

THE RHODENIZER REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2007

www.rhodenizer.com

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

INSIDER SECRET TO SOFTWARE DISCOUNTS	1
SOFTWARE LICENSING EXPLAINED	1
IS FREE A GOOD PRICE?	2
QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX	3
WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR DATA?	4
ABOUT RHODENIZER IT	4

THE TAKE-AWAY POINTS:

- Shop software using PriceGrabber.com.
- MOLP for managing more than 10 PC's.
- OpenOffice is a free alternative to Office.
- You can outsource the work of IT, but not the responsibility.

INSIDER SECRET TO SOFTWARE DISCOUNTS

Many of my readers know they can find great deals on software through the discount websites I've recommended. But, there is also a way to get additional discounts of \$10, \$50, \$80, or more if you know how! In this issue, I spill the secret.

On your PC, go to one of the discount software websites. For this example, let's choose "www.viosoftware.com". Check the price on anything of interest to you. I'll pick Microsoft Office 2007 Professional Retail (P/N: 269-11094). The price listed today is \$379.99, which is not bad but we can do better. Add this to your cart and minimize the web browser for now.

Next, open another tab or browser window and go to

"www.pricegrabber.com". From there, type in a search for the same software (don't choose any categories... sometimes it doesn't work if you do). In the results provided, you'll see many distributors offering you their price on this product. Notice the offer from Vio Software is now \$369.99! Click on the link provided and add this product to your cart. You'll now see two instances of the same software being offered by the same website (compare part numbers to be sure they're identical) with one priced \$10 lower than the other. The only difference is you've just negotiated a better price by using "Price Grabber".

Still not impressed? Visio 2007 Professional Academic (P/N: D87-02767) is listed on Vio for



\$199.99. Through Price Grabber, I find exactly the same software offered by Vio for \$142.80, a savings of \$57.19. Adobe Illustrator CS3 (P/N: 26001648) sells for \$489.99. Use Price Grabber and see Vio offer it for just \$407.89, saving you \$82.10! With free shipping and no sales tax, why would you ever go back to your old way of buying software again? Just use the power of [PriceGrabber](http://PriceGrabber.com).

SOFTWARE LICENSING EXPLAINED

I'm often asked about the differences between OEM, Retail, and Academic software. In most cases, there is no difference in the software, only in the license agreement. That can be a hard pill to swallow when looking at the differences in price. It may help to learn that software companies do not actually "sell"

software. They sell permission to use it. Intellectual property laws protect creators and their rights to profit from their creations. A creator of software does not have to give up his ownership (copyright). Instead, he can grant permission for others to use it (known as an End User License Agreement or

EULA). When you install software and click "I Agree", you've entered into a contract that dictates the terms under which that software may be used, and by whom. Here are some examples: "OEM" (Original Equipment Manufacturer) versions permit the licensee to integrate the software into (cont. P. 2)

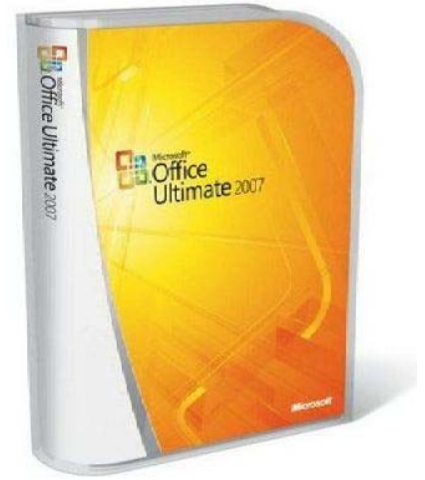
SOFTWARE LICENSING EXPLAINED (CONT.)

