

Police Dogs Sniff for Pirated DVDs

Labradors Taught to Recognize Scent of Discs

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Lucky and Flo are the world's first DVD-sniffing dogs.

There are drug-sniffing dogs, bomb-sniffing dogs, people-sniffing dogs, and now DVD-sniffing dogs.

An alliance of film industry groups that includes the Motion Picture Association of America and the Federation against Copyright Theft has announced the world's first dogs specially trained to detect CDs and DVDs in bags and packages. The idea is that the dogs may be able to alert police to large stashes of pirated movies.

The MPAA says there are currently two DVD-sniffing dogs in the world. They are Labradors named Lucky and Flo working at Stansted Airport in the United Kingdom. The canines have been taught to recognize the unique smell of a compact disc.

"Someone had the wise idea that maybe dogs could sniff out DVDs," Kori Bernards, MPAA spokeswoman, told ABC News. "There are a lot of pirated products that go in and out of Heathrow Airport and airports around the world."

The dogs have had some success so far, according to the MPAA. But there is still more training that needs to be done. At this point, the dogs alert police to any CD or DVD they smell in packages and bags. Customs officials in the U.K. hope one day the dogs will only signal when there are large collections of discs, which would more likely include illegally copied movies.

For the time being, Lucky and Flo are working at a FedEx shipping center at Stansted Airport where they are sniffing packages that are shipped around the world. Trainers say the dogs have been notifying customs agents of packages with discs in them. The packages have been opened but so far no pirated movies have been found.

"We're encouraged by this. It's a new tool against piracy but we welcome it and hope others will adopt such practices," said Bernards.

The movie industry has been trying all kinds of tactics recently to crack down on illegally copied movies. Earlier this week, the MPAA announced its employees are offering theater workers training to help them identify customers who might be using camcorders to make bootleg copies of films. Apparently that effort has already worked because four people were caught last weekend in California, Illinois and Taipei, Taiwan, allegedly trying to videotape "Mission: Impossible III," according to the MPAA.

Trainers in the U.K. said they hope to one day teach more dogs to detect discs. The ultimate goal is to have DVD detection dogs at airports and shipping centers around the world.