

**Headline: 6 Sim Lim Square shops raided for piracy**

They allegedly sold devices that allow Nintendo consoles to play pirated games

SIX shops in popular IT haunt Sim Lim Square were raided yesterday for allegedly peddling devices which allow users to download and play pirated games on their Nintendo DS handheld consoles.

More than 200 of these devices, which have been sold by game and game-console retailers there for about \$40 each, were seized during the raid by the police, working with video game industry watchdog Entertainment Software Association (ESA).

The United States-based anti-piracy body's members include some of the world's biggest video game companies such as Electronic Arts, Vivendi Games and Square Enix. These firms produce popular titles such as World Of Warcraft and Final Fantasy.

The raid marks the ESA's first action here, although it has been active in other countries in the region.

Its spokesman Cyril Chua said two versions of the piracy-enabling device were found: One contains a built-in storage capacity for holding the games, the other reads stored games from off-the-shelf micro-SD storage cards. Such cards are also used in devices such as mobile phones and digital cameras to store data, and each 2GB capacity card can hold about 18 games.

Also seized were two computers with pirated games and 19 micro-SD cards with pirated games pre-loaded onto them.

Until now, software busts here have been undertaken by the police, individual video game companies such as Sony, or the Business Software Alliance, which represents giants such as Microsoft and Adobe.

Mr Chua, an intellectual property lawyer, said that such devices are illegal under the Singapore Copyright Act as they 'circumvent' technological measures that protect copyrighted works. The device does this by fooling the game system into thinking it is an original game cartridge.

No arrests were made during the raid, but anyone convicted of peddling these devices faces penalties of up to \$20,000 in fines and two years' jail.

This haul follows last month's police seizure of more than half a million dollars of pirated movies and games, the year's biggest haul of pirated goods.