
Piracy and the Economy

To the Editor:

David Brooks ("The Nation of the Future," column, Feb. 2) presents a compelling case for America's future economic prosperity, with one caveat: intellectual property theft.

An analysis commissioned by NBC Universal indicated that more than half of America's economic growth is fueled by industries wholly or significantly dependent upon intellectual property. These industries have wages 40 percent above the national median and represent our best hope for increasing United States exports and reducing our trade imbalance. Unfortunately, these same industries are being hit hard by global piracy and counterfeiting.

In some countries, more than 90 percent of the software deployed is pirated. Other industries have similar issues. The cost of such activity is in the hundreds of billions.

We urgently need stronger criminal enforcement of intellectual property laws around the world and support, both private and public, for technological solutions to intellectual property theft. Business leaders and governments need to mobilize the resources necessary to protect our most precious economic assets, so that the United States economy does in fact thrive in the future the way Mr. Brooks and every other American hope.

BOB WRIGHT

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The writer, vice chairman of G.E. and chairman and chief executive of NBC Universal, is a founding member of Business Action to Stop Counterfeiting and Piracy.
