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Quarterly Digest

October - December 1998

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How Can You Tell If It's Counterfeit Software?

- Price. If it's too good to be true, it's probably a pirated copy.
- Insist on Documentation. Even a used software program should come with an operating manual, licensing information, certificate of authenticity, or holographic stickers. Note: Even programs that are preloaded into your computer should come with proper documentation.
- Examine labels and packaging. A disk with a hand-written label is an obvious rip-off. But look for more subtle signs like package logos or colors that don't look correct.
- If in doubt, call the software maker.

For additional information, or to report suspected software piracy:

Microsoft: (800) RU-LEGIT

Business Software Alliance: (888) NO-PIRACY

Software Publishers' Association: (800) 388-7478

Link instantly to websites for the above organizations:

<http://www.grayzone.com/links.htm>

See also: San Francisco Chronicle, "Technology," November 9, 1998 (Benny Evangelista)

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Baltimore Bootlegger Fined \$15,000

Brian Burkett, the owner of Sound Garden -- the largest independent record store in Baltimore -- was fined \$15,000 for selling bootleg CDs. Burkett, who refused to cooperate with the RIAA and Baltimore City Police Department, was also sentenced to one year supervised probation.

RIAA Fast Tracks, September 15, 1998

Latin Music Pirate Sentenced to Prison

Bernardo Campos Lopez is currently in jail serving a one-year sentence for violating California's True Name and Address Statute. Lopez was illegally producing thousands of counterfeit cassettes of many top Latin artists. The RIAA, along with the San Bernadino County Sheriff's Department, seized more than 250 cassettes used as masters and nearly a million counterfeit insert labels.

RIAA Fast Tracks, September 29, 1998

Record CD-Recordable Bust In California

The Anaheim Police Department, along with the RIAA, confiscated more than 32,000 alleged counterfeit and pirate CDs, most of which were CD-Rs. A total of 39 CD-R burners (the hardware used to copy the CDs) --capable of producing more than 1,500 CDs during a 10-hour shift -- were also seized along with almost 1.2 million alleged counterfeit insert cards and four computers. It was California's largest ever CD-R bust. An investigation is ongoing with several arrests expected.

RIAA Fast Tracks, November 3, 1998

First Time Offender Sentenced in Music Piracy Case

The Los Angeles County Superior court sentenced Leonard Wojtowicz to one year of house arrest that requires him to wear an electronic ankle bracelet. Wojtowicz, 65, was also ordered to pay \$10,000 in restitution to the RIAA for brokering illegal CD orders at replication facilities in southern California.

RIAA Fast Tracks, November 3, 1998

Counterfeit Label Supplier Behind Bars

The RIAA is going after folks who willfully supply music pirates with materials and equipment. George Krezinger was sentenced to one year in jail and fined \$20,000 for distributing counterfeit cassette labels. Arrested in March 1998, Krezinger was supplying labels to an Arlington, Texas counterfeit cassette factory that specialized in Latin music.

RIAA Fast Tracks, November 11, 1998

Four Arrested For Video Piracy In California

Four people were arrested in connection with a multi-million-dollar video piracy ring operating south of downtown Los Angeles. Among the locations raided were two video stores and two so-called video labs. Police confiscated 2,800 video cassettes and 39 VCRs. The investigation was initiated by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and then turned over to police. MPAA president Jack Valenti praised the Los Angeles Police Department's new financial crimes division that features a special emphasis on intellectual property crimes. This ring allegedly did about four million dollars in business a year.

Yahoo/Reuters [California News], November 25, 1998

Good Cop - Bad Cop?

New Haven, Connecticut police officer Captain James Sorrentino was charged with trying to return seized videotapes to a store for money. At press time, Sorrentino was scheduled to answer second-degree larceny charges. Investigators say the tapes were confiscated in a bootlegging investigation and should have been destroyed.

Yahoo.com/States News Service, November 18, 1998

Recommended Reading

"**The Widower's Two-Step**" by Rick Riordan, Bantam Books, 1998

The world of bootlegging comes to life in this complex murder mystery that takes place in and around the country western music scene in Texas.

