

## Women's rights fight continues over education in India

Since the beginning of history, we have seen the unjust mistreatment of women on an international scale. Within every society, from the concubines of Chinese noblemen to the Salem Witchcraft

Trials, women have been defiled and discriminated against. Education has not received its due attention, particularly in the case of women. Probably because the significance of the role of women in economic development has not been recognized.

Throughout the last century, women in the United States have fought to earn equal rights. Sadly, women in less developed countries are not given the same freedoms and opportunities.

In Indian society, the inequalities women face in education, employment and marriage are intolerable, demand change and hinder the political development of the nation and its people.

The role of education to promote social change is well known. Education is said to determine the level of aspirations, technology and productivity — all basic factors in the process of a nation's development.

Although primary education has been mandated by law, and various incentives like attendance scholarships, mid-day meals and free text books have been introduced, these benefits do not seem to make an impact, especially in rural areas.

Even adult literacy programs tend to neglect women and do not consider it essential to educate women.

Unless there is a change in the attitude of the planners toward these basic problems, there is no hope for satisfactory progress.

Male or female, only an educated individual can determine what is just and unjust in one's role as a productive member

of society. When the individual is aware of the injustice being done, only then can one act against it.

In Indian society, a woman's status has generally been determined by the position of her husband or family. Her individual achievements are rarely considered. Highly-educated women are not allowed to take up employment outside their homes because it is not considered respectable.

A wife of a well-placed man enjoys higher social status than a woman who is highly qualified and competent in her job. Ascribed status dominates achieved status.

In a democratic society, women are entitled to general access to the labor market on equal terms. Greater participation by women in all areas of employment is considered a crucial part of what contributes to a company's success. The need for creating more job opportunities for all workers is important for everyone to achieve their goals.

It was not only custom, but practical, that girls were less likely to attend school than boys in India. Girls didn't need the preparation for careers. A girl would grow up only to become a married woman like her mother. She received all her training within the household.

The doors of opportunity for educated women in India are still not equal to those of their counterparts.

The need for women's equality in education, employment and marriage is the only definite solution for a social, economical and political balance in India. Without this balance, the development of the country will continue to be hindered, if not eventually fail.

• Cheryl Daen, *Daily Lobo* (U. New Mexico), U-WIRE

## Tougher, enforceable laws needed to curb rampant online piracy

Since the Internet is basically a jumbled pile of software, the Web is full of intellectual property rights. However, from MP3s to GIF files to the programs that made them, online ownership rights have been trampled over for some time now.

The Napster vs. Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) lawsuit has brought digital copyright infringement into the spotlight, but the fight against piracy online has been a long and mostly quiet one.

In 1997, President Clinton signed the No Electronic Theft Act (NET) that allows criminal prosecution of copyright infringement, even if the accused is not trying to make money off the infringement. This closed a huge loophole in

### Top 5 countries for software piracy



copyright law and advanced the scope of law enforcement.

In mid-August, the Business Software Alliance (BSA) received more than \$200,000 in settlement money from two companies using unlicensed software products. With companies like Microsoft, Apple, Corel and Symantec in its ranks, the BSA is working harder than ever to protect its members' copyrights.

However, if the RIAA, BSA or any other copyright-enforcing body wants to make more than a dent against online piracy, the battle will have to be fought on Capitol Hill, as well as online.

The current system of copyright laws works well against tangible infringements, like selling shirts with a company's logo, but it is inadequate when code and digits are being stolen. To realistically enforce copyrights online, there needs to be aggressive, enforceable laws with agents actively seeking out instances of blatant infringement.

It is easy for most college students to turn a blind eye to online piracy. It often seems the victim of such infringement is a faceless corporation. Who cares if Bill Gates loses \$5 million this year — he can afford it, right?

The truth is that other than Gates and his fat-cat cohorts, people are losing to software piracy. One of the reasons retail software prices are so high is that manufacturers have to compensate for money lost to piracy.

Furthermore, the 1999 Global Software Piracy Report determined the United States software industry loses about \$3.2 million a year. To recover money lost from bootleg distribution, software companies have kept prices artificially high for more than a decade.

In the end, those who purchase software legally pay the price for online piracy. Likewise, the developers who lose money are not always faceless corporations. Just as illegal copies of Microsoft Office are floating around the Internet, so are registration keys for and full versions of programs made by amateur developers.

College students — even high school students — who put their programs on the Internet often find their work hacked, cracked and pirated by the unpaid masses.

The spectrum of people whose copyrights are ignored

online extends beyond software developers.

Many college students have created their own Web sites with original artwork, photographs or writing. While most of these artists are not trying to sell their work through their Web sites, they probably would want credit for their creativity when it shows up on other sites.

