

Some developing nations accept computer piracy

Eastern countries often may tolerate software copying

By Doug Kouma
Staff Reporter

Computer software piracy, the copying of programs from one computer to another, is more than just a legal issue, one University of Nebraska-Lincoln business professor said.

Ronald Hampton, who has been researching the topic, said that while Western civilization typically regarded computer piracy as a crime, the act was seen as an ethical issue in many Eastern cultures.

"Perceptions of whether this is right or wrong depends on the culture and belief system that is invoked in a particular society," Hampton said.

In many developing nations, such as China and India, computer piracy is widespread and accepted by the populations, Hampton said.

"As a culture, they are disadvantaged because of the prices that are charged in this society," Hampton said.

Madhavan Parthasarathy, a graduate student researching the topic with Hampton, said some cultures respected sharing technology.

These differences in attitudes have spurred an ethical debate in Western culture regarding the costs manufacturers place on software, Hampton

said. "Often, the time taken to develop a software program is no more than the time it takes to write a typical textbook," Hampton said.

Computer software, however, is priced much higher, he said. A word processing program can cost as much as \$400, while the actual cost to the manufacturer is usually only a small fraction of that cost.

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—Hampton
business professor

Parthasarathy said many people also were questioning the morality of copyrighting "intellectual property." Computer software is nothing more than someone's "idea transformed into a series of magnetic pulses," he said. This intangible aspect of computer software makes it difficult for people to see it as an actual possession, he said.

Parthasarathy said students could, in a sense, be considered a "developing culture." While they often lack the resources to buy these software programs, their need for them is often great.

Computer pirates fall into two major groups, Hampton said: those who must obtain a certain piece of

software and those who pirate simply because the software is available.

Manufacturers are not hurt by the second group, he said, because those people would never have actually purchased the software.

Hampton said manufacturers actually could use software piracy to their advantage, but first, they must acknowledge how widespread piracy is. Hampton said manufacturers must

"accept the fact that it does exist, and, given that, look at what they can do to improve the purchase of a product."

Some manufacturers have already introduced programs to benefit students, Hampton said. The manufacturer of SPSSX, one of the most common statistics programs used at UNL, has offered, for a small cost, to upgrade students' copies even if they were pirated, he said.

By offering such a program, Hampton said, the manufacturer still can benefit.

As more copies of software programs are circulated, Hampton said, manufacturers benefit from increased sales of accessories such as upgrades and program manuals.

Unions granted increase in student fee allocation

Health center's fee request same as prior year's

By Doug Kouma
Staff Reporter

The Committee for Fees Allocation unanimously voted Monday night to allocate \$1,641,114 in student fees to the Nebraska Unions, a 2.1 percent increase over last year's allocation.

The committee recommended that the full amount requested by the unions be allocated in light of rising energy and utility costs.

CFA members also discussed the possibility of reinstating a service charge for all non-student fee using accounts participating in Student Activities Financial Services.

Currently, all student groups participating in SAFS are assessed 10 cents for each disbursement made from their accounts. The committee, however, voted against reinstating the fees on the basis that money generated would be minimal.

Kunle Ojikutu, director of the University Health Center, said the center was requesting no increase over last year's allocation. Projected income would increase 2.66 percent over last year, he said, offsetting an increase in expenditures.

Much of the health center's expenditure increase could be attributed to added services, such as the newly added diabetic clinic and a new computer system.

Ojikutu said the health center faced special difficulties in budgeting because inflation in the medical field is at approximately 15 percent, compared to 2 or 3 percent for the general economy.

He said many of the projected increases in expenditures, such as maintenance and utility costs, were out of the control of health center officials. Other expenses, such as malpractice insurance and training for employees, were also on the rise, he said.

“I think the students are finding out that we're a bargain.”

—Ojikutu
University Health Center
director

"In health care, you are required to have continuing education in order to maintain your license," Ojikutu said.

He said the health center also expected an increase in the number of students using the center's various programs.

"I think the students are finding out that we're a bargain," he said.

Legislature

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It's especially important for drunk driving cases in which someone is injured or killed," he said. "It's very difficult to tell the loved ones of someone who was killed in an accident that we can't prosecute the defendant, even though he was tested at .10."

