



FROM BEHIND THE SERVICE COUNTER

As much as technology has progressed, I'm sorry to report that there is still misinformation and outright misrepresentation in my "industry" and this story in particular I feel obligated to share, and I'm almost going to name names...

So a middle aged gentleman comes into the store and puts a sealed Toshiba laptop box on the Service Counter. We inquire as to what we can do for him and he politely asks if we can install Windows 8 on his laptop.

Now the box is brand new and sealed with factory tape, and we've never seen a major brand name notebook ever come without Windows pre-installed so of course our curiosity is peeked!

In response to our questions the story starts to come out... He purchased the laptop at a big box store and the salesperson assured him that Windows 8 could be installed for "only" \$100. Believing the sales guy but being a bit skeptical of the store's techs and the price to do the work, he brought it to us to see if we would do it for less.

Of course when we power up the unit, Windows 8 is already there and we just need to activate it, a 3 minute task. Having dodged an expensive bullet, he now asks us to install his Office 2010. Now somewhat skeptical, we ask a few more questions and extract what we already suspect... the salesman also offered to install the Office package for another \$100, and here we go again! Unbeknownst to the customer, it's quite common for Microsoft to pre-install a 30 free trial of their Office platform and when you buy the program, they simply send you a license number which you need to type in. Activating his Office license is another 3 minute process.

Apparently at this point our client doesn't appear to be too phased by what's happened but we're definitely getting outraged!

The grand finale was his last question about the system's warranty because he was warned that if his laptop attaches to an American wifi connection when he goes to Florida that the manufacturer's warranty will be null and void... and that he should instead buy the store's extended warranty package.

We try to calmly explain that that is utter nonsense and not so calmly suggest he return to the store and demand to speak to the manager about what are obviously unscrupulous practices.

At Bloom MicroTech we have been running an ethical and responsible business for over 20 years. To have the big box stores move into our marketplace where we were once revered as a trusted source for simple, straight forward computer information and grab the lion share of the customer base with their relentless pounding advertising, is a somewhat perversion of business. But it happens. The truly depressing part of this story is how many unsuspecting people have already or will fall prey to this kind of misrepresentation and overcharging.

Now in all fairness, we will point out that all this is in reaction to our client's story and if he misinterpreted something at the store then a lot of this rant is for not, but this gentleman certainly was very well spoken and we certainly have every reason to believe what we were told.

Either way, you just have to be a bit skeptical out there and find someone you can trust. After all, it's only your money.

Happy computing and be careful out there!

Harley Bloom
Bloom MicroTech