

## Unlicensed Software

A recent report commissioned by the BSA and conducted by IDC, the global market intelligence firm found that London is responsible for more reports of software piracy than any other city in the UK, with one in five pieces being used illegally. The report claims that London businesses are installing pirated software worth £149m each year.

Small businesses often do not have sophisticated IT departments and because they have often grown quickly and organically are particularly susceptible to the use of unlicensed software.

According to the Business Software Alliance (BSA), such firms run the risk of legal difficulties as they do not have the resources to perform the necessary checks on every programme on each computer.

Whilst the BSA admits that businesses using unlicensed software may not be doing so deliberately, this does not mean that it is not illegal and could lead to possible repercussions.

The BSA is running a regional initiative throughout June and July to raise awareness of software piracy's impact on businesses and the local economy and inform companies of the benefits of effective management. It plans to contact over 1,000 firms in the capital offering a software health check.

### Impact on the Small to Medium Sized Business in Yorkshire and Humberside

- Business systems may not be fully protected with security updates and patches if they are using unlicensed software
- If automatic updates are turned off with respect to Microsoft Updates, it could be an indication that a genuine copy of Windows is not installed
- Businesses in the region may have grown quickly in a short space of time from a home office environment utilising freeware to a situation where licensed software is a legal requirement
- Consider the implications should staff wittingly or unwittingly download unlicensed software or copyrighted music for example. The business will be liable for this. Are policies and training in place to mitigate the risk?

To find out more about the BSA and its campaign against unlicensed software, go to <http://www.bsa.org/>

For free, impartial, bespoke advice on security, implementing the right systems and how to protect against the risks posed by unlicensed software, please contact the Business Crime Reduction Centre on 01142751314.