

## CLAIMS

1. A method for limiting the use of unauthorized digital content in a content-sharing network in which digital content is distributed as files, wherein each file comprises content information and is associated with characteristic information and verification information, the method comprising:

(a) determining a first file whose content information is copyrighted;

(b) repeatedly distributing a second file in the content-sharing network, wherein the second file is associated with characteristic information and verification information that match the characteristic information and verification information, respectively, of said first file, and wherein the second file comprises content information that does not match the content information of the first file.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (a) comprises detecting the first file in the content-sharing network.

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein step (a) comprises processing a copyrighted file with a distribution program.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein steps (a) and (b) are performed before publishing said digital content.

5. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein step (b) comprises falsifying a network address of the one or more second files.

6. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein step (b) is performed in response to detecting a file request that indicates the characteristic information and verification information of the first file.

7. An apparatus for limiting the use of unauthorized digital content in a content-sharing network in which digital content is distributed as files, wherein each file comprises content information and is associated with characteristic information and verification information, the apparatus comprising:

a first interface for connecting to content-sharing network;

a second interface for connecting to a content-sharing client authorized by a copyright owner;

a filter; and

a processing section;

wherein the filter is configured to copy to the processing section such traffic that originates from the first interface and is destined to the second interface;

wherein the processing means is configured to detect in the copied traffic a file request that indicates a first file having content information that is copyrighted by the copyright owner, and in response to such detection, respond to the file request by supplying a second file that is associated with characteristic information and verification information that match the characteristic information and verification information, respectively, of said first file, and wherein the second file comprises content information that does not match the content information of the first file.

8. An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the apparatus is configured to first publish the characteristic information, verification information and content information of a copyrighted file in the content-sharing network and then change the content information of the copyrighted file.

9. A set of computer-readable program media, the set comprising computer program code, wherein execution of said computer program code in a computer attached to a content-sharing network causes said computer to carry out the steps of claim 1.