

Puzzle for October 6, 2006

In 2003, Senator Orrin Hatch said he wanted copyright holders to be able to use special-purpose hardware to prevent piracy. The following paragraph is quoted from the PoliTech mailing list, and is dated June 19, 2003, at 10:12AM:

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-UT, said he was drafting legislation to require devices in PCs permitting the destruction of hardware used for widescale copyright infringement by sending a secret command to the remote computer. A copyright holder would be required to offer two warnings before the “kill switch” was activated and the computer destroyed or permanently disabled, Hatch said.

1. What are the arguments in favor of Sen. Hatch's proposal?
2. What are the arguments against Sen. Hatch's proposal?
3. If this proposal had been adopted, what safeguards should be put into place to prevent unauthorized activation of the “kill switch”?