

CZ: Lenovo fails to silence GNU/Linux user on Windows refund

A GNU/Linux user who failed to get PC producer Lenovo to reimburse him for an unwanted Microsoft licence, was paid the same amount by the website where he posted the details of his negotiations.



After lengthy negotiations, the Lenovo office in the Czech Republic offered to reimburse the GNU/Linux user, Kamil Páral, for the Microsoft OEM licence that came with his new laptop. However, the company wanted him to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). Páral refused, for such an NDA is not part of the Microsoft licence. Instead, he took the story to AbcLinuxu ('the ABC of Linux'), a Czech web site on GNU/Linux.

According to Luboš Doležel, one of the editors at Abc Linuxu, Lenovo first refused to reimburse the GNU/Linux user, saying that the hardware and software were inseparable or that he should contact Microsoft. After a few months, Páral threatened to file complaints with a government business regulator and a government sponsored organisation for consumer rights. Lenovo then agreed to reimburse him, offering CZK 1950 (about 87 euro) for returning the Microsoft Licence and erasing the software, but only if he signed the NDA.

Programmer Páral, who started using GNU/Linux two years ago, decided to make his endeavours public. He wanted to raise awareness, he explains, to motivate other Open Source users to take similar actions. He posted the story on AbcLinuxu: "I read many web sites on Open Source and AbcLinuxu is one of the most famous."

Perseverance

The website decided to compensate Páral the same amount and to try to get international attention to the report by posting the article in English. "The editors of AbcLinuxu, along with many other users of GNU/Linux, BSD, and other operating systems, believe that Páral's perseverance will lead to an improved relationship between IT manufacturers and end users, so that it will be possible to order any computer without a preinstalled operating system from Microsoft."

Páral says he had not expected the site to compensate him. He is also surprised by the attention drawn by his report. His article was picked up by many Czech web sites and the popular international technology news site Slashdot. "This is absolutely beyond what I expected."

In several EU member states, Open Source users have fought for the reimbursement of unwanted proprietary software licences. Last year courts in France and Italy forced PC manufacturers Acer and HP to compensate Open Source users. Earlier this summer Darty, a French computer chain store, was ordered to list the price of pre-installed operating systems. Yesterday, a computer science student at the Polish university in Lodz posted an English translation of how he successfully negotiated for reimbursement with Lenovo Poland.

More information:

- [Abc Linuxu news item](#)
- [Comparable case in Poland](#)

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