

October 17, 2006



## **Beware the Software Police: Is Your Company Legal?**

So you have twenty workstations in your office and two servers. Do you know what kind of software is on your machines? Do you have legal licenses for all of it? How can you be sure?

The Business Software Alliance is an organization that champions online safety and provides free information and tools to promote the legal use of software. The BSA has come up with a four-step plan for businesses to make sure they are in compliance with the software licensing laws. Here is a brief description:

### **Step One: Have a Plan**

Make sure that the person responsible for purchasing software buys from reputable vendors and receives all original manuals, materials and licenses with each piece of software that is purchased. Don't let your employees load unauthorized software on their systems.

### **Step Two: Do a Self-Audit**

Make a list of all software loaded on every machine. Record the product name, version number and serial number for every program. Also inventory all licenses, manuals, floppy disks, CDs or other media used to load programs on your machines.

### **Step Three: Compare What You Own to What You Have**

Check that all loaded software has its corresponding license. The license will tell you how many installations are allowed for each program. Remember, programs can be MOVED from one computer to another. However, it is illegal to COPY the program to another computer unless the license specifies more than one installation.

### **Step Four: Audit Regularly**

If you regularly check up on your software, you will be able to anticipate when it is time to upgrade your software versions and keep your company current with standard office tools. It is also a good idea to check systems when an employee leaves your company, to be sure that the software stays with you and no illegal copies have been made.

### **Helpful Hint:**

If you purchase a system with pre-loaded software, make sure it comes with legitimate installation disks and licenses. Put these items in a safe location. If your software ever needs to be reinstalled, it is IMPERATIVE that the original installation disks are available.

### **Suspicious Signs of Illegal Software Sales**

- The price is too good to be true
- The software came without traditional packaging
- The packaging or materials that came with the software look like they went through a copy machine

At TTBI, we feel that it is our responsibility to not only be software legal, but to educate our clients so that they will be aware of the laws regarding software licenses. If you are unsure about the status of your software licensing, and need assistance with a self-audit, we will be happy to assist you. We are computer consulting, and more.

For the FREE document from the Business Software Alliance on software compliance and more information on software piracy and the law, please visit [www.bsa.org](http://www.bsa.org).