



Safeguarding Your Computer



Don't Get Duped Into Getting Fake Software: Seek Help On *How To Tell* Web Site

(NAPSA)—For the average consumer or small-business owner, acquiring computer software poses an important decision. In most cases there's not much time to waste or money to burn on the transaction. But buyers should beware—the lowest-priced programs aren't necessarily the best bargains.

Microsoft Corp., a leading crusader in the effort to protect intellectual property, has recently introduced the *How to Tell* Web site, <http://www.microsoft.com/piracy/howtotell>. The site provides tools that will aid consumers in determining whether their Windows operating system software on their new PC is genuine.

How to Tell provides several services designed to direct consumers to useful information:

- Translation into over 30 languages worldwide.
- A simple click-through tour that helps consumers examine whether their Windows operating system software is genuine.
- Information on Microsoft anti-counterfeiting features, such as certificates of authenticity (COA) and edge-to-edge hologram CDs.
- Links to nearly 100 of Microsoft's OEM partners' Web sites worldwide. These Web sites provide additional information for consumers who have questions about the Microsoft Windows operating system.
- Local software piracy news.

Software piracy, which is the unauthorized copying, reproduction, use or manufacture of software, can harm consumers and businesses in many ways. Pirated software can sometimes contain viruses and is often missing key software code. And those who acquire counterfeit software are ineligible for technical support.

Closer to consumers' pocket-books, however, is the cost of piracy, which the Business Software Alliance (BSA) reports resulted in a worldwide economic loss of \$11.75 billion in 2000. The study also reports that, in 2000,



Pirated computer software is no bargain.

37 percent of business software applications in use worldwide were unlicensed, an increase from 36 percent in 1999.

"Microsoft is determined to provide education and protection for our consumers against software piracy," said Orlando Ayala, group vice president of the Worldwide Sales, Marketing and Services Group at Microsoft. "We are very excited about the *How to Tell* Web site and how it may help consumers across the world acquire genuine Microsoft Windows with their new PCs and avoid spending good money on bad software."

Here are a few additional steps consumers can take to shield themselves from being robbed by software pirates.

- Be mindful that honesty isn't everyone's policy. Counterfeit software is widely available.
- Get names and phone numbers of those you're dealing with. Save receipts, program information and other documents.
- Be a comparison shopper. Rock-bottom prices sometimes spell trouble. It's okay for a program to cost less than a manufacturer's recommendation, but if it's a lot less, that should raise a red flag.

Consumers and Microsoft resellers can receive help in distinguishing between bogus Windows operating system software and the real thing by visiting the *How to Tell* Web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/piracy/howtotell>.