

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

234196 - Is it permissible to work in a company whose computer software are copied?

the question

Allah, may He be exalted, has guided me and enabled me to erase the unlicensed software that was on my computer, but if Allah blesses me with a job on the computer, or I am asked to do some work on a computer that is not mine, do I have to make sure that the software used is licensed, or not? Is there any sin on me if I work on that computer when I know that the software is not licensed?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is well-known that copyright, patents and other rights of a tangible or intangible nature are protected, and it is not permissible to transgress those rights or tamper with them without the permission of the owners.

But if there is a need for that software, and original copies are not available, or they are available at an exorbitant cost, especially if the owners have already covered their costs and made a reasonable profit, then in sha Allah there is nothing wrong with copying them or downloading a copy of them, on condition that it is for personal use only, whether this use is at an individual level or at the level of a company that does not trade in this copied software. This is a middle view between those who would ban it altogether and those who would allow it in all cases, without restrictions. For more information on that, please see the answers to questions no. [102352](#) and [81614](#).

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Because the issue is one on which the scholars differ, with some forbidding it and some allowing it in different circumstances, you do not have to make an extra effort to find out about that from the business owner. Even if we assume that this software was set up on this computer in a situation in which it is not permissible for someone like him to do that, the burden of sin is his alone, and you do not have any share of his burden of sin, so long as you are working with him in permissible activities and you are not the one who set it up on the computer. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another” [Faahir 35:18].

But if the company makes money from copying and selling this software, then in this case you would be helping them in this transgression; then you would be required to stop, in compliance with the words of Allah, may He be exalted (interpretation of the meaning):

“but do not cooperate in sin and aggression” [al-Maa'idah 5:2].

And Allah knows best.