



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 27, 2005

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Supreme Court “Grokster” Decision Protects Technology, Condemns Purposeful Distribution of Devices Promoting Infringement

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Supreme Court today rendered its decision in the MGM v. Grokster case, ruling that companies who distribute devices with the “object of promoting its use to infringe copyright, as shown by clear expression or other affirmative steps taken to foster infringement” are liable. The case sought to determine whether makers of file-swapping software are liable for copyright infringement by their users, or whether the 1984 Sony Betamax ruling prevails – that is, as long as the products have legitimate uses, manufacturers are not liable for illegal uses by some of the users. The following statement can be attributed to Sarah Deutsch, Verizon vice president and associate general counsel:

"Verizon is pleased with today's decision. As noted in our industry's amicus brief, we have agreed from the outset that any business model consciously built to exploit infringing activity and which subsists almost exclusively on infringement should be subject to some form of legal sanction and redress. We are also encouraged by the Court's recognition to be “mindful of the need from trenching on regular commerce” and its refusal to revisit the Sony decision. Verizon remains committed to continuing to work with copyright owners and Congress to find appropriate solutions to the difficult issues of copyright liability.”

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