

Jfed142 says:

I'm not a hardcore gamer or anything, and as someone who's always paid for games, didn't care and wasn't affected by piracy in any way that I knew of - until EA put Securom on a game I bought without telling me.

That's the problem with DRM like Securom: it only negatively affects those that pay for the game. That is the publisher's decision - to inconvenience or create problems for paying customers with invasive (and ultimately ineffective) DRM, not any pirate's.

I have no problem with cdchecks or anticopy that is CONFINED TO THE GAME. I'm sure you, I, and millions of others have bought and played countless games using those protection methods with little or no problem over the years. But Securom, Starforce, and others like it operate outside of the game and affect other parts or uses of our personal property, and that's just plain wrong and why I won't purchase anything that utilizes that technology. I'm risk averse too, and publishers have no right to affect me so negatively, especially after I PAY THEM for product.

DRM is a term that's becoming synonymous with all that's wrong with certain technologies, and isn't truly accurate in all cases, agreed. But it is an issue for consumers these days, and thus an issue for publishers - it can potentially lose them actual sales, not the ones they presume to lose to piracy.

I had no idea of how pirating worked until EA told me that the stuff they use to prevent it was causing problems for those with legit and paid for copies.

They shoulda stuck with disk checks.

(no, i don't pirate. i boycott. i am actual lost sales.)

D.L.C says:

Some of that post doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Spore and Mass Effect were cracked within 24 hours of release. DRM of that sort does not work. In fact, DRM of that sort likely destroys sales as those who would have bought it don't because of DRM and instead turn to cracked versions. And it leaves really bad impressions for future games. Bioshock for one left folders that could only be removed by a re-installation of one's OS. Essentially DRM of the EA sort are effectively stripping people of their administrator rights. Even worse, these DRM schemes don't publicly state what they do to your computer. That's class action lawsuit material there.

We sue the pants off of companies who sell us stuff that does stuff that harms us and our property without first informing us of the potential consequences.

What publishers need to do is strike a balance between pissing off their customers and protecting their IP rights and they need to offer them a product that is worth it to them to actually pay for. iTunes for example has slowed p2p music theft. Has it stopped it? No, but it has slowed it. p2p music theft during the heyday of Napster was growing at double digit rates. It's nowhere near that today.

The issue is the loss of one's legal rights to do what they want with their property. If one has only a few installs, which you seriously understate as relatively small changes have triggered the reinstall thus forcing some people to spend huge sums of money on the hotlines to get new keys, has to constantly

phone home to use, and loses administrator rights along with several instances of rootkits being installed this is big *** problem.

Personally, if every publisher did what Stardock did, offer a good product without big brother draconian policies that let you legally do what you want with your purchased game, DRM wouldn't be much of an issue.

Instead EA pumps out terrible products with bad DRM. Heck, I'm okay with steam if it was more reliable and less prone to glitches and crashes.

H. Le says:
Welcome to the DRM discussion R. Ly,

And thanks for the great article, although I wholeheartedly disagree with this sentence in the "Conclusion" paragraph, " I'm under no illusions that most people will not like this article because it doesn't support piracy, but ultimately my responsibility is to write what I believe to be true, not what I believe will be popular; more and more these days, the two are drifting apart anyway." To me, this sentence seemingly suggests that somehow, to disagreeing with the article is to take a pro-piracy stance - rather than an anti-DRM stance. Surely, for the most part, publishers and DRM supporters cannot, or will not, distinguish the difference between pro-piracy vs. anti-DRM in order to promote DRM. And the quoted sentence played right into this misconception. On the other hand, I must acknowledge that this is probably the first article that dare to openly bash STEAM.

Personally, I used to be a DRM supporter up to about 1 - 2 years ago when I found out how stupidly easy it is to download a game for free, and begin to question the whole DRM scheme altogether. Even though I had problem with it, I did not follow StarForce closely until the lawsuit. As for SecuROM and Bioshock, by using the harshest DRM scheme known to date, Bioshock was able to thwart piracy attempt for a whole 13 days (according to the article)! As a result, other publishers are jumping on the band wagon - perhaps hoping for the same results (?) The truth still stands that once cracked, the DRM scheme is useless. Thus, in effect, the so-called 'success' of Bioshock DRM is in some ways responsible for the terrible DRM backlash suffered by Spore where many people are seemingly pirating the game out of spite, or simply as a statement against DRM, rather than the act of piracy itself. If this is so (the article denies this suggestion, but many others, such as that from Forbes.com, support it). If this is the case, what is a possible solution that may apply? A new and harsher DRM scheme for every single game being released ?

From this perspective, in oppose to the theory that increasing piracy demands harsher DRM, can we also say that harsher DRM promotes increase in piracy ? The article touched this issue, but is leaning toward the former rather than latter. I personally think it is a toss up. However, if this is indeed the case, then perhaps we are ALL caught in a vicious cycle whose ever increasing viciousness will annihilate all intellectual properties - not just PC gaming - in the long run.

On a side note, curiously enough, in spite of all the 'cry wolf and piracy' from the publishers, there is a Spore DRM article where the EA spokesperson [I think it was Mariam Suheyer (sp?)] inadvertently suggested that piracy does not effect sales directly (???). If you are really interested but cannot find this article, please let me know, I will search for it again.

Therefore, concerning DRM and piracy, given the ultimate and continuous 100% failure rate of DRM (in case you have not notice the recent trend, all DRM is cracked on the same day of release - or before !), here is the nagging question that is still begging to be answered: Is piracy the really the cause of DRM ? Or, presently, it is simply the pretext for DRM ?

Also, in the case of the DRM developer, which is not fully discussed in the article IMO, such as Sony and SecuROM, do you know any existing security agency that has a practically 100% failure rate within hours of the security system implementation and can still stay in business (until the next security system is 'perfected') ? Consequently, do you ever wonder why publishers don't sue the pants off DRM developers for DRM failure ? What I am suggesting is that is there any possibility that there is more going on with DRM other than what is being printed in articles ? However one wants to consider it, there are still undeniable gaping holes in the anti-piracy arguments that DRM supporters like to use - or as the publishers would like you to believe.

In conclusion, I think the article that you link to probably the most comprehensive on the DRM debate yet, and treated the issue fairly as much as possible. However, I personally doubt that it can provide the final solution. On the other hand, I also like the suggested "Practical Solution" very much and think that it would be an excellent start in the long process of resolving the DRM issues. For the record, I also prefer the off-line disc check DRM type such as Tages and Safe-Disc.

My favorite quote from the article concerning DRM :

*** "If all else fails, don't buy games which have problematic DRM, but don't pirate them either - this sends an unambiguous message to the games companies that all demand for their product - both legitimate and illegitimate - is falling." ***