Dell's response to Microsoft's Windows User Experience Amendment Proposal

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The following is a position document which is a result of the discussion between Dell Computer Corporation and Microsoft on 12/11/96 in Redmond, Washington, regarding the Windows User Experience (WUE) amendment which has been proposed by Microsoft as an amendment to Dell's contract with Microsoft.

Dell's concerns with the Windows User Experience fall into four areas: Technical Feasibility, Customer Satisfaction, Technical Support Costs, and Business Impact

Technical Feasibility

WUE mandates that Dell cannot run any programs until after the user has closed the "Welcome to Windows" screen. Dell needs to be able to run programs (generated by the AutoTool) at the end of user setup.

if required to comply with this amendment, Dell will need to run another program at the end of user setup, after Dell's existing installation tools have completed, to remove items from the startup group and registry to prevent their automatic running. As currently installed, Dell automatically starts programs like the Microsoft Office Shortcut Toolbar, as a user convenience (also, this is how a hand install of the same to running the cleanup program after system setup for WUE adherence is to re-develop, revalidate, and repilot hundreds of existing scripts, which is clearly infeasible from a schedule/resource perspective, and would have a very high cost.

Another concern is that, because we cannot run any programs if adhering to WUE, we cannot start system level services (like the Battery Gauge for portable systems, third party PCMCIA support and third party power management software for Windows NT). This is clearly unacceptable from a system performance / system integrity / technical support cost point of view.

Customer Satisfaction

Picture a corporate customer who orders 100 systems a month with Windows NT or Windows 95 and Microsoft Office and Lotus SmartSuite. The ones he receives in January, after the boot and setup process, will have the Microsoft Office Shortcut Bar and the Lotus SmartSuite taskbar displayed on the desktop, and the customer will be able to immediately access parts of those applications from the desktop.

When he receives the same order in February, (assuming that compliance with WUE started 2/1/97), after the boot and setup process there will be no taskbars or shortcut bars on the desktop. The customer's immediate impression will be that the software was not installed, or was not installed properly. It is very likely that this will result in a Technical Support call being placed to Dell. Whether or not the customer calls, their perception of Dell will be negatively effected.

Technical Support Costs

It is generally agreed by those familiar with the WUE proposal at Dell that it will result in increased Technical Support costs. While these costs cannot be estimated before the change, the resulting calls will be tracked and costs assessed on the basis of that tracking. Where these calls result in system returns, the returned system costs will also be tracked

Business Impact

Implementation of WUE by Dell, as originally proposed by Microsoft, would:

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- reduce system integrity and system performance due to lack of system level services running at first boot;
- confuse and disappoint repeat customers, who would see a different system behavior and interperet this as an incorrect or defective order;
- prevent Dell from operating in its current business model by making it unable to install many of the applications and peripherals that it currently sells;
- cause Dell to violate many of its business agreements, by making Dell unable to present its Electronic Break The Seal (EBTS), its online software license;
- increase Dell's Technical Support costs by increasing the number of calls from users who do not complete the installation properly (by clicking the icon, which cannot be made to stand out in any substantial way) or who perceive that the software that they ordered was not installed; and,
- defeat Dell's recent initiative to reduce its technical support costs by presenting, at startup time, the Express Service Code screen which presents the user with an ID which can be used to automatically route Technical Support calls at Dell.

To enable Dell to sign up to complying with some version of the WUE proposal from Microsoft, a number of changes must be made to the proposal. These changes come in two flavors: Must Haves, and Like To Haves

Must Haves

Dell must have the ability to run

. including applications and peripherals software, during operating system setup. This is required for Dell to maintain its business model and continue to ship a wide variety of products, now and in the future.

Dell must have the ability to start system services, such as the battery gauge, PCMCIA support, and other support services with minimal UI impact (the battery gauge does put up a very small battery icon, for example). This is required for system performance and system integrity, as well as to reduce Technical Support calls.

Dell must have the ability to present the Electronic Break The Seal screen, the Express Service Code screen, and a screen which instructs the user to find the "Complete Dell Setup" icon after the setup process is complete. This screen would have an image of the "Complete Dell Setup" icon, along with the following text:

> After you finish the Microsoft Windows operating system setup, double-click the Complete Dell Setup icon on your desktop.
>
> Press any key to continue.

The EBTS is required to maintain Dell's legal agreements with Dell's third party software vendors. The Express Service Code screen is required to maintain Dell's Technical Support cost reductions due to this screen. The "How to Complete the Dell Setup" screen is required to ensure that the user understands what is required to complete the system installation and to reduce the amount that WUE acceptance will increase Dell's Technical Support costs.

Like To Haves

Because Dell is a build-to-order company, Dell would like the ability to fully complete the software installation (prior to first customer boot) if the customer requests that Dell do so, including leaving things in the startup groups so that task bars, etc will come up on the first customer boot.

Screen Shots

The Electronic Break The Seal screen is shown below:

Software Licenses

efore using your computer, read all of the software licenses that come with each program you ordered. There may be several software licenses to examine. To comply with the terms and conditions of the software licenses, you must consider any diskette sets for Dell-installed software as BACKUP copies of the software installed on your computer's hard-disk drive.

ype 'Y' to indicate that you have read all of the software licenses and agree to their terms.

If you did not order Dell-installed software on this computer, or if you do not accept all the terms of the licenses, please call the customer assistance phone number listed in your system documentation.

Yes

The Express Service Code screen is shown below:

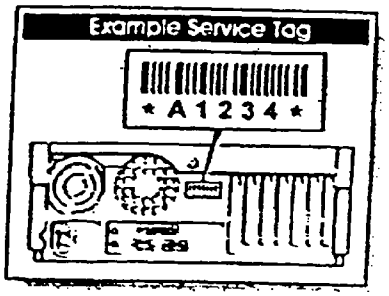
IMPORTANT TECHNICAL SUPPORT INFORMATION

Should you need to contact Dell Technical Support, use an express service code to efficiently route you to the most appropriate support area.

The service tag and the express service code for this computer are displayed below.

Write down and store this information in a safe place.

Press the 'X' key when finished.



Service Tag	Express Service Code
12XYZ	181-695-5

The Dell Express Service Code program can be found in Dell Accessories.

To exit, press the "X" key

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