tividi and Kabel Digital Home illegally. Even emulators are already available. But nobody is taking any action against the vendors of such pirated cards, nor has there been a key change.

What would a key change achieve? The experience of the past has shown that new codes are immediately spread via the Internet.

Karasu: The owners of hacker Smartcards and those who use illegal software in their receivers would at least be forced to download new data to their cards or boxes, which involves quite a bit of technical effort, particularly in the case of Smartcards. As things are now, Nagra is simply making life too easy for illegal viewers.

What role does Premiere have to play in this?

Karasu: It simply cannot be in the interests of the Pay-TV provider to have his programmes received illegally over a period of months, without the encryption provider making some efforts to counter this. Premiere in particular should know from the past how bad this is for business. However it is not only Premiere, Kabel Deutschland and the like who need to do something.

And who else?

The state media institutions in Germany. Illegal software and hacker cards are used to outsmart the PIN queries for Blue Movie, Red X Club, Playboy TV or Blue Hustler. Anybody can view pornographic movies, around the clock, whether parents are present or not. I simply cannot understand why more pressure is not put on NagraVision to fix the situation, and quickly. At the moment illegal viewers think encryption is a joke.

Will the cat-and-mouse game between hackers and Pay-TV providers ever have an end?

Karasu: For as long as there are protected contents, you will have people who take an interest in outsmarting and overcoming this protection. Pay-TV hackers do not regard their activities simply as a mental challenge, or a sport, for the sake of hacking. They want to make money with their illegal smartcards, and right now that plan is working, and at least part of the reason for this is that the other side is standing still, resp. that the measures implemented are at most a drop in the ocean.

About Dream

The Dream brand is synonymous with hardware and software solutions for digital television. In an age of converging media, the 7000 series of Linux-based set-top boxes created by Dream represent not only high-quality user-friendly products, but also a recognisable brand name. The 7000 series features a USB interface, network connectivity and an expandable hard drive, thus combining television, PVR and PC technology in a single compact unit. The Dream DM 500 is the smallest Linux-based set-top box in the world. The global corporate network of hardware and software developers is busy day and night ensuring that Dream will remain the innovative pioneer for digital television in Germany, now and in future.

Contact

MH Media
Medienbüro Hankmann

Am Propsthof 15-17
53121 Bonn

Tel.: +49 228 - 721 79 52
Fax: +49 228 - 721 87 94
GSM: +49 176 - 631 244 15

hankmann@mh-media.biz