

Bad Technology Mojo

Saturday, 25 December 2004

Sometimes life throws you a series of curveballs, a streak of bad luck if you will. And for some inexplicable reason it comes in threes. Well, my technology mojo took a dump in a big way and I'm still waiting for the third blow. Funny enough, it wasn't the technology per say, but rather terrible customer service from technology companies. Either way, if somebody's messing with my tech, they might as well be noodling my tech.

It Starts With My Cell Phone…

I finally decided to leave Sprint PCS in pursuit of a friendlier plan. I dumped my land line and the overage charges and long distance to Canada were killing me. After four years or so, it was time to sever my relationship with Sprint PCS. For two days I researched before finding the almost perfect plan and that was damn near impossible. I remember when everybody offered unlimited evenings started at 7:00 PM instead of 9:00 PM without having to sign a two year contract or pay at least \$59.99. I remember when Sprint PCS charged only \$10 a month for unlimited data instead of \$15 with restrictions. It's less for more these days.

I ended up switching to AT&T Wireless knowing full well that Cingular buyout was under full swing. My techie senses should have rang loud when I asked customer service the difference between their mMode and Mobile Internet service. I imagined my words leaping over her head as a long pause ensued. "I don't know", she replied. Honestly counts for something I guess. I should have bailed instantly when it took three days to port my number. Sprint PCS for incoming calls and AT&T Wireless outgoing.

What happens when the phone I get stinks? Signal drops and annoying pops during calls was enough for me. I had a 30-day "buyer's remorse" period and I was only on day 25. It turns out that the first person to answer the phone at AT&T Wireless is nothing more than a switchboard. The second person is only sometimes useful. It's the third person that's supposed to do the work. After 1.5 hours on the phone, I finally go somebody to send me a replacement phone. She even told me I had another 30-days to test drive the replacement. Damn…the wait was worth it.

One week later, no phone. Now there was hell to pay. It turns out that giving hell takes time. On Sunday, one department transferred me to another department and left me on hold for 30 minutes. They never did figure out that the department was closed on Sundays. On Monday I called again. Hung up once after being on hold for an hour, dialed directly to the right department, got transferred a couple times before discovering there was no record of my call the week earlier and now I was outside the 30-days. All told 3.5 hours passed before getting a replacement phone. In fact, I got a no charge upgrade to the palmOne Treo 600. Was 5.5 hours worth the upgrade? Hell no!