



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Letter to the Editor

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‘WINDOWS’ TO MORE PROBLEMS

When you install a more advanced programme on your computer you expect that it is going to work and serve your purposes better but it did not seem to be the case when Microsoft introduced Windows 10.

The Consumers’ Association of Penang (CAP) is dismayed by the fact that there have been an overwhelming number of complaints about Windows 10 from consumers worldwide.

Microsoft announced last year that it will no longer support the older versions of Windows if computers are not upgraded to Windows 10. It offered Windows 10 for free to those with their PCs running on Windows 7 or 8 while those who did not upgrade would not receive crucial updates and security patches.

By doing so, Microsoft has curbed its millions of customers’ choice to choose because if they chose to maintain the older versions, they expose their computers to security risks. They are also coerced to use an operating system (Windows 10) that is less reliable than the ones before.

There have been cases when this operating system (OS) was installed without the permission of the user. A woman Anita Elias in London was offered £500 (RM2,560) as a gesture of goodwill by Microsoft after Windows 10 was installed without her permission; her laptop recovery and antivirus software programmes were deleted, and her laptop slowed to a crawl.

Microsoft had not considered the possibility of older computers’ hardware incompatibility with Windows 10. Computer owners might also be using older productivity software or those acquired from a third party (non-Microsoft).

Third party software may not work because companies that produced them had not manage to test their product against Windows 10 because their programmes had been written before the introduction of Windows 10 or that the companies themselves had ceased supporting their software that are working well with older Windows versions.

You can imagine the exasperation of Windows 10 users when they encounter problems caused by the programme or problems that result in data loss.

Among the common complaints are that the older installed programmes on the computer are either out of sync, deleted, or may not longer work with the upgraded OS.

When the system crashes, it is expensive to send the computer for repair. Some complained that peripherals such as printers, Wi-Fi cards and speakers can no longer work with the computer after the installation of the new OS.

CAP would like to ask:

- Why was Windows 10 operating system not sufficiently debugged before coercing computer users to switch to it in such haste?
- Would Microsoft compensate users of the operating system if their computer crashes?
- Why would Microsoft assume that most computers have a system recent enough to support the use of Windows 10 and abandoned those with older systems?
- Do the computer owners with older systems deserved to be side-lined by Microsoft by discontinuing to provide crucial updates and security patches, thereby exposing their computers to security risks?

Microsoft should not deprive computer users a choice to choose between an older Windows version and Windows 10.

CAP is of the opinion that it is unfair for Microsoft to allow Windows 10 to be installed without the computer owner's consent, even more so if installing it would create problems associated with the OS.

The Malaysian Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry (MDTCC), and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) needs to immediately implement a mechanism for computer users to claim from Microsoft for the problems encountered while using Windows 10.

MDTCC and MCMC has to consider Section 32 of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 that there is an "implied guarantee" that the goods (in this case, software) are of "acceptable quality" and "free from minor defects".

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