

SIIA warns of pirated software

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The SIIA is alerting holiday shoppers to the dangers of pirated software. The Software & Information Industry Association warned consumers Monday to be on the lookout for pirated software this holiday season. The number of people who unwittingly purchase or receive pirated software as gifts goes up during the holidays as shoppers look to stretch their gift-buying budgets, the group said.

The association warned in a release that "while the price may be right, selling and distributing pirated software is illegal and costly to all consumers." Studies have determined that the software industry loses roughly \$12 billion every year due to illegally copied software.

"Popular video games, business applications and home software have all been widely copied and distributed illegally," said Keith Kupferschmid, SIIA's vice president of Intellectual Property Policy & Enforcement.

The SIIA noted that despite steep discounts, "illegal software always comes with a hidden price tag."

The group said in its release, "Users won't have access to technical support or upgrades. Patches that repair software vulnerabilities will also be unavailable. Worst of all, pirated software can come pre-loaded with a virus or other malicious code."

Pirated software is not sold only off the back of trucks or at sidewalk stands, the SIIA said. The rise of e-commerce has provided a new venue to pirates, and many set up professional looking Web sites or "crooked"

auctions through eBay or other auction sites to lure consumers.

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