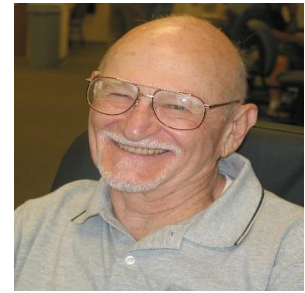


NOBODY ASKED ME BUT.....



CAVEAT EMPTOR - Latin for "Let The Buyer Beware!" and an extension of Schwartz's first law, which is, all together now; TRUST NO ONE. I recently bought a new digital camera to replace the good but basic one I've been using. As this is being read I'm sure that at least some of you will be nodding your head having experienced some or all of my cautionary tale. Others, take heed. You could be next. Here are some guidelines to follow for your next shopping venture in the world of computing (or any other buying quest you may contemplate).

1. Check out the ratings of your prospective purchase. Magazines such as PC World and Smart Computing have product evaluations on their Web site. Our L.W. library has copies of Consumer Reports. Also important are user evaluations. Web sites such as www.epinions.com, www.mysimon.com and www.cnet.com provide user reviews of most of the items you are interested in. These are valuable in that the reviewers are consumers who purchased the item, have used it and are not afraid to tell it like it is. One caveat (there's that word again); it's been said that some manufacturers send glowing reports on their own products. Hopefully when there is a preponderance of favorable user reviews the product should pass.

2. Tech support is a crucial component of a happy marriage to the product. Go to the Manufacturer's Web site BEFORE you buy to determine the kinds of support they offer. Today, live, 800 number, in America support is nirvana. Telephone support is best; instant messaging, fair; email, cumbersome; automated email FAQs the worst.

3. What else is required to operate the product? My camera needed a memory card (camera's internal mem. insufficient), a card reader and then a powered USB 2.0 hub (I have only 2 USB ports in my computer) for the memory reader to function. The bucks add up kids!

4. Don't hesitate to pick the brains of our Club's supervisors and teachers. They've been at this for some time and you can benefit from their experience and expertise.

P.S. The camera is great!!!

Matt

ONE LINERS

If high heels were so wonderful, men would still be wearing them.

Sue Graffton

I have yet to hear a man ask for advice on how to combine marriage and a career.

Gloria Steinem

If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning.

Catherine