

# The Letters of the Law: The Year in Tech Law from A to Z

Thursday December 27, 2012

From the remarkable battle over the Stop Online Piracy Act to the massive public backlash against Internet surveillance in Canada, law and technology issues garnered headlines all year long. A look back at 2012 from A to Z:

A is for Astral, the Canadian broadcasting giant that was to be sold to Bell Media for over \$3 billion. The CRTC blocked the sale on the grounds that the companies failed to demonstrate the transaction was in the public interest.

B is for Jean-Pierre Blais, the newly appointed chair of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. Blais surprised the industry by adopting a strong pro-consumer approach during his first months on the job.

C is for the Copyright Modernization Act, the copyright reform bill that received royal assent in June 2012.

D is for Dean Del Mastro, the Peterborough Member of Parliament who raised the spectre of regulating online anonymity.

E is for the European Parliament, which voted overwhelmingly to reject the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement after hundreds of thousands of Europeans protested against it.

F is for FreeDominion.com, an online chat site that defeated a claim of copyright infringement involving the posting of portions of newspaper articles.

G is for GeoCoder, a small Ottawa company that created a crowd-sourced database of Canadian postal codes. Canada Post objected to the database, filing a copyright infringement lawsuit.

H is for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which seized bodog.com, a domain name owned by Canadian online gambling tycoon Calvin Ayre.

I is for Industry Minister Christian Paradis, who failed to unveil a digital economy strategy, despite a commitment to do so by year-end.

J is for Jones v. Tsige, a landmark Ontario Court of Appeal decision that recognized a new tort for invasion of privacy.

K is for Keatley Surveying v. Teranet, a proposed class action lawsuit involving copyright claims over land surveys.

L is for levies on microSD cards. After a copyright collective asked the Copyright Board of Canada to impose new fees on the cards, the government issued a regulation effectively blocking the request.

M is for McMaster University, one of several Canadian universities that were hit by security breaches.

N is for Nexopia, a Canadian social media service that was found to have violated privacy laws following a lengthy investigation by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

O is for an open textbook initiative launched by the British Columbia government that will support the creation of dozens of new freely available online textbooks.

P is for the constitutionality of privacy legislation, which was thrown into doubt in *United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 401 v. Alberta (Attorney General)*, an Alberta Court of Appeal decision.

Q is for the *Queen v. Cole*, in which the Supreme Court confirmed that privacy rights survive in the workplace.

R is for *Rogers v. SOCAN*, one of five copyright cases released by the Supreme Court in July 2012 that shook up the Canadian copyright landscape.

S is for the Stop Online Piracy Act, the controversial U.S. legislation that sparked global protests including a Wikipedia blackout.

T is for TellVicEverything, the grassroots Twitter campaign protesting against Canadian Internet surveillance legislation.

U is for Untied.com, a gripe site about United Airlines run by Jeremy Cooperstock, a McGill professor. United demanded that Cooperstock take the site down due to trademark and copyright claims.

V is for Voltage Pictures, which launched proceedings to obtain personal information on thousands of Canadian Internet users alleged to have downloaded its films.

W is for a wireless code of conduct, which the major wireless carriers asked the CRTC to establish after several provinces moved to create provincial codes.

X is for dot-xbox, one of thousands of proposed new domain name extensions.

Y is for Yelp, the review site that hosted criticisms of an Ottawa restaurant that ultimately led to a criminal libel conviction after the restaurant owner sought revenge for the negative review.

Z is for Judge Russell Zinn, a federal court judge who confirmed that the patent for Viagra was invalid days after the Supreme Court voided the patent for failing to provide sufficient disclosure.