

Microsoft unleashes lawsuits, raids in piracy crackdown

December 4 2009, By John Letzing

Microsoft Corp. said Thursday it has unleashed a series of lawsuits and is cooperating in criminal prosecutions worldwide in an effort to stem piracy of its software.

All told, Microsoft said it has launched some 300 "enforcement actions," which include civil suits and raids in about 70 countries worldwide. The company also is drawing attention to the "forensic labs" in nine cities, designed to detect [counterfeit software](#).

Microsoft's [Windows software](#) dominates the global market for [personal computer](#) operating systems, providing a solid anchor for the company's other offerings, such as the Office suite of word processing, spreadsheet and other tools.

But rampant piracy has periodically taken a significant bite out the company's quarterly results.

Microsoft said Thursday that the crackdown includes raids by China's Copyright Administration against 12 companies there charged with counterfeiting software, and the filing of a lawsuit against a local "system builder for hard-disk loading piracy."

The Redmond, Wash.-based [software](#) giant said it also filed four civil legal actions in India, coupled with four "criminal market sweeps."

Pirated copies of Microsoft's latest iteration of Windows, Windows 7,

can be purchased on the black market in India for as little as \$1, according to recent media reports. Windows 7 was released in October, and Microsoft is counting on it to help burnish its image following a relatively poor reception for its predecessor, Windows Vista.

While a relatively small percentage of Microsoft's sales occur in developing markets such as China and India, the company is looking to them to provide future growth.

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