

Software Piracy, p3

Pirate bulletin board system operators invest quite a bit of money into their computer systems. Most computer systems are no less than one thousand dollars (Appendix C).

SOFTWARE PIRATE HANDLES

Software pirates employ a variety of aliases or "handles" on bulletin boards, as well as in face to face encounters. A list of handles is listed in Appendix D. These handles spring from every part of the United States culture, as well as references to the English literature and popular fantasy/science-fiction. Once a pirate has chosen his handle, s/he rarely changes it except to avoid attention (Interview #2). The handle becomes the person's alter-ego. Understanding why a particular person chose a handle may very well describe who that person is or wishes to be.

HOME SOFTWARE PIRACY

The purpose of this study was to determine the causes and effects of software piracy by the individual user, detail how software pirates disseminate pirate programs, and suggest ways to combat home computer software piracy. The causes and effects of software piracy have already been discussed; too much revenue has been lost already due to software piracy. That lost revenue has been passed on to computer users who may have had every intention of purchasing software. Once the price has been driven up, computer users turn to piracy to get software that is too expensive and they cannot use.

However, it must be noted that software pirates do not pirate software to evaluate it, nor to fight back against oppressive licensing agreements, nor upgrade scams. Software pirates steal software because they want to be on the cutting edge of software technology. If it is out there, and they can get it for free, why buy it (Interview #2)? Lowering the prices of software until they are relatively inexpensive will not stop software pirates. They pirate because they are addicted to getting the latest software before it hits the shelves. And, the way pirates accomplish this is through the network of pirate bulletin boards spanning the country.

There is only one way to combat software piracy. There is only one way to stop home computer software pirates. That way is to

outlaw pirate bulletin boards internationally. Despite great advertising campaigns against corporate piracy, home computer piracy will not be stopped because pirates see themselves as ants being chased by an elephant. The ants can swarm, walk away with everything working together, and then disappear into their respective hideouts, hideouts indiscernible to the elephant's eye, untouchable by its long trunk.

CONCLUSION

The hypothesis is retained; software pirates, despite being informed that piracy is a felony, will not stop pirating. Corporate piracy, educational piracy may be stopped. However, piracy at these centers is limited to employees taking copies of programs from work home. If there is no network of pirate bulletin boards to disperse the software internationally, then piracy is easy to stop.

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Interviewee #1. Home Computer Pirate known as Red Cadillac.

Interviewee #2. Business Home Computer Pirate known as Business

Pirate.