Software Piracy Exposed

Paul Craig
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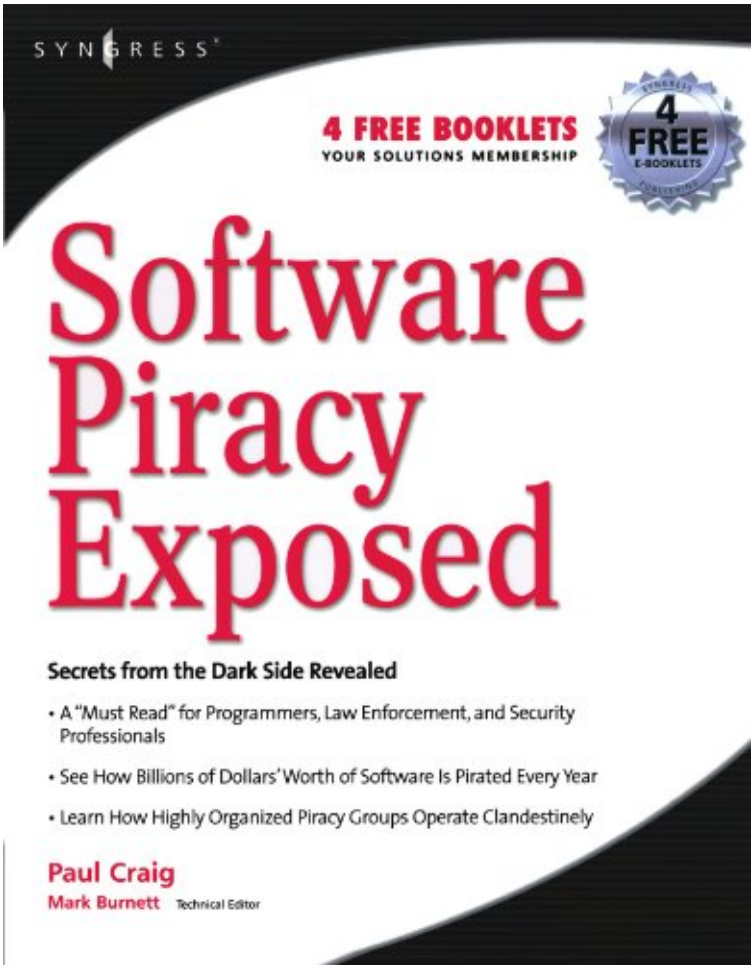

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Paul Craig : Software Piracy Exposed before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Software Piracy Exposed:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Entertaining but flawedBy Scott A. FrancoFirst, I ran across this book in the bookstore, went home, got abetter price, and read it cover to cover. The book was entertainingas hell. The only part I didn't particularly care for was theinclusion in the appendix of what was clearly an overview ofcurrent virus, popup, firewalls and other softwares, which Iconsidered way off the book's subject.The problem with the book is that it seems entirely unproofed(unproofread). Spelling errors are rampant, and the authorappeared to lose control of the book in places, writing"Sentinel was discovered by the FBI in late 1999, who thencalled the FBI"The various clerical errors could have been overlooked. However,there were so many technical errors and distortions, I was leftwondering if the author was reporting on what he had witnessedin the "scene" accurately. He reports again and again thatcrackers can defeat any program in minutes or hours, then laterrelates on programs that remain uncracked.

