# Why you should always use original software



Photo: Microsoft

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DigitalOne, AsiaOne | 06-05-13

It may be a poorly-packaged CD being peddled in a night market. A bundle being offered at a 'special discount'. Or an apparently genuine product being sold at an unbelievably low price.

Before you think you've got a bargain on your hands, make sure that the software you are about to buy is a genuine, licensed item from the original manufacturer. Otherwise, you might be bringing home malware, viruses and even hidden programs that can compromise your online banking systems and steal your identity.

"Using counterfeit software exponentially increases the risk of exposure to viruses and spyware as well as the potential for data corruption, theft, and financial loss for consumers," said Mr Jonathan Selvasegaram, Corporate Attorney at Microsoft Corporation.

He said that a recent study by Microsoft revealed that 69 per cent of counterfeit software DVDs and computers running illegal copies of Windows in the region were found to contain "high-risk malware infections and viruses".

The study showed that 5,601 instances and 1,131 unique strains of malware and virus infections were found in new laptops installed with pirated and counterfeit software. They included the highly dangerous "Zeus" Trojan virus, which can capture a user's keystrokes to steal personal information such as banking IDs, account usernames and passwords.

A more basic issue faced by users of pirated software is that the software does not work properly. Users find that they cannot activate the software, cannot read the disc or experience system instabilities after installing the software.

Using original software, however, assures you that you have a working product that is constantly patched and updated to protect your computer from the latest security threats. It "safeguards users' private information, guarantees solid performance, and provides technical support and latest software updates to ensure greater productivity and security," said Mr Selvasegaram.

He gives the following advice for consumers who want to ensure that they are buying a genuine Microsoft software:

- Always purchase from software from trusted retailers only

- Avoid deals that are 'too good to be true'

- Ensure that software purchases come in their original packaging. When purchasing a new PC, they should always ask for genuine, pre-installed operating system.