

This is a new series of case studies illustrating the difficulty one has purchasing a PC in the UK without being forced to pay a "Microsoft Tax". We use Linux on all our PC's and have done so for several years. Therefore we do not need, nor should we be forced to pay for any Microsoft software licenses.



We did some research and approached Dell UK to buy some of its rather smart-looking Vostro laptops, OS-free. Now Dell has a reputation for being fairly "*penguin-friendly*" and that it will build systems to the customer's specification. Moreover, its new Vostro laptops really are nice machines, with a good specification and a business-like appearance. We really wanted to buy some. I even transferred the money into our purchasing account ready to do the deal. Sadly, Dell's UK completely disinterested "sales team" managed to blow away any chances of that. Here's what happened...

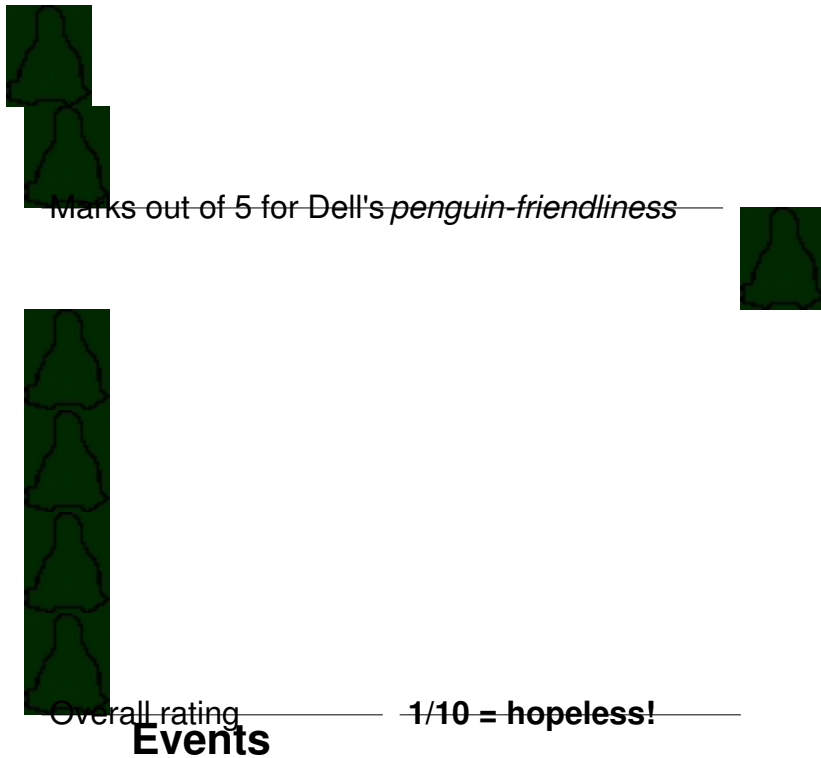
Dell's Penguin rating

Marks out of five for Dell's customer care.

(This would have been zero but

Dell did actually manage to get us back once)





2009-07-07 I enquired to Dell UK via its [on-line contact form](#) regarding our desire to purchase several Dell Vostro laptops, OS-free. I also asked if it transpires that Dell is unable to supply them OS-free, whether it honours the Microsoft EULA - where we can return unwanted MS licenses to the vendor for a refund. I explain that we don't use MS products. Dell's site promises a next day response.

No response was received.

2009-07-08 I enquired again via Dell UK's on line enquiry form asking why Dell was ignoring me?

2009-07-09 09:30 I received a phone call from a withheld number that turned out to be from Dell. The caller apologised for failing to mail me, blaming this on failures in Dell's on-line enquiry system. I explained again that we either want to buy Vostro laptops OS-free. Alternatively I need assurance that Dell will honour Microsoft's EULA and refund the cost of the Windows license if we refuse to accept the terms of said license. Caller promises to call me back in half-an-hour to advise me with regard to whether Dell can supply Vostro laptops OS-free or if they will refund unused Windows licenses.

Since then we have heard **nothing** from Dell

Conclusion

It seems there are one of two possibilities here - and they are not necessarily mutually exclusive...

1. For reasons unknown, Dell does not want to sell us computers without MS Windows or
2. Despite recession and notoriously poor sales, Dell simply cannot be bothered about its customers at all.

Of course, if a company treats you badly *before* it makes the sale, imagine how badly it will treat you if things go wrong *after* it has taken your money! Needless to say, we will **not** be purchasing any Vostro laptops!

Update

2009-07-11 Seems that whilst Dell UK cannot be bothered to deal with our sales enquiry, it is perfectly happy to spam us with unwanted sales material:

http://www.garfnet.org.uk/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=185&Itemid=331

- If you have been forced to buy a microsoft Windows Vista license against your will, remember that Microsoft's own end user license agreement for Vista Home states:-
"By using the software, you accept these terms. If you do not accept them, do not use the software. Instead, return it to the retailer for a refund or credit ."