Does Age Matter? Students’ Perspectives of Unauthorized Software Copying under Legal and Ethical Considerations

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Received 25 June 2010; Received in revised form 20 February 2011; Accepted 21 June 2012

Abstract

As pervasive computing applications advance, issues of information ethics (IE), especially intellectual property and associated software piracy, are of specific concern. This study explores software users’ developed attitudes toward unauthorized software copying (USC). Whether or not the users are of legal age, as identified by the Taiwanese government (i.e., under or over the age of 18) is assumed to be the main factor influencing users’ attitudes toward USC. This study also considers prior studies’ investigations of other factors, such as gender and ability to engage in USC activities. Finally, this study confirms that users, under and over legal age, have significantly different perspectives for legality and degree of ethical behavior ($F=4.498, p=0.012$). More detailed discussions appear at the end of this study.

Keywords: Information ethics, intellectual property, unauthorized software copying

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