

Steve Roggenkamp  
Classes 4, 6b

I am writing this in support of Exemptions on Circumvention of Copyright Protection System for Access Control Technologies.

Within the last year or so I purchased two computing devices covered by the exemptions, a Seagate GoFlex and a Buffalo Linkstation. I purchased these to use them for backing up my computer systems. The GoFlex unit includes a wireless communication capability, so I believe these belong to either Class 4 or 6b depending on how they are used and connected to other devices within my network.

Both of these devices are small, about the size of a paperback book, and thus meet my definition of a portable computing device. I found with both units I could easily replace the disk drive with a generic disk drive, thus making it easy to use these devices to make backups that I could store outside of my house.

One problem that I have with both of these units, though, is that they do not provide a means of natively encrypting the data on the devices, thus putting my data at risk due to multiple scenarios (theft, misplacement, etc.) Plenty of examples exist in popular news articles about individuals and organizations losing sensitive data that should have been protected to know that this is a risk to anyone wanting to preserve their personal data.

There is little incentive for the manufacturers to include such a function in low-cost consumer devices since it would probably increase their customer support costs with people losing encryption keys, passwords, additional complexity, and so forth.

Adding encryption capabilities requires me to circumvent the access control technologies used on these systems to gain access as the root user so that I can install software on the units. Both of these units use a version of the Linux operating system so they provide a familiar environment within which to operate.

I do not feel I have caused any undue hardship to the manufacturers of these devices. I have not returned either of these units and I realize I voided any and all warranties when I opened the cases. If anything I increased their sales when I had to purchase an extra unit due to the results of my experimentation.

I have a final philosophical question about devices such as this. Do I not own these as my property as a result of purchasing them? Do I not have the right to do with my property as I wish, including making them more useful to me? I do not wish to copy and sell the firmware present on these devices, I just wish to replace and expand it.