The solutions to fighting online piracy start small. When people use other's creative works, they should recognize the creator's ownership by paying for use of those works.

If somebody wants to use photographs from a Texas A&M sophomore's personal Web site, the student's permission should be sought and credit should be given.

This is a small example of copyright infringement. Anyone who has checked out the huge number of illegal "warez" sites online has an idea how deep the well of pirated software runs. To truly stem the tide of blatant copyright infringement on the Internet, legislation with teeth is needed.

Cases that the BSA has successfully settled have been initiated by employees reporting their company's copyright infringement. The BSA has attacked mid-sized companies that cannot use the Internet's anonymity to hide their illegal software copies. But that is exactly what happens in most cases of software piracy — after digging around online, a Web user can find a free copy of pretty much any retail software.

To drain this pool of copyright infringement, law enforcement officials should follow the footsteps of the average Web surfer and actively seek out "warez" sites. Locating the sites is not enough.

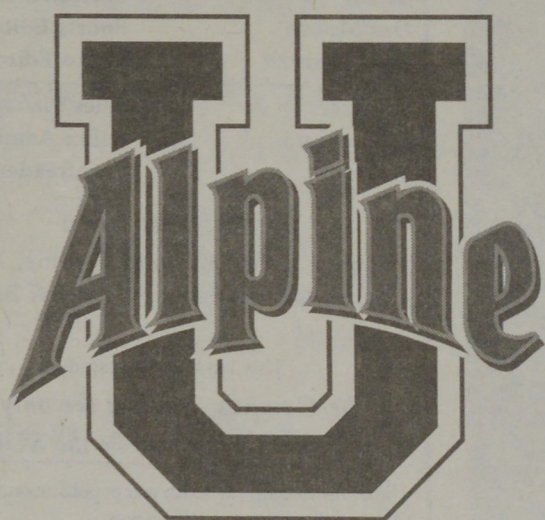
The RIAA's lawsuit against Napster is putting to test the accusation that providing a link to an illegal file is enough to constitute copyright infringement. If the courts decide in favor of the RIAA, which the first lawsuit's ruling already did, the law might finally be able to catch up to online pirates.

Following the NET Act's removal of profit motive, defining links to pirated software as a crime would close another loophole in copyright law.

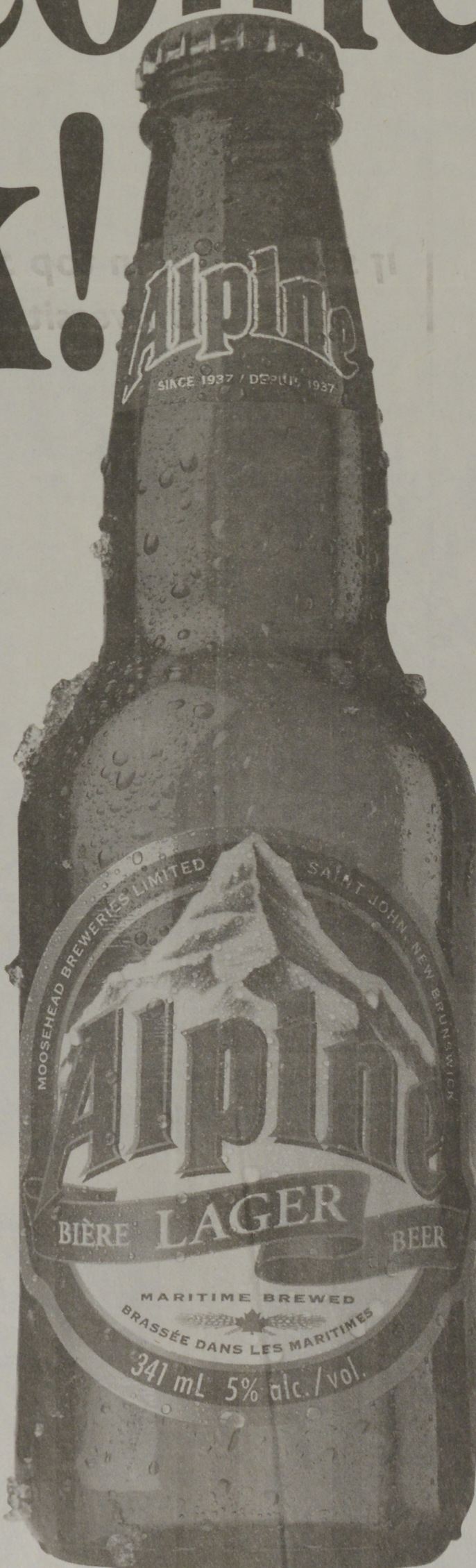
Actively enforcing that law could cut down on a lot of overt online piracy, and that would benefit all users.

• Eric Dickens, *The Battalion* (Texas A&M U.), U-WIRE

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