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## To settle lawsuit, grandfather will speak against film piracy

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A 67-year-old Racine man who was sued for up to \$600,000 by a group of major film studios over four movies his grandson downloaded will lecture children about Internet piracy as part of an out-of-court settlement.

In the settlement reached late last week, Fred Lawrence agreed to work with the movie companies and the Milwaukee Bar Association in coming weeks to develop a program to teach local families and school children about copyright law, said his attorney, Jill Gilbert Welytok.

"My client maintains that at the time the downloading occurred, neither he nor his grandson understood that they were infringing the movie studios' copyrights," Welytok said. "This is an area of the law where education rather than litigation is appropriate."

Lawrence's grandson, then 12, admitted downloading "The Incredibles," "I, Robot," "The Grudge" and "The Forgotten" over a peer-to-peer electronic file-sharing network last December, not knowing it was illegal.

Lawrence was sued in federal court in November after he ignored a letter offering to settle the matter out of court - a letter similar to one sent in March to hundreds of alleged illegal file sharers across the country.

Although Lawrence and his grandson live in Racine, they will actually speak to elementary school children at Maple Dale School in Fox Point when the program rolls out in January, Welytok said.

Lawrence also will pay an undisclosed amount to the studios, Welytok said. Under the agreement, that sum is to remain secret.

Lawrence previously rejected an offer to settle for \$4,000, which was made days after news of the lawsuit became public.

"The Lawrences are honest people and have taken financial responsibility for the inadvertent infringement that occurred. They do not condone copyright infringement and are saddened that they inadvertently infringed someone's rights," Welytok said.

The Motion Picture Association of America said they were pleased with the compromise.

"The purpose of these lawsuits is not only to punish people for film piracy but to inform them about the law," said Kori Bernards, an association spokeswoman. "With respect to Mr. Lawrence's family, they offered help to inform people about piracy, so we are taking them up on their effort."

The association's lawyers filed a motion to dismiss the lawsuit Wednesday, but details were not settled until late last week, according to Welytok.

Lawrence had argued that although he felt bad that his grandson had downloaded the movies, he couldn't afford to settle the lawsuit and didn't think it was fair to punish him for something his grandson did.

Both parties say the settlement was mutually beneficial.

"At the end of the day, this is a very constructive outcome that will help many people understand the importance of respecting copyrights and intellectual property," Welytok said.

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