Software marketing

Software is composed of many programs that all together fulfill a certain task. Programs are strict instructions that tell the computer what to do. A computer is a complex machine that uses directions like programs and software to operate, without it it" s useless. In other words, software brings life to a computer" s hardware. More precisely, it represents what fuel is to a car. There are two categories of software; operating systems and applications. Both of them are a necessity to one" s computer. The first one is the largest program, and the most important one.

This software deals with file management, memory management, provides a user interface, and manages I/O devices like printers, and disk drives. Microsoft is well known for their Windows 95, and Windows NT operating systems, two of the most popular operating system on the market because of its user-friendly features. But operating system like Unix, and Linux are more known for their stability, and good performance. On the other hand, applications are smaller programs that fulfill a less important task.

To satisfy the user" s demand, programs are written accordingly. For example, a lot of word processor users have the privilege of having programs like Word to help them. Other might like spread sheets, and use programs like Excel, or Lotus1-2-3. There are also database applications like Access, or programming compilers like Borland C++. All those application are very common for personal computers. This is why companies try to sell along with a computer an operating system, and a package of highly demanded applications at the same time.

Operating system, like application is expensive. Recently, companies have been offering free version of software on the Internet for competition, or economic purposes. Therefore two new categories of software emerged; shareware (freeware), and proprietary software. First, shareware are software programs that are available to anyone who wishes to use it. Winzip for example can be downloaded from the Internet for free. Thanks to Microsoft, a multitude of useful software are available the same way, the most popular one is probably Internet explorer.

An important notice about shareware is that they" re not complete programs, in other words the version downloaded is not as complete as the original one, but it still fits some user" s demands. That" s what counts. On the other hand, proprietary programs are exactly what a freeware program is not. In other words, it" s complete, expensive, and protected. Whit it comes a license that unauthorizes anyone to duplicate, copy, or install the purchased software. Any violation of this right may lead to further implications. The purchase only allows the buyer to use the software, not to copy it.

This leads to the complex laws of ownership. To understand the meaning of ownership, it" s important to known what ownership is, and how it" s acquired. First, ownership means to own a property by right, therefore it" s a legal possession that ensure proprietorship. Second ownership can be acquired in more then one way. By purchasing a house you can become a owner, if you create, find, or inherit a thing you therefore logically become the owner as well. For example, if you find a gold mine you become the legal owner.

There is different kind of ownership, and the most common one is certainly physical ownership. In this case the recipient is able to do whatever he wishes with his propriety. As an object, owners can use their properties as they want, as long as they" re not violating the law, or anyone" s rights. A house is a great example of physical ownership. The owner is able to do whatever he wants to it, as long as he doesn" t endanger his neighbors. This is where ownership software becomes more delicate. Can software be treated in a similar way? should it be considered as an object?

This question is complex, and this is why policies have been created for software copying. For example, if an individual buys a computer program, he buys the right to use that software as much as he wants. On the other hand, strict laws forbid him to duplicate, or copy the actual software. Indeed as for books, videos, and songs there are copyright laws that govern software copying, and the violation of those laws are serious. Computer software are ideas that are translated in coding, therefore making duplicates is like stealing someone else" s idea; it" s plagiarism, that" s a crime.

By those laws, computer programmers are protected as well as writers, and signers. Therefore they get the credit for their work. But this particular aspect of software copying is still uncertain, because authorities fail to enforce the law, and this is how computer software, videos, and songs are illegally copied everyday. Programmers do get credit, but they lose an enormous profit. Another important kind of software ownership is called patent. This kind of ownership is a writing in paper securing an invention. Like this, a programmer is given complete rights over his software.

He has the power to give, copy, install, uninstall, or simply give to a certain individual a copy of his program. This is how programmers are protected from other programmers that would like to develop a program closely similar to there" s. All this discussion about ownership seems to be so complex, therefore why isn" t software free for all to use? In a capitalist society like ours, the fundamental purpose of creating a product is to make profit out of it. If not, why would you spend ten dollars to print a T-shirt, and sell it for free. This idea seems ridiculous.

On the other hand, individual like Richard Stallman claims that software ownership is harmful to society. How is that? Computers engineering like any other businesses as to meet certain economic standars to maintain themselves. The industry of computers is constantly growing, and therefore more demanding in terms of software. Before the Internet, word processors, and spreadsheets were very popular, but now Font page 98, and Internet Explore are one of the upcoming software in the business. Now the question is, why sell them for free when they" re creating huge profits?

Richard Stallman argument is that it deprives people from using the software. This is like saying that a BMW should be free, because it deprives the lower class people from driving a luxury car. Now does that make sense? In his article, his analogy to roads is completely false. Why? Simply because roads are not free, tax payers give every year a part of their salary to maintain them, therefore should that mean that we should all pay for free software. Of course not, because the needs of roads, is not comparable to needs computer software.

Roads are a necessity, while computers are still optional. Stallman claims also that free software ownership damages social cohesion. Therefore, the fact of not copying software could hurt society. Does it mean that I" m being a bad citizen? Should this example be right for cars, houses, pay checks, etc... If so, it" s not going to happen any time soon. Stallman argument are week, and unrealistic. In other word they don" t make sense. For the simple fact that every example used in his article are easily destroyed. Therefore, his arguments are incomplete.

Computerscienceis constantly expanding, it's therefore providing a great amount of profit to our society. As capitalist, the idea of giving computer software for free should not even be considered, yet ignore, simply because it makes no sense for programmers, as it would for any other profession to give a service for free. This is why copyright laws have been set in order to regulate those that support Stallman" s theory. But still, the authorities fail to enforce those laws, therefore this problem is far from being over. It" s very easy to get free software, especially with the arrival of CD writers.