CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

香港城市大學

A MODEL OF SELF-REPORTED LENIENCY TOWARDS SOFTWARE PIRACY IN HONG KONG

針對香港電腦軟件之自我態度模式研究

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Abstract

This dissertation reports the results of the first comprehensive study of software piracy in Hong Kong utilizing the grounded theory approach. Qualitative data were used to generate hypotheses, which were then tested using survey methodology. The results have important implications for controlling a multi-million dollar problem in "Asia's World City".

The costs of software piracy are enormous. In 2001, it was estimated that the software industry lost $10.97 billion due to software piracy (BSA, 2002). Software developers pass this loss on to the users of original software. Software piracy has been investigated from various disciplinary perspectives, including the legal perspective, (Swinyard, Rinne, Kau, 1990; Im & Van Epps, 1992; Robinson & Reithel, 1994), the decision-making perspective (Taylor and Shim, 1993; Simpson, Banerjee, & Simpson Jr, 1994; Sims, Cheng, & Teegen, 1996; Banerjee, Cronan & Jones, 1998; Thong & Yap , 1998; Wager & Sanders, 2001) and the moral perspective (Lee. Eining & Long, 1994; Logsdon, Thompson, Reid, 1994; Kini, Rominger & Vijayaraman, 2000). While these studies offer some insights, many of the results are contradictory. In addition, most of the studies were conducted in Western countries, particularly the United States. Given the immature state of theory, and the obvious cultural differences between Western countries and Hong Kong, it was considered advisable to begin "with a blank sheet of

paper".

The study, therefore, began with a content analysis of messages collected from an Internet based users' discussion forum in Hong Kong, and from an online survey. Using the grounded theory approach, I identified five main factors as predictors of the reported leniency toward software piracy.

In the second phase, I developed and administered a survey to 263 Hong Kong computer end-users participating in a computer exhibition. Findings suggest that respondents' knowledge of software copyright law and availability of original software have direct effects on self-reported leniency towards software piracy. Social acceptance towards software piracy, the cost of original software, and respondent gender were also found to affect self-reported acts of software piracy. Theoretical implications, as well as practical implications for preventing software piracy, are discussed.

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