

Re: VS 2003 Very Slow

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- *From:* "Ronald Laeremans [MSFT]" <ronaldi@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 06 Apr 2005 13:24:37 -0700
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Peteroid wrote:

Hi Ronald,

Thanks for your responses! I do have a concern of my own though (please don't read the following as an attack, its more of a concern). The policy reads:

"In special cases, charges that are ordinarily incurred for support calls may be canceled if a Microsoft Support Professional determines that a specific update will resolve your problem."

My concerns are as follows. First, you have to call to find out if you 'qualify' for the special case, so you must BET \$250 your problem can be solved for free. Second, it specifically says you are only qualified if a 'SPECIFIC update' (meaning one that ALREADY exists) will solve your problem. This implies to me if you find a NEW problem you still pay \$250 for the privilege of telling MS about their mistake. And third, does this mean you will only help people who have CREDIT CARDS with \$250 in their account?

No, will normally not be charged when reporting a bug. The "normally" part is there if a bug tht is unrelated to an issue the call is about gets discovered or if customers raise several issues of which just one is a bug and the others are unrelated. It normally does mean you need to give a credit card with \$250 available or have incidents available (which come with various ways of getting the product, including MSDN Universal").

It is just a cop out for MS (or any company) to respond something like 'well, we get so many calls we would have to charge more for the product if we didn't charge for customer support'. Well, you can also reduce such costs by making

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BUG-FREE SOFTWARE!!! But paying for customer support makes us pay for the privilege of de-debugging your software. Finally, the policy says 'MAY be canceled'. Why does a MS Support Specialist get to determine this, seeing as how such a person is hardly a neutral party? How would you like it if the customer got to determine if he MAY pay for customer service according to his 'support specialists' (ie., himself?). Oh, that doesn't sound good to you? Neither does a MS employee deciding if a customer is going to have to pay MS. You need a neutral party here...

I don't want to sound defensive here, but please do look at what your actual experience is rather than at what the policy states; that policy is both there for legal reasons (and similar if not more customer friendly than the one most of our competitors use) and to act as a somewhat of a filter to make sure a small set of customers does not simply call product support to avoid spending 20 minutes reading the documentation or searching for available information. The support engineers in any case I have been involved with go out of their way to make sure the customer is satisfied.

I think if MS is going to CHARGE for customer support, they should have to PAY people who find new bugs (say, \$5000?!). What, that doesn't sound reasonable from MS's point of view? Neither does paying for customer support from a CUSTOMER'S point of view. After all, if we have to pay when we mistakenly call you up with a problem that happens to be not be general bug, why shouldn't MS have to pay for mistakenly putting a bug in their software? You guys are aware most people will go DAYS of trying to solve such a bug themselves before finally coming to the conclusion it might be an MS bug, right? Who compensates such a person for this time, as if it truly does result in the discovery of a new bug? I'm sure you pay for internal QA, so why do you charge for external QA? In such a case MS is responsible for the person's down time (which can be VERY costly to such a person), and it does result in MS having a better product if a bug is truly revealed. So \$5000 is almost cheap...

I have always felt charging ANYTHING for customer support is dangerous and bad business. It actually rewards companies for their mistakes, and thereby makes it (sub-consciously) 'better' to actually have bugs!

And that is why we charge just a fraction of the cost of actually providing the support. Many of the calls that customers do pay for result in 10 to as much as 50 (and in some cases even more) hours of work by support engineers; many of these end up being due to are very hard to repro bugs in customer code.

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At the VERY LEAST MS should set up a page to report bugs without having to use a phone! When a customer reports a potential bug in your software he shouldn't have to pay for a phone call (I only use a cellular phone like many others so the 'free' aspect to the 800 line is of no help) or wait on the phone to talk to someone.

We do, there is a web option for support (the same cost structure and guidelines on when charges will be waived apply) and there is the MSDN feedback center for reporting bugs (without engaging support and completely free with no strings attached, but mostly used to fix bugs in alphas and betas or in a future release, this mechanism does not give you the ability to request a QFE fix).

And when do the charges for calling paid custom support get billed? BEFORE or AFTER the phone call? If its BILL first and ask questions later, then I believe it would be stupid to report a bug to MS that one finds in their software (since there might be a charge of \$250 if there isn't already a fix for it, and there might be a charge even if there IS a fix for it), which harms MS and me and everybody else. And heaven help the good samaritan who tries to report something that turns out to not be a bug...

My 2 cents...

[==Peteroid==]

PS - I think the fact this thread exists at all is evidence that this 'paranoia' in regards to calling MS Customer Support is an issue that needs to be dealt with...

I agree.

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