

The Future of Future Shop

The Removal of a burden

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It began 4 years ago in the fall of the year. My old computer had died and I had money and I wanted to spend it on a new, top of the line PC. I had gone to Future Shop on McCloud Trail where I sat and negotiate a new computer with the manager of the store. I purchased the Warranty insurance as this was the one thing I knew I would need based on previous experience. Over the next few years the PC worked mostly well but ran into some unusual problems including shutting down for no reason. As they explained to me there was nothing wrong with the computer so I spent several hundred dollars getting it upgraded. Then another year passed and more problems and this time they indicated that it was the software. So I took it home and went out and bought another computer as I didn't want to have them erase my computer with all its information until I had a chance to save it.

Finally I took it in to the NE shop and asked them to look at it and they did and they found that the mother board had failed and it was not a software issue as they had believed. They told me I would need to pick out a new computer after I had brought in the other parts from the old computer which I did this morning.

Then George(?) spoke to Nij and had him take me back to pick out an equivalent value computer. A cheap, off the shelf brand, that sold for the price of \$399. This was for the replacement of the computer that had originally cost me nearly two grand in 2002. As they put it the equivalent computer was one that was equivalent to technology that was sold in 2002 not the quality or value. For example I had purchased Intel but they wanted to provide me with an AMD processor which though 'nice' is much cheaper in price. And so it went back to George who tried to convince me they were doing the right thing by offering me equivalency of value.

I thought about that a lot today. What is equivalency of value? I asked George if I bought an expensive Frigidaire refrigerator and put it under warranty would they replace it with a cheap no-

name brand if the original broke down?

Equivalency, in Future Shops case, can be compared to a man purchasing a Cadillac and then when it fails the company pulls up a tiny Volkswagon from the lot and saying "See, this has 4 wheels. Look there are four seats and a radio and a steering wheel. What more do you want?" That might be called equivalency in some circles but it is not an equivalency of value. That is when the company says to you "Look, here is a computer that is equal in value to the one that failed you."

No insurance company worth its salt is going to get away with taking someone's money for a ten bed room house and replacing it with a 1 or 2 bedroom home. This is like selling the person 5 star insurance but giving them 1 star treatment when the price comes due.

There is another question which comes due here and that is called the removal of burden. If I have a burden and I pay someone to help me with that burden I expect them to offer me the best help they can. When I buy a computer and pay a hefty price for it then there is something called 'trust' which says "I trust you to help me when that computer dies and is irreplaceable and can no longer be used..." If they offer me value at 1/2 or 1/3 or 1/4 or 1/8 of the original price then I am left with a question of broken trust. It makes me wonder what will happen in the future if I purchase something of high value. Will the equivalency of value be true to the word that is spoken or second rated.

Now some might wonder what ended up happening. I would not accept the \$399 computer and George indicated that Nij should help me to look for a computer valued around \$900 which would have been acceptable. One was found, a slightly older model Emachine on sale for \$605. I was too tired to argue and stood numbly by while all the paperwork was filled out and I signed on the dotted line and forked over an additional \$150 for two years of ** star warranty insurance.