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Well Over Half the World's Computer Users Admit Pirating Software, BSA Study Finds

Emerging markets drove the commercial value of software theft to a new record \$63.4 billion in 2011

Washington, DC — May 15 — Well over half the world's personal computer users — 57 percent — admit they acquire pirated software, the Business Software Alliance reported today in the ninth-annual [BSA Global Software Piracy Study](#). Some users say they pirate all or most of the time, according to the study. Others say they do it occasionally or rarely. The net effect fueled a global software piracy rate of 42 percent last year.

The commercial value of all this pirated software climbed from \$58.8 billion in 2010 to \$63.4 billion in 2011, a new record, propelled by PC shipments to emerging economies where piracy rates are highest.

"If 57 percent of consumers admitted they shoplift, authorities would react by increasing police patrols and penalties. Software piracy demands a similarly forceful response — concerted public education and vigorous law enforcement," said BSA President and CEO Robert Holleyman.

Overall, the study found that piracy rates in emerging markets tower over those in mature markets — 68 percent to 24 percent, on average — and emerging markets account for an overwhelming majority of the global increase in the commercial value of software theft. This is because emerging economies are rapidly extending their influence over the global PC market. (They took in 56 percent of last year's shipments.) It is also because frequent pirates in emerging economies install nearly four times more software per new PC than their counterparts in the developed world.

Other key findings of the 2011 BSA Global Software Piracy Study:

- There is strong global support for IP rights and protections in principle, but a troubling lack of incentive for pirates to change their behavior in practice. Just 20 percent of frequent pirates in mature markets — and 15 percent in emerging markets — say the risk of getting caught is a reason not to do it.

- The most frequent software pirates are disproportionately young and male — and they are more than twice as likely to live in an emerging economy as they are to live in a mature one (38 percent to 15 percent).
- The most frequent software pirates also are the most voracious software users. They report installing 55 percent more software on their computers than do non-pirates. This gives them an outsized impact on the global piracy rate.
- Business decision makers admit to pirating software more frequently than other users — and they are more than twice as likely as others to say they buy software for one computer and then install it on additional machines in their offices.
- By its sheer scale, China has the most troubling piracy problem. China’s illegal software market was worth nearly \$9 billion in 2011 versus a legal market of less than \$3 billion, making its piracy rate 77 percent. Moreover, buyers in China spend just \$8.89 per PC on legal software, less than a quarter of the amount buyers spend in other BRIC markets.

“IP theft is a global economic drain, stifling not only IT innovation, but job creation across all sectors of the economy,” said BSA Senior Vice President of Anti-Piracy Jodie Kelley. “Governments, especially in emerging markets where most of the theft is taking place, must take steps to modernize their IP laws and expand enforcement efforts to ensure that those who pirate software face real consequences.”

BSA conducted its ninth annual study of global software piracy in partnership with IDC and Ipsos Public Affairs, two of the world’s leading independent research firms. The study methodology involves collecting 182 discrete data inputs and assessing PC and software trends in 116 markets. This year’s study also included a survey of nearly 15,000 computer users in 33 countries that together account for 82 percent of the global PC market.

Full copies of the BSA Global Software Piracy Study, plus additional information about the study’s methodology and findings, are available for download on BSA’s website: www.bsa.org/globalstudy.

About BSA

The Business Software Alliance (www.bsa.org) is the leading global advocate for the software industry. It is an association of nearly 100 world-class companies that invest billions of dollars annually to create software solutions that spark the economy and improve modern life. Through international government relations, intellectual property enforcement and educational activities, BSA expands the horizons of the digital world and builds trust and confidence in the new technologies driving it forward.

