

Buyer Beware...

TIPS FOR ONLINE CONSUMERS

Educating yourself on how to identify illegal software helps protect you from online scams. Here are 10 helpful tips from the BSA that will steer you in the right direction:

- **Trust your instincts.** Check the online seller's price against the estimated retail value of the software. If a price seems "too good to be true," it probably is.
- **Make sure it's authentic.** Be suspicious of software products that do not include proof of authenticity such as original disks, manuals, licensing, services policies, and warranties.
- **Beware of backups.** Avoid sellers offering to make backup copies. This is a clear indication that the software is illegal.
- **Steer clear of compilations.** Be wary of compilations of software titles from different publishers on a single disk or CD.
- **Get seller's contact information.** If you cannot contact the seller after making a purchase, you may have no recourse if the product turns out to be pirated. Make certain to get the seller's address, if possible.
- **Keep Receipts.** Printout a copy of your order number and sales confirmation and file them for your records. This information will help build your case if it is pirated and further action is needed.
- **Ensure secure payment.** Make certain that the Internet connections you are using are secure.
- **Understand transaction terms.** Get a clear understanding of the merchant's policies concerning returns and refunds, shipping costs, and security and privacy protection before you complete the transaction. Most importantly, look for a trust mark from a reputable organization to make sure the online retailer is reliable and has a proven track record of satisfying customers.
- **Do your homework.** Before making a purchase, do as much research on the seller and vendor as you can. Check the seller's rating or feedback comments when on an auction site. Some of the most frequently sold titles on auction sites include products by Adobe, Autodesk, Corel, Intuit, McAfee, Microsoft, and Symantec.
- **Ask the experts.** Contact the BSA with any concerns or questions by calling **1-888-NOPIRACY** or visiting our website **WWW.BSA.ORG**.

