

Fraunhofer spin-off iPharro Media GmbH (formerly Semiotix) receives €4 million to start up operations.

iPharro, a spin-off from the Fraunhofer Institute for Computer Graphics (IGD) located in Darmstadt, Germany, has developed software to identify videos much faster than in real time. The system does not depend on embedded information such as earmarks or fingerprints, but rather uses a content clip-to-clip comparison. It is, therefore, capable of detecting specific sequences in the vast amounts of legacy motion picture material illegally stored on public sites such as YouTube. This is normally difficult to accomplish because the metadata necessary for easy detection have been stripped off.

“Video copyright infringement is a significant share of the US\$250 billion in losses due to internet piracy incurred annually according to the US Patent and Trademark Office – we will help to get that under control,” declares iPharro CEO David T. Fisher, a 25-year veteran of the TV broadcasting industry and an expert on rights and royalties management.

The technology is not only useful for the detection of copyright violations, it is also able to track variations in video clips that are important for media research. “After thorough evaluation of the best technologies available on the market today, one of the company’s first customers, Nielsen Media Research, has selected iPharro’s technology for worldwide rollout,” says Dr. Bernd Geiger, Triangle founding partner. “Nielsen’s demands far exceed what is required for copyright infringement detection. That gives us an enormous head start in entering this market.”

Founded in 1987, the Fraunhofer Institute for Computer Graphics is one of the most renowned research centers for graphics and image processing worldwide. Fraunhofer research also invented the mp3 format, a technology which revolutionized the media world.

Triangle focuses exclusively on university and research spin-offs and is currently the only VC to do so in Germany. This round is Triangle’s third investment out of its recent Fund IV.