

## MICROSOFT SOUNDS COUNTERFEIT SOFTWARE ALERT, HACKERS COULD SNOOP YOUR DATA



Microsoft launched a Global piracy awareness campaign this week, appraising businesses of the dangers and threat of counterfeit software invading their businesses when downloading software from the Internet. However, Microsoft's "Piracy Lurks Everywhere" video, is rather vague and befuddling and at first viewing leaves the viewer mystified about what it is trying to say. The images of men with digital cameras concealed under the copier, of attractive female employees going about their work with gay abandon, and a pair of shifty preying eyes stalking their every move, belittles the seriousness of the issue of piracy and dilutes its dangers more than highlighting them. However, a second and third viewing clears the ambiguity somewhat. One deciphers that the message that the video intends to send out is that downloading unauthorized software could have serious security and privacy issues. The visuals highlight the danger of putting your credit card number on sites that promise very lucrative deals at astronomical discounts. It shows that when people break into your businesses network, they can see everything that gets copied or scanned. This could include credit cards, confidential documents, driver license numbers and other classified documents. Microsoft's invitation at the end to visit [www.howtotell.com](http://www.howtotell.com) to know everything about how to identify genuine software actually contains useful advice that the ad unfortunately is unable to convey. According to their blog more than 400,000 people from around the world have reported buying or receiving pirated software to Microsoft since 2005. Piracy is not just teenagers using seedy sites to download movies or games for free. Its face is much larger. Microsoft had filed a complaint against UK electronics retailer Comet. According to Microsoft, the store chain illegally duplicated around 94,000 copies of Window Vista and Windows XP and sold them to their customers. Since, the illicit software market has pervaded every nook and corner of the globe and can be easily accessed through auction websites, online retailers selling illegal software and since it is often hard to decipher the genuine seller from the counterfeit, perhaps a stronger and straightforward ad was needed to ram home the message. The ad has, in spite of its ambiguity, generated considerable curiosity and has been viewed by many. Though a majority of the viewers are cynical of the ads content and effectiveness, there are others who feel that the ad has a subtle message interwoven with the visuals, that whilst counseling the people about the perils of unlicensed software, it also tells them that it is morally and ethically wrong to buy and sell such software.