Pirate network smashed
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A LARGE-scale computer piracy network spanning several countries including Australia has been smashed. Polish police spokeswoman Agata Salatka said police in western Poland had wound up an organised group of computer pirates, involving more than 100 people.

The group had been active in Poland, the United States, Australia, Britain and Slovakia. Several people, including five young Polish computer programmers who were considered the group's leaders were arrested and faced up to eight years in prison, she said.

The pirates hacked into the computers of universities and technical institutes, using the large memory of the powerful computers to stock - without the knowledge of the owners - the most modern programs, music, games and films.

They then sold them on the black market.

Ms Salatka said the gang was dismantled after being shadowed by the police last October, in collaboration with the FBI and police in Britain and Slovakia.

In Poland - which joined the European Union on May 1 - pirated goods, including the most recent films which have not yet hit the country's cinema screens, are often sold on open-air markets.

*Agence France-Presse*

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