

# COPY-RIGHT OR COPY-WRONG – SOFTWARE LICENSING

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In this dynamic Information Technology era, increased access to the Internet has led to a significant rise in breaches of software licensing regulations. To combat this growing trend, organisations worldwide are starting to fight back by monitoring what exactly employees are up to as they surf the net, with a significant number of organisations now monitoring Internet use. In addition, a lot of illegal copies of software are readily available on the market via other forms of media.

There are a number of different licensing models that vendors can employ when it comes to distribution of their software. Some of the common ones are license per host, license per number of concurrent connections, per seat and per server licenses, site licenses, volume licenses and OEM licenses. Nowadays one may also have to register the use of product online, verifying to the vendor that they are in possession of a legal copy of the software.

With the rise in stringent software licensing regulations worldwide, there has also been an exponential growth in the availability of mechanisms to circumvent all the above mentioned licensing regimes, resulting in increased availability of pirated software. Product key generators, publishing of genuine license codes in the public domain and availability of tools to *crack* into application and operating systems software are some of the techniques that are widely utilised

Undoubtedly the advantages in using a legal copy of any software are numerous, some of which are:

- ◆ Guarantee of complete and licensed original product
- ◆ Access to full technical support
- ◆ Ability to receive latest upgrades and patches at discounted prices

- ◆ Complete documentation
- ◆ Knowledge of full compliance and freedom from risk of prosecution

Yet the practice of using unlicensed software is on an incline throughout the world. Results from a survey of students at UNITEC Institute of Technology, Auckland indicate that there is widespread use of unlicensed software, especially on home computers. Costs associated with purchasing of software licenses and the ease of availability of unlicensed copies together with the lack of rigorous law enforcements in this area are the major reasons why one is tempted to use such copies.

Whatever the reasons may be, software that has been copied right is the only one that should exist and be installed.