Point Your Browser Tip: <http://www.flash.net/~huisache/>

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How Low Can You Go? Pirates Exploit Linda's Memory

According to a scathing feature article in London's Sunday Mirror, pirates--allegedly from the Holland-based Yellow Cat Records--are cashing in on Linda McCartney's death by "flooding Britain with pirated CDs of her last songs," according to the article. The pirate CD is called "Appaloosa Love," apparently named after Linda's favorite breed of horse.

The paper went so far as to name the alleged bootleggers: "The Mr. Big behind the shady operation is 35-year-old Dutchman Joss Remmerswall. Remmerswall, who has convictions for counterfeiting in Holland, masterminds the ring from an office in The Hague, aided by two sidekicks called Stan and Andre...Yellow Cat moved to the Hague a year ago after the authorities in Amsterdam and Luxembourg forced him out."

Remmerswall, claimed the paper, also does business as Yellow Dog Records and Black Cat Records.

"Wide Prairie," the official CD, was released recently, with all profits going to animal charities. The CD was compiled by Linda's husband, ex-Beatle Sir Paul, as a tribute from songs recorded during her fight against cancer.

Sir Paul is said to be deeply saddened upon learning that the bootleggers printed on the CD's sleeve the last words he spoke to his wife on her deathbed. To add insult to injury, the jacket of the CD features--without permission--one of the last photos of Linda taken by her daughter Mary. The pirate CD contains 22 tracks, including master recordings and outtakes from "Wide Prairie."

According to a friend: "Paul took this very personally. He is devastated that someone has sunk so low."

Sir Paul's publishing company MPL, along with the British Phonographic Industry (BPI), has launched an intensive investigation into the matter. BPI Security director Dave Martin told the Mirror: "We are taking this very seriously. Even other bootleggers think this is below the belt."

London Sunday Mirror, October 25, 1998; ICE Magazine, December, 1998

Hootiecast

Representatives from Hootie and the Blowfish and the RIAA recently spoke to a group of students at North Carolina State University on the importance of respecting copyrighted songs on the Internet. Hootie drummer James Sonefeld, along with his manager, lawyer and an RIAA representative spoke to the class and answered questions regarding the proliferation of unauthorized Internet sound recordings. "I think it's very similar to prostitution," said Hootie's manager, Rusty Harmon, when asked about bootlegs. "The guy in Italy making copies is the pimp. The product you're buying are the whores." The two-hour session -- dubbed Hootiecast -- was also broadcast on the Internet.

AP News - The Associated Press News Service, September 3, 1998; RIAA Fast Tracks, September 15, 1998

Special 'Beat the Boots' Mention: David Bowie

Always on the cutting edge, David Bowie plans to introduce the first "virtual CD" in music history. Currently in progress at his Internet Service Provider (ISP): <http://www.davidbowie.com>, the cyber CD will contain live tracks from his 1997 Earthling tour. It has been aptly titled "liveandwell.com." ISP subscribers--better known as BowieNet Members--have been invited to submit show reviews, ticket stubs, photos and anecdotes from the highly acclaimed tour. The project may inadvertently discourage bootleggers: at least we hope so!

davidbowie.com Press Release, November 11, 1998

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China

China Closes 72 Pirate Software Plants Since 1996

Beijing

China has closed 72 compact disc production lines over the past two years as part of a nationwide fight against software piracy, state media said on Thursday. Zou Bian, secretary general of the China Software Alliance (CSA), told Xinhua news agency that the closures had saved Chinese software producers 10 billion yuan (\$1.2 billion) in losses each year. International software piracy watchdogs have estimated that 96 percent of software used in China is pirated, one of the highest levels of piracy in the world. China's customs authorities have already seized hundreds of million of pirated compact discs in the first 11 months of 1998, Xinhua said, and courts have handed down harsh prison sentences to copyright violators. But pirated software is still widely available and many computer vendors promote sales by installing hundreds of dollars worth of pirated software in PCs.

Reuters, November 26, 1998

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Internet
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Website With Hundreds of Live Cure Songs Busted

The Cure MP3 Audio Archive -- which hosted 750 live cuts from throughout the modern-rock band's 23-year career -- was removed after the student hosting it was ordered to do so by his university, which had been notified of the site by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

Point Your Browser Tip: <http://rl.sonicnet.com/news/archive/story.jhtml?id=502530&pid=503284>

Sonicnet.com, October 16, 1998 (edited by Michael Goldberg)



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