Norman McPherson, regional supervisor for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, said five states — California, Maine, Oregon, Utah and Vermont — had .08 limits, and those states had seen "significant reductions" in alcohol-related fatalities.

David Titterington of Lincoln told the committee how his father was paralyzed from the neck down last July when the car he was driving was struck at the intersection of 10th and Van Dom streets by a minor driving under the influence of alcohol.

The minor was tested at .092, below the current legal limit. He still has not been charged in the incident, Titterington said.

Several small business owners spoke in opposition to the proposal, arguing that lowering the legal limit would hurt their business.

Dan Arcuri, a business owner from Omaha, said LB80 would not stop drunk driving.

"But it will hurt the casual drinker," he said. "You might have a guy who

goes out to dinner with his wife or girlfriend, has a bottle of wine, gets pulled over driving home and loses his license. That's terrible."

Mary Barrett of Omaha agreed. "People who drive at .08 have nothing to do with drunk driving," she said. "It's a small, hard-core group — probably less than 1 percent of society — that chooses to drink and drive. This law would force police to concentrate on the characteristics of this hard-core group rather than society in general."

“It's next to impossible to convince someone who's tested at under .10.”

—Matt Conboy
Omaha city prosecutor

Marty Conboy, an Omaha city prosecutor, said he had heard rumors and accusations that lowering the legal level of intoxication would unfairly target social drinkers, who have three or four drinks in a night.

He said he already had heard ob-

jections based on rumors that just two or three drinks would push the .08 limit.

But, he said, the rumors are unfounded.

"It's just not scientifically possible to reach that level with two or three 1-ounce doses of alcoholic drinks," Conboy said. "I weigh 170 pounds, and (in a controlled experiment) it took nine drinks for me to reach .08."

Conboy agreed with Lacey that the .08 limit would help reduce alcohol-related fatalities.

"It's next to impossible to convict someone who's tested at under .10," he said. "Lowering the limit would give law enforcement officers a chance to convict those people who pose a threat to themselves and others."

Richard Hughes, president of the Nebraska Licensed Beverage Association, said LB80's supporters were using "scare tactics to slowly but surely put the liquor industry out of business."

"They're beating a dead horse," Hughes said. "Somehow, they think if we keep lowering the (blood-alcohol content level) drunk drivers will disappear from the road. But the people we have to get off the road are the alcoholics, and we're not getting it done by picking on the social drinkers."

"We do not have prohibition in this country."

The committee did agree to give the university system about \$2.4 million over the next two years to cover operations, maintenance and utilities costs for 14 new buildings that recently have been built and are ready to open.

"There are several new buildings coming on line that we have already appropriated money to construct," Moore said. "So we felt we needed to appropriate money to open them."

Even with these increases, the committee's funding recommendation for the university system going into the hearing is about \$12 million less than Gov. Ben Nelson's recommendation.

Spanier said, "I understand the state's financial circumstances and I'm sympathetic to them, but I intend to let people know the damage that cuts like that could do to the university."

The university's hearing before the Appropriations Committee is scheduled for March 9.

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Cut

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by the budget proposal."

Peterson said GLC members hoped to voice students' concerns to the Appropriations Committee next week.

Massengale said the Appropriations Committee needed to indicate to the full Legislature — and to Nebraska citizens — the magnitude of the problem the state faces in dealing with its \$68 million revenue gap.

It is that gap Sen. Scott Moore of Seward, chairman of the budget-writing Appropriations Committee, said his committee was attempting to close without relying on tax increases.

The budget request submitted by university officials does not include a list of specific items that would be cut in the face of reduced funding, as most other state agencies submitted, Moore said.

However, Massengale's statement, released after the committee approved the budget cut recommendation, listed

a number of possibilities.

"Obviously, at this early date, we cannot list specific cuts that would be required," Massengale said. "But the categories that must be considered are fairly easy to identify."

These categories included:

- elimination of whole programs;
- reductions or eliminations of outreach services;
- additional closed class sections;
- continued deferral of serious building repair and maintenance problems;
- cuts in student services;
- continued deterioration of research equipment and erosion of personnel support, including graduate and technical assistantships;
- continued reductions in faculty support services such as telephones, copy equipment and on-site services to rural areas;
- delays in compliance with federal regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.