

BSA Global Software Survey results released

Computer users cite the risk of security threats from malware as the top reason not to use unlicensed software. Among their specific concerns are intrusions by hackers and the loss of data. However, 34% of the software installed on personal computers in South Africa in 2013 was not properly licensed.



These and other findings released today in the BSA Global Software Survey underscore the need for effective software management practices, especially in business settings.

"There has been a one percentage-point decrease in the use of unlicensed software since 2011. We hope this is the start of a downward trend that suggests South Africa is beginning to appreciate the value of genuine software," explained Marius Haman, chairman of the South Africa committee of BSA|The Software Alliance. "Properly licensed software offers reduced risk and increased operational efficiency, and should be seen as an important business asset."

The BSA Global Software Survey is conducted every other year for BSA by IDC, which this year polled computer users in 34 markets including nearly 22,000 consumer and business PC users and more than 2000 IT managers. Among the findings:

- The rate at which PC software was installed without proper licensing in South Africa was 35% in 2013, a one percentage point decrease since 2011. The commercial value of that unlicensed software totalled R4.11 billion.
- The chief reason that computer users around the world cite for not using unlicensed software is avoiding security threats from malware. Among the risks associated with unlicensed software, 64% of users globally cited unauthorised access by hackers as a top concern and 59% cited loss of data.
- IT managers around the world express understandable concern that unlicensed software may cause harm, yet less than half say they are very confident that their company's software is properly licensed.

- Only 35% of companies globally have written policies in place requiring use of properly licensed software.

"The reality is that South African businesses are operating within a thriving digital economy and properly licensed software will help ensure that they run as efficiently and securely as possible," said Haman. "Smart software management processes can help build confidence in South African businesses and their ability to transact securely over the internet, which could have a massive positive impact on our fledgling economy."

"Unlicensed software use is an organisational governance issue - and this study shows there is a clear need for improvement," said BSA president and CEO, Victoria Espinel. "There are basic steps any company can take to ensure it is fully compliant, like establishing a formal policy on licensed software use and maintaining careful records. Companies also should consider implementing more robust software asset management programs that follow internationally accepted guidelines. These SAM programs can deliver substantial value by ensuring adequate controls are in place to provide a full view into what is installed on a network. That helps organisations avoid security and operational risks, and it ensures they have the right number of licenses for their users."

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

- The global rate at which PC software was installed without proper licensing rose from 42% in 2011 to 43% in 2013 as emerging economies where unlicensed software use is most prevalent continued to account for a growing majority of all PCs in service.
- The commercial value of unlicensed PC software installations totalled USD62.7 billion globally in 2013.
- The region with the highest overall rate of unlicensed PC software installations in 2013 was Asia-Pacific, at 62%. This represented a two percentage-point increase from 2011, with the commercial value of unlicensed installations reaching USD21 billion.

A full copy of BSA's Global Software Survey, including country-specific data, is available for download on www.bsa.org/globalstudy.

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