

All hail the Kim (Dotcom)

JOHN C ABELL, for Reuters

Piracy means never having to say you're sorry. That might as well be the mantra of Kim Schmitz, better known as Kim Dotcom, the most flamboyant internet character this side of John McAfee.

For those who've missed this story so far, until about a year ago Kim Dotcom ran a wildly popular site called Megaupload from his New Zealand mansion. Megaupload allowed people to upload massive files - you know, like movies and TV shows the uploaders don't own and don't have the right to share. Which probably explains both the site's wild popularity, and the Justice Department's prosecutorial zeal.

Things were going great until local authorities raided the joint, arrested him and shut down the site on behalf of the United States, which has charged him with 13 criminal counts of conspiracy, infringement and wire fraud. The upshot of the indictment is that those uploads amounted to piracy, and Megaupload was enabling it.

But since then, things have not gone smoothly for the feds.

A New Zealand judge ruled that the police had acted illegally - executing overly broad warrants - as the US Justice Department's long arm of the law in the raid by 76 officers (that's just three fewer bodies than the 79 Navy Seals sent to take down Osama bin Laden.) As the AFP reported at the time, Judge Helen Winkelmann ruled that "the police relied on invalid warrants when they searched the properties and seized the various items, the search and seizure was therefore illegal."

Some researchers actually posited that total box office receipts actually went down when Megaupload was shut down.

These days, Kim Dotcom is out on bail.

On January 19 - a year to the day since Megaupload was squashed - Kim Dotcom launched Mega, which does the same thing but better, because now you can encrypt your files and only you hold the key. Cloud storage services like Google Drive, Dropbox and Microsoft's SkyDrive are password-protected, but if that one lock is picked then the contents of your vault are compromised. Not so if every document is encrypted with a key nearly impossible to guess. Indeed, offering encrypted cloud space could indemnify Dotcom from the legal consequences of users storing copyrighted material on his servers - he doesn't know what it is, and can't, the theory goes.

By creating Mega, DotCom is suggesting that cloud services are imperfect repositories because they don't afford the people who use them the power to keep to themselves whatever they store in them.

Password-protection only goes so far, but if

someone gains access to your space - or a government issues a warrant that the cloud company decides to honor - your stuff is their stuff. Encryption is a form of document protection that makes it a practical impossibility for anyone but the person who holds the unlock code to ever decipher it.

And why shouldn't we have that? Why shouldn't privacy expectations extend to the cloud in the same way that we assume them to be on our computers that we keep in our physical possession?

Since every new business needs a launch event, Kim DotCom decided to put on a show that made Qualcomm's CES keynote seem like a poetry reading. For those of you who weren't invited and have 1:14:07 to spare, I urge you to watch the proceedings, as shared

reasons you would want to protect the contents of your digital stuff the same way you can on your computer. Trade secrets; sensitive information that might fall into the wrong hands if your computer does, like passwords and financial data; or, just because you are the sort of person who even shreds old grocery shopping lists.

But you don't have physical possession of things you store in the cloud. And there is a huge push to make the web your hard drive: this is the strategy Google is pushing with Drive and its Chromebook line of netbooks. SkyDrive is now built into the latest version of MS-Office. Cloud computing is ushering in a new era of less expensive laptops and non-traditional computers like smartphones and tablets.



An actor in police costume greets Megaupload founder Kim Dotcom (L) as he launches his new file sharing site "Mega" in Auckland.

PHOTO: REUTERS

by Kim DotCom on YouTube. There was a re-enactment of the raid - which had been dubbed "Operation Takedown" - complete with helicopter assault. Native dancers and other performers warmed up the audience on a huge stage backdropped with a multimedia screen of the sort you'd expect to see at an Apple product unveiling. This all occurred in his mansion's driveway.

Given the fact that he's a rather self-indulgent self-promoter and, in the words of Wired, "The Most Wanted Man on the Net," Kim Dotcom may not be the world's best evangelist for this particular cause. But putting aside all of Dotcom's ego, he's making a valid point.

There are any numbers of not nefarious

We shouldn't have to sacrifice security and peace of mind to take advantage of this important trend. All the big players are pushing us into the cloud, but we shouldn't go all in unless we are afforded the same kind of protections that we have here on earth.

The messenger may be preposterous, and Kim Dotcom's motives may not exactly be altruistic, but he's in the right.

Just as pornography helps to preserve free speech, Kim DotCom is striking a pose that we all have a stake in protecting.

And like the old saying goes, only Nixon could go to China.

JOHN C ABELL WRITES ABOUT TECH, BUSINESS AND POLITICS.



Shariar Hasan, head of retail sales and distribution of Qubee speaks at the event.

Qubee laptop fair kicks off

IT & TELECOM REPORT

The four-day 'Qubee Laptop Fair 2013' begins today with the theme "Light Up The Light Of Technology" at National Military Museum, Bijoy Sarani, in the capital.

Expo Maker organised the fair and Qubee, a WiMAX service provider, is the title sponsor of the event.

Shariar Hasan, head of retail sales and distribution, at a press conference said "We are proud to host the Qubee Laptop Fair 2013; this is the 5th time that we are doing this and it is worth to be part of it as each time many new people in our country are becoming connected to the world and possibilities of fast internet. We have a number of offers in place to incentivise potential internet users, including double volume for the same price."

