

INTERNET ETHICS

Survey Reveals Education Needed To Deter Piracy On The Web

(NAPSA)—A survey released in May 2002 by the Business Software Alliance (BSA) reveals a staggering discrepancy between the behavior of Internet users and beliefs about intellectual property protection. More than one third of the 1,026 Internet users surveyed have downloaded commercial software online, yet have failed to pay for the copies. Despite this behavior, 85 percent support intellectual property protection laws that safeguard the revenues that software companies rely on for research and development, and 95 percent believe that companies and individuals should be compensated for software development.

These conflicting attitudes and acts are played out in the online marketplace, where software piracy is rampant. The BSA estimates that more than 90 percent of the software sold on auction sites alone is pirated. This practice opens individuals and companies up to significant software piracy liability because software from many developers, such as Autodesk Inc., the world's leading design software and digital content company, is nontransferable. This means that once you purchase software, you cannot give it or sell it to someone else. Compounding the problem, software purchased from Internet auction sites often leads to mass production of counterfeit product overseas, which can enter legitimate distribution channels and displace large numbers of legitimate sales.

"Software piracy leads to business revenue losses, fewer jobs and less tax revenues," says Sandra Boulton, director of Piracy Prevention at Autodesk. "Software companies contribute considerable resources to combating piracy—through education, policy efforts and enforcement—that could be more effectively used for product innovation, company expansion and lower product prices."

Organized pirate groups impact legitimate market

Internet piracy adversely impacts the legitimate market for software in several other ways. Many freeware sites offer "warez," a slang term for pirated software. These sites are breeding grounds for pirates who give, barter and sell unauthorized software. Pirated programs are also available in



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other areas of the Internet through news groups, e-mail and Internet relay chat.

Organized pirate groups often remove technical security measures embedded in the software, thereby enabling users to make multiple copies. And, the distribution of new or pre-release software via online sites garners prestige and admiration within the subculture of Internet pirates. Pre-released software distributed by these groups prevents software companies from controlling the quality of the software and making the usual refinements that occur prior to commercial release. This harms both product reputation and consumer acceptance. Internet users surveyed confirm that downloaded, unlicensed software that puts users at legal risk or does not function properly is extremely problematic. Increased education on these issues may cause a reversal in behavior toward legal software acquisition.

Internet piracy laws

In recent years, the U.S. government has addressed the issue of Internet software piracy. The 1997 No Electronics Theft Act allows for criminal prosecution of copyright infringement and the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act prohibits circumventing any protection measure designed to prevent unauthorized access to copyrighted material.

To find out more about piracy and its legal ramifications, download the free "Piracy on Internet Auction Sites" brochure at www.autodesk.com/piracy. To report piracy of Autodesk products, call 1-800-NO-COPIES and for products from other software companies, call the BSA at 1-888-NO-PIRACY.