Which is it ? Thereare pronouncements about how certain programs cannot be crackedwhen they make windows calls, leading to the conclusion thatthe author is not aware that even the Windows kernel can bedebugged. The author talks about dongles being "enveloped",as a "small deciphering machine". It appears that he wasn'taware that a dongle can have an onboard CPU, or be a simpleROM accessible by the main computer. The text reads likean effort to dance around the fact that he didn'tunderstand the difference.The other errors, or if you will, "affectations" of the bookare just annoying. The term "ISO" is used many times in thebook as the term for a CD-ROM image on a computer. The authordoes, at one point, give the definition of ISO = InternationalOrganization for Standardization, but never gives the fulldefinition of "ISO 9660" (or similar). Calling a disk imagean "ISO" is like calling an apple "A grocery" because that'swhere you got the apple. ISO has hundreds, if not thousands ofstandards. I do realize that such misuse of terms is commonon the internet, but I would expect better from a reporter.The term "warez" is explained: (exaggerated plural derivativeof software). Not bad, but the author repeats this expansionover and over again like a bad Saturday Night Live skit.I liked the book, but would warn that there are better booksto really learn how to protect applications against piracy.My current favorite is "reversing", but Eldad Eilam, but I havethree books on the subject so far, and I unfortunately find Iknow more about it than the writers of these books (and notbecause I know more than average).7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Yo ho, yo ho, a pirate's life for me..By Thomas DuffWith all the hype currently being generated about digital piracy, I decided it might be interesting to read Software Piracy Exposed by Paul Craig and Mark Burnett. There's an interesting subculture there that's unlike anything I've ever known, and it's not quite what I expected...Craig spent some time working himself into a position of trust with a number of significant players in the piracy scene. While not participating in the activities himself, he was able to see how cracking and distribution organizations are structured, and what drives the individuals to do what they do. Surprisingly for software piracy, it's not necessarily being able to have and use the software you crack. Mainly it's the bragging rights to say you were the first to crack and distribute the package, or that you have the largest collection and distribution network. I got the distinct impression that most of the hardcore players in this culture don't even have the time to use the software. Since these groups are competing against each other, minutes can be critical in breaking a package open and getting it out first on a network. And as soon as one is done, the next one is waiting. If you spend days cracking something complex and then get beat out by another group by a few minutes, you (and your group) don't get credit for the hack and all the work was wasted. It seems like music and movies are less intense so far as breaking encryption, but a bigger deal to get it out early. Morals and ethics aside, it's a rare look into a strange lifestyle...While the book is pretty good, it did suffer from some bad basic editing. Acronyms were inconsistently spelled (MP3, Mp3, etc.), and I got tired of seeing the parenthetical description of "warez" showing up time after time. Explain it once at the beginning, and then move on. There were even a couple of times when the explanation of the acronym was just plain wrong. I feel if you're going to publish a technical book, you need to pay attention to these things. Otherwise, it looks shoddy, unprofessional, and rushed. While it wasn't enough to make me dislike the book, it did detract somewhat from what would have been a very good volume otherwise.Editing aside, it's a worthy read in order to understand the mindset and reality of the piracy and cracking subculture. Software piracy does have a financial effect on copyright owners, but it's not a case of "every copy is a lost sale"...3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Amazing look into the world of digital piracyBy Richard BejtlichI loved Software Piracy Exposed (SPE), despite the lack of good technical review, copyediting, and proofreading. I liked SPE because the author did original investigative reporting to gain the trust of the pirate underground. By infiltrating the scene, he brought an unprecedented level of access to the common reader. That is real threat reporting, which for me compensates for rough presentation.SPE is surprising on multiple levels. In one respect, the book shatters myths held by most outsiders. For example, I was shocked to learn that digital pirates hate those who distribute content over peer-to-peer networks. Almost all of the attention from the media, anti-piracy groups, and lawmakers focuses on p2p -- yet real digital pirates hate p2p users too! In fact, the more I read about digital pirates, the more I appreciated that piracy is almost a secondary aspect of the scene. In reality, piracy (outside p2p) is about building a reputation and gaining respect among peers. It seems hardly anyone dealing in stolen content ever uses it -- all they do is crack and trade it to elevate their status in the pirate community.A second surprise involved the sorts of people active in the pirate scene. This is the advantage of a book like SPE over the competition; SPE is written by a reporter who interviews pirates themselves. In one case, a university network admin hosts a top level pirate site by hiding bandwidth usage from his supervisors. In other cases, top technical schools in Europe with fast connections are favorites of pirate users. On p 53, pirate suppliers -- those who steal media, that is then cracked and distributed -- said they knew of no other supplies who hacked companies to steal media. That ran contrary to my understanding, but I believe it.I was also highly interested in learning how my own books have been pirated. I was always curious how a book that had never been published as a Microsoft .chm file would appear on p2p networks. SPE reveals that book pirates use stolen e-book credentials to sequentially read and scan text and images. Their custom software then compile a completely new book out of the material they obtain.The final surprise was the warped sense of morality demonstrated by members of the pirate scene. Consider this quote: "Sadly, the Internet attracts such bottom dwellers, people who in real life have no one to talk to. The anonymity of IRC is a place they revel in. Some of us, though, still maintain ethics and standards." These are the words of the leader of a pirate group! Oddly enough, a

few sentences later this person states "I idolize the true friends on IRC." In another case, a pirate who narrowly avoided an FBI sting shares these sobering thoughts: "Now I really don't think piracy was worth it. I have a life, a girlfriend, a job... The worst thing about the scene is how fast you are forgotten; nobody really cares too much after a few months. Is that worth the jail time?" Indeed.I highly recommend reading SPE. I would skip the four appendices, as I do not believe they add anything noteworthy to the book. If you are a nontechnical person, you will still enjoy reading SPE since it is more about humans and their motivations, and less about technology.

This book is about software piracy--what it is and how it's done. Stealing software is not to be condoned, and theft of intellectual property and copyright infringement are serious matters, but it's totally unrealistic to pretend that it doesn't happen. Software piracy has reached epidemic proportions. Many computer users know this, the software companies know this, and once you've read the Introduction to this book, you'll understand why. Seeing how widespread software piracy is, learning how it's accomplished, and particularly how incredibly easy it is to do might surprise you. This book describes how software piracy is actually being carried out.This book is about software piracy--what it is and how it's doneThis is the first book ever to describe how software is actually stolen and traded over the internetDiscusses security implications resulting from over 1/2 of the internet's computers running illegal, unpatched, pirated software