



BACKGROUND ON BUSINESS

Are You Playing Roulette With Your Business?

(NAPSA)—Millions of American businesses may not realize that their employees are playing “roulette” with their organization’s corporate ethics and computer safety by pirating software.

That’s because running software without a valid license—regardless of how ethical the business is—is software theft, and that’s a high-stakes gamble for any organization.

According to the Business Software Alliance, employees download illegal software from peer-to-peer systems and buy and install counterfeit or unauthorized products on office computers every day. It only takes one employee to download unlicensed software onto office computers to put the company at risk for serious legal and financial consequences. Under federal law, each program infringed may lead to a penalty of up to \$150,000, and an organization can be held liable for its employees’ actions. In addition, software piracy may expose a company to viruses capable of crashing a company’s computers and networks.

By ignoring an organization’s need for responsible software management and regular audits, a business owner will never fully know if unlicensed software exists on company computers. Whether due to end-user copying or employee downloading, the very existence of unlicensed software puts businesses and their owners at significant risk—digitally, ethically and financially. It’s critical that businesses understand the importance of proper software management and put a policy in place to protect themselves.

“Why should companies use



Illegal business software can cause numerous problems.

licensed software?” asks Bob Kruger, vice president, Business Software Alliance. “It protects a company’s network from viruses, is less likely to fail, comes with full customer support and warranties, helps a business avoid fines and prosecution, is good corporate ethics and, most importantly, it’s the law!”

Don’t gamble with your business. Protect your company by establishing a software management program. Here are six tips to help you get started:

- Develop a company policy on software usage and have employees sign it annually;
- Appoint a software manager who is in charge of purchasing and tracking all software;
- Audit company software regularly, checking employees’ computers for unlicensed software brought from home or downloaded illegally from the Internet;
- Schedule periodic software management training sessions for new or existing employees;
- Continually educate employees about the company’s software usage policy; and
- Turn to the Business Software Alliance (BSA) for tools and advice on establishing and enforcing the company’s software usage policy. Call 1-888-NO-PIRACY or visit www.bsaaudit.com.