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Government unveils anti-piracy campaign

Effort designed to raise awareness of copyright theft

By TED JOHNSON

Hollywood faces a myriad of challenges in fighting piracy, but among the most vexing is public perception.

To that end, at a White House event on Tuesday, Attorney General Eric Holder unveiled a new government campaign designed to raise awareness of copyright theft, with public service announcements that put a human face as victims of piracy.

Included is a spot produced in partnership with MTV, in which singer Addie Brownlee is shown playing guitar at a subway stop, but instead of putting money in her guitar case, passersby take dollars and coins out.

The narrator says, "When you download music illegally, you are stealing from musicians, songwriters and people like Addie who are denied payment for work that is rightfully theirs."

The campaign is being carried out by the nonprofit National Crime Prevention Council, responsible for McGruff the crime dog.

Other print campaigns are focused on warning consumers of counterfeit drugs and fake designer fashions. A one-sheet print ad depicts a forlorn crew member and the message, "That pirated movie you just bought...cost someone her job."

Past campaigns to root out piracy -- including movie trailers with edgy music and quick jump cuts, and irreverent humor spots featuring the likes of Jack Black -- have had mixed results.

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