TO: Administrators of the Computer Science Department

FROM: Luke Miller, Graduate Student

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SUBJECT: Software Piracy Awareness at Murray State University

**Introduction**

Software piracy has become a serious problem all over the world and has become a greater danger to the entertainment industry which loses billions of dollars a year to illegal downloading and piracy. The problem of this report was to determine just how knowledgeable college students were of this problem and also to find out how many have or do participate in this act. I asked a variety of questions to a variety of people to try and find out just how common this problem is.

**Scope**

My main purpose and goal behind this survey was to determine the attitudes and awareness of the average college student to this very common problem that haunts us today. Without knowing how common this problem is you can never really try to stop it because you do not know where to start. I think trying to figure out how common the problem is, is the first step in trying to put a stop to it completely.

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**Procedures.**

I started off this process by asking four simple true/false questions which all had the same answer of true. The questions were as follows: 1. Purchased software is covered by copyright law and generally allows for only a backup copy to be made by the purchaser. 2. Making copies of copyrighted software for distribution to others (software piracy) is a federal crime. 3. Making a copy of a software program owned by my company for use at home, unless expressly allowed, is a violation of copyright law. 4. Software piracy is punishable by both fine and imprisonment. The next series of questions I asked in the survey dealt with three specific situations. To each question, the students were asked to give their honest answers and were assured that all responses would remain confidential. The situations given are as follows: 1. Your employer has purchased *Visual Communicator* for use on your computer at work. You have a computer at home and would like to have a copy of the program for you and your family’s personal use. You would… 2. You visit a local computer software store and see *Visual Communicator* with a price of $149. You would… 3.You obtain a copy of Visual Communicator. A friend asks you for a copy of it, You would… Based on the results to these questions I gathered my data and came up with my conclusion.

**Findings**

My findings were not really that surprising to me as a college student because I already had a hypothesis on how my results would turn out. For each question and situations given my results were as follows:

1. Purchased software is covered by copyright law and generally allows for only a backup copy to be made by the purchaser.

84 true 16 false

2. Making copies of copyrighted software for distribution to others (software piracy) is a federal crime.

94 true 6 false

3. Making a copy of a software program owned by my company for use at home, unless expressly allowed, is a violation of copyright law.

82 true 18 false

4. Software piracy is punishable by both fine and imprisonment.

92 true 8 false

1. Your employer has purchased *Visual Communicator* for use on your computer at work. You have a computer at home and would like to have a copy of the program for you and your family’s personal use. You would

a. Make a copy of the disk for use at home and buy a manual at Amazon. (38 responses)

b .Make a copy of the disk and photocopy the manual for home use. (50 responses)

c. Wait until you could afford to purchase a copy for yourself. (12 responses)

2. You visit a local computer software store and see *Visual Communicator* with a price of $149. You would

a. Buy it now or if money is short, come back later to buy it. (100 responses)

b. Shoplift the software. (0 responses)

3. You obtain a copy of *Visual Communicator*. A friend asks you for a copy of it, You would

a. Give your friend a copy of the program. (58 responses)

b. Trade your friend a copy of *Visual Communicator* for a copy of *Adobe Photoshop*. (22 responses)

c. Sell your friend a copy for $25. (6 responses)

d. Tell your friend that he/she must purchase a copy. (14 responses)

**Analysis**

Based on the data given it is fairly obvious that almost every college student out there is somewhat familiar with piracy and illegal downloading. This is a big issue that we face as a world. The more technology advances the easier it will become to access anything illegally. At some point people just have to look in the mirror and realize this is a problem that deals with our morals as a world more than anything else.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Conclusions**. The following conclusions are made based on this study.

1. Piracy and illegal downloading is a well known problem that is very relevant.

2. This problem is not something that is just going to go away it is something that is always going to be around.

3. Lastly, The entertainment industry faces a tough road ahead as far as ways to prevent this kind of thing from happening goes.

**Recommendations**. The following recommendations are made based on the conclusions of this study:

1. Better internet security and monitoring should be allowed to control this.
2. We should not just ignore the problem and hope it goes away but we should be actively trying to come up with a solution to this problem.
3. Professors and teachers should know this an occurring problem and should speak out against it if the topic is ever brought up in a class discussion.
4. The university should try to better there internet security to atleast keep people from doing this.