

No. 212: Let the Buyer Beware

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Before we get to today's topic, let me relate a conversation between my wife, Nancy (KC9FZK), and myself, today.

Nancy: Did you write your Computer Corner article for the newsletter yet?

Stan: No, not yet.

Nancy: Better get to it. Tom will be back in town Wednesday; check your email as to when it must be in.

Stan: OK. I'll get to it.

So, next time you see Nancy, thank her! She keeps me honest and on time.

At our last swapfest (26Sep15), one of our ORC members bought a Windows 7 computer. The seller related the machine was perfect and offered our member his card with contact information, but our member forgot to take it. When he got the computer home and set it up, the desktop came up, but programs would not run without a password. He had no password and no way to get it. Therefore, our member was out the dollars he had paid for the machine.

The simple moral to this story is: never purchase any piece of equipment at a swapfest without getting at least one of the following two items: 1. A basic demo from the seller showing the equipment operates as intended. 2. Contact information from the seller so you can phone or email them with questions later as you become familiar with the piece of equipment.

In the case of a computer, the demo should show that the following are operating:

1. The Operating System itself (run Start, Accessories, System Tools, System Information, for info on the OS, who manufactured the system, memory installed and other tidbits).
2. Programs. (try Start, Accessories, System Tools, then Disk Cleanup for a simple indication that programs will work properly).
3. Antivirus. Look for an antivirus program and run it to get an indication of how current it is. If the virus definitions are more than 3 months old, make the assumption that the machine is virus infected and be prepared to go on a witch-hunt to detect and kill them. In that case, also be prepared to hunt and kill rootkits that might be lurking on the hard drive.
4. Network cable connections or WiFi connections. If it is important to you, plug in a cable or activate the WiFi ability of the machine, and then run Internet Explorer to see if you can get on-line and surf the net.

Be careful what you pay for. And, if you need a computer, always check with me first. When I have them, mine are freshly rebuilt, guaranteed, and the proceeds go to support good causes: some combination of the ORC, the ORC Scholarship Fund or OZARES. Happy Computing!