Value of Unlicensed PC Software Installed in East and Southern Africa Toted $540 Million in 2013, Despite Security Concerns

Kenya — 01 July, 2014 — An average of 73 percent of the software installed on personal computers (PCs) across East and Southern Africa in 2013 was not properly licensed, according to the 2013 Global Software Survey released by BSA | The Software Alliance (BSA). The report found the commercial value of unlicensed software in Kenya alone totaled $128 million last year; in the Middle East and Africa the commercial value of unlicensed software was $4.3 billion in 2013.

According to the report, rates of unlicensed software installations declined slightly across the region from 2011 to 2013. In Kenya, the rate was unchanged at 78 percent in 2013; Botswana declined one point to 79 percent; Zimbabwe declined one point to 91 percent; Zambia declined one point to 81 percent; and South Africa declined one point to 34 percent. However, the commercial value of unlicensed software across the region actually decreased from $672 million in 2011 to $540 million in 2013.

The survey reported that computer users cite the risk of security threats from malware as the top reason to avoid unlicensed software. Among their specific concerns are intrusions by hackers and loss of data. Yet in the enterprise, only 35 percent of companies globally have written policies in place requiring use of properly licensed software.

“While unlicensed software use has declined slightly, rates are still too high and detrimental to economic growth,” said Marius Haman, Corporate Attorney, Digital Crimes Unit at Microsoft, one of BSA’s member companies. “Reducing unlicensed software use will help to stimulate the economy, enhance businesses productivity
and better avoid security risks. Security is especially important in light of the growing threat of cybercrime.”

Globally, unlicensed software use continues to be a major problem with 43 percent of the software installed on PCs around the world not properly licensed. Emerging markets now account for 56 percent of all PCs in use globally — and nearly three-quarters of all unlicensed software installations (73 percent). That trend is likely to continue.

One of the alarming trends revealed in the study is the significant gap between workers’ and IT managers’ awareness of company software policies. A full 42 percent of workers say their companies either do not have a policy on licensed software use or they don’t know, while 86 percent of IT managers claim that their companies have either a written policy or an informal one. It is no surprise, then, that less than half of IT managers surveyed are very confident that their company’s software is properly licensed.

"Most people don’t know what is installed on their systems. That needs to change," said BSA President and CEO Victoria Espinel. "There are common-sense steps managers and administrators can take to make sure their organisations are using genuine, properly licensed software.”

Another concern for businesses is accidental piracy. “As methods to manufacture and sell counterfeit software become more sophisticated, there is an urgent need for greater awareness of this critical problem. Unsuspecting companies are at risk of downloading or purchasing counterfeit software that can expose them to spyware, malware and viruses that can lead to identity theft, loss of data, and system failures,” said Haman. “Local law enforcement is taking action to tackle software counterfeiting. An effective partnership between the public and private sector is crucial to reducing unlicensed software use.”

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

- The commercial value of unlicensed PC software installations totaled $62.7 billion globally in 2013, a slight decrease from $63.5 billion in 2011.

- Among the risks associated with unlicensed software, 64 percent of users cited unauthorized access by hackers as a top concern and 59 percent cited loss of data.

- The Middle East and Africa has the third highest regional rate of unlicensed software tied with Latin America at 59 percent. Asia-Pacific has the highest
rate in the world (62 percent) followed by Central and Eastern Europe (61 percent).

- Although a gradual shift is occurring in the delivery of software functionality to the cloud, it is not likely to lower the rate of unlicensed software installations anytime soon. According to the survey, 52 percent of respondents said they shared log-in credentials, up from 42 percent in 2011.

About the Study

The BSA Global Software Survey, conducted in partnership with IDC, estimates the volume and value of unlicensed software installed on personal computers in 2013 across more than 110 national and regional economies. It also reveals key social attitudes and behaviors related to software licensing, intellectual property, and emerging technologies based on a global survey of more than 24,000 respondents. For more information about the methodology and a copy of the complete report, visit bsa.org/globalstudy.

About BSA

BSA | The Software Alliance (www.bsa.org) is the leading advocate for the global software industry before governments and in the international marketplace. Its members are among the world’s most innovative companies, creating software solutions that spark the economy and improve modern life. With headquarters in Washington, DC and operations in more than 60 countries around the world, BSA pioneers compliance programs that promote legal software use and advocates for public policies that foster technology innovation and drive growth in the digital economy.