Al-Amin Dewan, coordinator of the fair said fifty-seven exhibitors are taking part at the fair with seven pavilions, eight mini pavilions and forty-two stalls

which include Qubee, Acer, Asus, HP, Intel, Samsung, Gigabyte, Toshiba, Apple, Lenovo, MSI, Bijoy and all other types of laptops, tablet PCs, WiMAX internet devices and antivirus package will be available at the fair.

There will be some devices which are unavailable in the market. Visitors will be able to experience the devices at the fair.

The fair will remain open from 10:00am-8:00pm. The four-day will fair will end on February 25.

Acer, Asus, HP and Samsung are the co-sponsors of the fair.

Abu Said Suzan, assistant general manager of Acer Bangladesh, Mohammad Al Fuad, country product manager of Asus Bangladesh, Imrul Hossain Bhuyan, country manager printing and personnel system of HP Bangladesh, Abul Hasnat Sohel, deputy general manager, IT division of Samsung Bangladesh were present at the press conference.

BASIS Outsourcing Award 2013

IT & TELECOM DESK

Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) has started the registration for the BASIS Outsourcing Award 2013.

The registration form is available at outsourcingaward.basis.org.bd will end on February 25.

This year, BASIS will give 100 awards in total. The organisation has decided to award one person from each 64 districts of the country with this award. This move is taken to encourage everyone in the country in outsourcing field.

For the first time, female freelancer will also be awarded.

The award has been categorised in four sections - outsourcing organisation, individual freelancer,

district wise freelancer and female freelancer.

Fifteen awards will be given in outsourcing organisation category. In individual freelancer category, there are 18 awards in six different sub-categories: web application development and programming, mobile application development, SEO and online marketing, web design, graphic design, and online blogging and content development.

Three female freelancers or entrepreneurs will be awarded in female freelancer category.

BASIS will announce the name of the award winners at BASIS Softexpo 2013 which will be held on March 6-9 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

Google Glass features unveiled in preview video



BBC

Fresh details about Google's eagerly-anticipated smart glasses have been released by the company.

A YouTube video uploaded by the company shows Google Glass in action - including the interface which appears in the wearer's line of sight.

The search giant has also opened up the trial of the product to "creative individuals" and developers.

Google co-founder Sergey Brin was recently spotted on New York's subway testing the device.

The product was first unveiled as part of a demonstration at a Google launch event last year

where developers were offered early access to the device for \$1,500.

The company is now inviting people in the US to use the hashtag #ifihadglass to suggest ways they would make use of the headset.

"We're looking for bold, creative individuals who want to join us and be a part of shaping the future of Glass," Google said.

"We're still in the early stages and, while we can't promise everything will be perfect, we can promise it will be exciting."

The demo video showed how Glass can be used to take pictures and record video, as well as share content directly via email or social networks.

Voice commands such as "OK,

Glass, take a picture" were used to control the device.

Other features appeared to include Skype-like video chats, and other related information such as weather reports and map directions.

All of this information appeared in a small, translucent square in the top right of the wearer's field of vision.

The display is considerably less intrusive than previously published concept videos.

Wearable technology is seen as a major growth area for hardware makers in 2013 and beyond.

The newly released Pebble watch links directly to a smartphone - a concept Apple is also rumoured to be working on.

Sony seeks head start over Microsoft with new PlayStation

REUTERS, New York

Sony Corp said it will launch its next-generation PlayStation this year, hoping its first video game console in seven years will give it a much-needed head start over the next version of Microsoft's Xbox and help revive its stumbling electronics business.

The new console will have a revamped interface, let users stream and play video games hosted on servers, and allow users to play while downloading titles as well as share videos with friends. Its new controller, dubbed DualShock 4, will have a touchpad and a camera that can sense the depth of the environment in front of it.

Sony, which only displayed the controller but not the console, said on Wednesday the PlayStation 4 would be available for the year-end holiday season and flagged games from the likes of Ubisoft Entertainment SA and Activision Blizzard Inc, whose top executives also attended the glitzy launch event.

It did not disclose pricing or an exact launch date.

Sony's announcement comes amid industry speculation that Microsoft Corp is set to unveil the successor to its Xbox 360 later this summer. The current Xbox 360 beats the seven-year-old PlayStation 3's online network with features such as voice commands on interactive gaming and better

connectivity to smartphones and tablets.

But all video game console makers are grappling with the onslaught of mobile devices into their turf.

Tablets and smartphones built by rivals such as Apple Inc and Samsung Electronics Co Ltd already

said of the new PlayStation.

"It'll be a slow burn and not heavy uptake right away."

MIGRATION TO MOBILE

Console makers will also have to tackle flagging video game hardware and software sales, which research firm NPD group says have dropped consistently every month



PHOTO: REUTERS

Andrew House, president and Group CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment, speaks during the unveiling of the PlayStation 4 launch event in New York.

account for around 10 percent of the \$80 billion gaming market. Those mobile devices, analysts predict, will within a few years be as powerful as the current slew of game-only consoles.

"It looks good and had a lot of great games but the industry is different now," Billy Pidgeon, an analyst at Inside Network Research,

over the last year as users migrate to free game content on mobile devices.

PlayStation 4 will have an app on Android and Apple mobile devices that connects to console games and can act as a second screen, Jack Tretton, President and CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment of America, said in an interview.