

## What is Software Piracy?

Software Piracy refers to the unauthorized use or copying of software. When a user purchases a software program, he does not purchase the software itself, but the right to use the software. This right is governed by a licence. When you purchase a boxed software product, you receive a CD, manuals and a licence agreement. This licence generally allows you to use the software on one workstation. In the work place, it may be tempting to install this software onto all of your workstations. Where the user acts in a manner contradictory to the terms of the licence, he has probably committed software piracy.

### Advantages of Piracy:

There are certainly advantages to pirating software. Main benefits include:

- **Cost:** Pirated software costs nothing, or close to nothing, to obtain. When a consumer wants to buy a software package which costs upwards of € 2,000 (example: AutoCAD, Starry Night), the amount of money saved by pirating software is certainly really big. The consumer cannot afford to buy all the software's of the market in order to have a complete opinion of which one is the most appropriate for the working sector, because usually the software's have a demo edition in which the most important components are disabled.
- **Easy to Acquire:** Pirated software is extremely easy to find, whether online, or sold openly in foreign countries, or simply provided by friends. In fact, in many cases, it is easier for someone to go online and download an illegal copy of a software program than to drive to a store and buy it from a retailer.
- **Anonymity and Personal Privacy:** Pirating software can be committed without going out of the house, or even interacting with any person. Thus, it is very tempting to commit this "victimless" crime. A major issue is the anonymity we have when we do not need to subscribe with our real ID because we can never be sure that no third-party people are getting our so called "personal privacy" (how can we be sure that when we send Microsoft our serial number only, is not receiving some other personal information also?). And most of the times we all have seen our mailbox full of junk e-mails and we try to understand how did these people get our e-mail address...
- **Profit:** Although most software pirates do not profit directly from pirating software, the temptation to make money by selling illegal programs is strong. All one needs to become a software pirate is a CD burner, which now costs as little as €100, and the pirate's computer can become a virtual cash cow. Even selling a pirate cd on the cost of 1/3 of the original's cd price, the profit is really huge. Especially some technical programs which their cost is not affordable by everyone, it is easier to sell it even at the 1/5 of the original's cd price and gain a really high profit, concerning time you "worked" and money you got.
- **Experience gained:** Many universities give their students the software and the serial number they use at the university, in order to install it on their computers and get involved learning the software better, studying the lessons working straight on the software, without buying it or need to go to the library to study. It is much better to study working with the software rather than read a book and try to imagine theoretically what the programs' outputs would be or the steps needed to do.

- **Quality, Security, Reliability:** All the companies that provide the market with a software program, support the theory that the original cd is better than a pirate cd because the cd is from a very good quality, it is secure since it is from the company inside and it is tested and protected from miscellaneous problems such as corrupted cd, virus etc., and the program is reliable and able to do what is supposed to do. But so is the pirate one. The best quality cd might cost € 7 and not € 70 as the original one. Antivirus are out there for a purpose: to disinfect us, so there is a solution on that too. As far as concerning reliability? Even Microsoft gave to the consumers a service pack of Microsoft Office 97 which had a macro-code written in Access which could permit access to a third-party person inside our computer.

- **Software Programmers learn by their mistakes :** It might kinda sound like irony but since the software is pirated that means that the programmer did not take all the precautions to secure the software from being pirated. But it also means that there might be more problems, even inside the software's code. So that gives the challenge to the programmer to construct a software that is the best that it can be.

## **Conclusion**

Software piracy is not as bad as the companies want to appear it. They just want to gain as much money they can get without really care about the consumers. There are millions of programmers that construct a software, dedicate hours and hours to their software and then they just upload it on a website on the Internet for free, with the source code, in order to help other people to do their job or even other programmers to develop a better software. And what do they only ask? Just some credits and a thankful e-mail... That is something that must all make us think.