Security Threats Rank as Top Reason Not to Use Illegal Software, BSA Survey Finds

Sydney, Australia — 24 June 2014 — Computer users cite the risk of security threats from malware as the top reason not to use unlicensed software. Among their specific concerns are intrusions by hackers and loss of data. Yet 21 percent of the software installed on personal computers in Australia in 2013 was not properly licensed.

The BSA Global Software Survey, released today, underscores the need for effective software management practices, especially in business settings.

“Businesses and consumers should be mindful of potential financial and security risks they are taking if they have unlicensed software installed on their computers,” said Chair of the BSA Australia Committee, Clayton Noble.

“There are common-sense steps managers and administrators can take to make sure their organisation uses genuine, properly licensed software.”

The BSA Global Software Survey is conducted every other year for BSA by IDC, which this year polled computer users in 34 markets including nearly 22,000 consumer and business PC users and more than 2,000 IT managers. Among the findings:

- The rate at which PC software was installed without proper licensing in Australia was 21 percent in 2013, a reduction of 2 percentage points since 2011. However the commercial value of that unlicensed software has more than doubled over the past decade, totaling AU$837 million in 2013.

- The chief reason computer users around the world cite for not using unlicensed software is avoiding security threats from malware. Among the risks associated with unlicensed software, 64 percent of users globally cited unauthorised access by hackers as a top concern and 59 percent cited loss of data.

- IT managers around the world express understandable concern that unlicensed software may cause harm, yet less than half say they are very confident that their company’s software is properly licensed.
Only 35 percent of companies globally have written policies in place requiring use of properly licensed software.

“This study shows that there is much work to be done and serves as a reminder of the importance of using properly licensed software," said Noble. “There are basic steps any company can take to ensure it is fully compliant, like establishing a formal policy on licensed software use and maintaining careful records. Companies should also implement robust software asset management programs that follow internationally accepted guidelines, including regular reviews of software licenses and deployments. These SAM programs will ensure adequate controls are in place and provide a full view into what is installed on a network. This helps organisations to avoid security and operational risks, and will ensure they have the right number of licenses for their users.”

Among the other findings in BSA’s Global Software Survey:

- The global rate at which PC software was installed without proper licensing rose from 42 percent in 2011 to 43 percent in 2013 as emerging economies where unlicensed software use is most prevalent continued to account for a growing majority of all PCs in service.

- The commercial value of unlicensed PC software installations totaled US$62.7 billion globally in 2013.

- The region with the highest overall rate of unlicensed PC software installations in 2013 was Asia-Pacific, at 62 percent. This represented a 2 percentage-point increase from 2011, with the commercial value of unlicensed installations reaching US$21 billion.

A full copy of BSA’s Global Software Survey, including country-specific data, is available for download on BSA’s website: [www.bsa.org/globalstudy](http://www.bsa.org/globalstudy).

About BSA

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