



Software Piracy isn't an issue that's going to go away in a hurry.

It's been around for years and it may be affecting your organisation in ways you hadn't expected!

Using illegal software and installing unauthorised software may already be costing YOU an “arm and a leg”!

If you talk to the big players (Microsoft et al) in the Software Industry and the Anti-Piracy “police” they will always tell you it costs \$ hundreds of millions in Australia (and right around the world) in lost software sales and tens of thousands of local IT jobs are lost annually due to software piracy.

So what?

This is not really the message you need to hear as it just isn't relevant for your business or organisation!

Do you really care how much Microsoft loses due to piracy? Probably not!

BUT - the message you really need to focus on is that there are some other “more significant” costs and issues lurking under the surface that may impact your business significantly “when (not if) you are caught out”!

IF?

NO, we say “**When**” as there are many, many instances where a staff member or an ex-staff member has “dobbbed an organisation in to claim a reward”!

Is this fair play? We don't think so as it's hard to sort the miscreants from the innocent victims.

Adding to your worries are the issues surrounding downloading from the Internet and file sharing of music and movie files and these will increase your risk, if not managed correctly.

Managers of Organisations at all levels need to gain a much better understanding of the risks that you are facing in a practical sense and then learn what can be done, to both manage and overcome these risks, so that you can get back to core business activities. The reality is that Anti-piracy vendor action is increasing through the BSAA, SPA, Microsoft, Novell, Symantec etc.

The Music, Video and Movie industry have taken more prominence over recent weeks with actions overseas against home users, and recently have conducted court order appointed “Anton Pillar” raids on ISPs in Melbourne and Sydney as well as some larger Universities etc over the issues of file sharing and file swapping. Your business names could be on their lists of files seized!

What is Software Piracy?

Webopedia at http://www.pcwebopedia.com/TERM/S/software_piracy.html defines “Software Piracy” as - “**The unauthorized copying of software.**”



and states - “Most retail programs are licensed for use at just one computer site or for use by only one user at any time. By buying the software, you become a licensed user rather than an owner (see EULA). You are allowed to make copies of the program for backup purposes, but it is against the law to give copies to friends and colleagues.”

Software piracy is all but impossible to stop, although software companies are launching more and more lawsuits against major infractors. Originally, software companies tried to stop software piracy by copy-protecting their software. This strategy failed, however, because it was inconvenient for users and was not 100 percent foolproof. Most software now requires some sort of registration, which may discourage would-be pirates, but doesn't really stop software piracy. “ Source http://www.pcwebopedia.com/TERM/S/software_piracy.html

“Legal Eagles” define it as

“Software piracy is the unauthorized duplication of computer software. Although most computer users today are aware that unauthorized use and duplication of software is illegal, many show a general disregard for the importance of treating software as valuable intellectual property. Copying software is an act of copyright infringement, and is subject to civil and criminal penalties. It's illegal whether you use pirated software yourself, give it away, or sell it.”

Let us Widen the Definition

The description "software piracy" covers several different activities, for example: - illegal copying of programs, peer to peer file sharing, installing copies on to multiple machines in excess of what you have paid for, installing older versions (after upgrading), disk duplication and counterfeiting (burning CDs/DVDs etc) and distributing software, selling serial numbers and hacked software for licensed versions — even sharing a program with families, friends and neighbours can be classed as “software piracy”.

Let's Be Clear! If you LEND, GIVE, COPY or SELL the software to anyone without the express permission of the owner of the software license, you need to understand this is an infringement of Copyright and the license and therefore can be construed as ILLEGAL. Software is NOT an asset (in the physical sense) it is sold to you under a license to use, with specifics terms of use with usually a nonexclusive right to USE the software for a specific period of time.

So what's the fuss about?

It's important to understand the different ways software is pirated, not just to comply with the law but to protect yourself, your computer and your organisation.

Most organisations are well aware of the issues of software piracy - yet many still are caught totally unawares when the “anti-piracy police” arrive unannounced at the front door and seize their computers with a court order. **Can they do this? Sure can!**

Would you pass the Software Compliance Quiz? Try it out here, it's free!
http://www.pcprofile.com/pcaudit_quiz.htm

Then contact us for HELP, **you'll need it!**

OUR VIEWPOINT

Wasting money on software compliance auditing (in the manner currently being conducted) is no way to run your business entity, when the money for the cost of conducting software compliance audits could be far better spent on your core business activities BUT you already know this!

We know that software compliance is NOT the core business activity of your organization and the money spent on traditional auditing techniques is MOSTLY WASTED and could be better deployed and utilised elsewhere.

"To combat and overcome both illegal and unauthorized software usage in organisations you need a robust technology asset management solution to force a shift in attitude to what is really a PEOPLE based problem!"

The Bottom Line Message?

If you are caught with illegal software **it is going to cost you far more than just the cost of the fines** that are **always in the 5 to 6 figure mark!** You may need to find out more about how unauthorised and illegal software can impact your organisation in terms of fines and penalties as well as creating significant business disruption!

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If you want to know more about **HOW you can REDUCE your RISK TODAY**, please contact us at the address above. PCProfile has been helping organisations in Australia and overseas to reduce their risks in this area for the last 13 years!