

Sentech in hot water over broadcast piracy

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Sentech's failure to stop widespread broadcast piracy in Southern Africa is negatively impacting on Botswana's television industry. eBotswana - a sister company to e.tv - is in court on Thursday arguing an application against the South African signal distributor in the South Gauteng High Court for failing to take all reasonable steps necessary to prevent pirate viewing of SABC channels in Botswana.



eBotswana's General Manager Dave Coles says, "At the moment, approximately 70% of the Botswana population is watching the pirated SABC channels, thereby seriously damaging growth in the local broadcast, production and advertising industries through the loss of potential advertising revenue"

Sentech has failed to maintain the encryption system on its Vivid platform which has led to the piracy. Despite repeated requests from eBotswana since 2009 and Sentech's undertakings to Parliament that it would upgrade the encryption by March 2011, it has failed to do so. Due to Sentech's failure to maintain the encryption system, the SABC signal is currently being pirated off Sentech's Vivid Bouquet with the use of a satellite receiver commonly referred to as the Philiboa.

"We believe that the television industry not only in Botswana but the entire SADC region will benefit greatly if the piracy is stopped," says Coles.

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