(cont. from P. 1) original equipment. Intended for businesses that build and sell computers, this license is priced lower because technical support is not included. If the end user needs help, he must contact the company he bought the computer from. Distributors must agree to only sell OEM licenses with "a computer". However, many now get around this requirement by disputing the definition of "a computer", selling

OEM licenses with a 10 cent chip or some other piece of "hardware". "AE" (Academic Educational) versions permit use by teachers and students for educational purposes at greatly reduced pricing. Distributors are supposed to confirm eligibility before selling this license. But, some have dropped these requirements in light of recent court decisions where enforceability of those restrictions is still being disputed. "NFR" (Not

For Resale) licenses are provided free in certain cases for educational or sales demo use. "MOLP" (Microsoft Open License Program) uses the same license key and software on multiple PC's up to the limits purchased and includes discounts for charity and non-profit use.

For-profit businesses should use retail versions until they reach 10 PC's or more. Then, enroll in a MOLP for easier license management.—C. R.



IS FREE A GOOD PRICE?

It depends. Remember last month I said "there's no such thing as a free puppy"? Some things cost more to keep than they cost to get. But, this time I have something to tell you about that really is a great deal for those willing to try something new.

Imagine everyone in your office, club, or workgroup, using computers that have the same version of business productivity software. All with the latest, state-of-the-art features. And, all at no cost. Sounds too good to be true?

Sun Microsystems is the main sponsor of this open source software project called OpenOffice.org. It's a suite of applications that closely mimic their Microsoft Office counterparts, but you

can legally download them all for free. There's no catch. It's a volunteer effort by software developers and IT professionals donating their time and talent in a collaborative effort to provide the world with a free alternative to the expensive Microsoft Office suite.

"Writer" is the word processor alternative to Microsoft Word. "Calc" is the spreadsheet program that compares to Microsoft Excel. "Base" is the database equivalent to Microsoft Access. "Draw" looks a little like Microsoft Visio. "Impress" is the presentation slide tool to replace PowerPoint, and "Math" is a graphical analysis program that... looks like nothing else I've ever used. The entire OpenOffice.org suite is avail-

able in 65 languages with versions that run on Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, Unix, and other platforms.

I've used it myself and had no problems. One word of caution: Be careful to save the files you create in "Microsoft compatible" format. Use the "Save As" option to select the correct file type when you want others to be able to open your files in their Microsoft applications.

Now, choose a PC for testing (preferably without Microsoft Office) and download the free software from www.openoffice.org. Try it for a while to see if you could use this instead of Microsoft Office. If it does everything you need, you can say free was a good price indeed!



Microsoft	OpenOffice.org
Word	Write
Excel	Calc
Access	Base
PowerPoint	Impress
Visio	Draw

QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX

Q– “Most people in our office do nothing about spyware or backing up their files until it’s too late. What can we do to make them more proactive?”

A– Technology provides the tools for managing information. But, company policy must dictate how those tools are to be used. Effective policy defines who is responsible for what, and the penalties for non-performance. I think you’ll see new enthusiasm for safeguarding company data when management plainly states who is responsible and what the penalties are for negligence in these areas.

If Information Technology is a sword, management is the arm that wields it. Strong management is what ultimately makes IT effective.

Q– “Some of the new DVD and CD-ROM burners have a feature called “LightScribe”. What is this?”

A– It’s a firmware option that enables you to “burn” data to a blank CD or DVD, then flip it over and use the same laser to “burn” text and images onto a special coating on the other side. This enables you to label the disk without the use of any stick-on labels that might peel off afterwards. It requires the use of special software (usually included with the drive) and special “LightScribe” coated CD’s or DVD’s that are a bit

more expensive. You can still write to regular blank disks if you prefer... you just won’t be able to use the LightScribe feature on them.

Q– “My main computer is a desktop. I also carry a laptop and a Blackberry. How can I keep my information synchronized between them all?”

A– Technology is supposed to make life easier, not more complicated. Instead of trying to maintain 3 copies of the same files, contacts, calendar, etc., why not just keep everything in one place and access it remotely? There are a variety of solutions available. The right one for you depends upon your particular needs and budget.

You could subscribe to a hosted Outlook/Exchange service (such as [MailStreet](#)) and remotely access all of your Outlook data from any PC with Internet access using only a web browser. This is a good solution if you use multiple computers. This way, you never download email. You leave it on the server and manipulate it remotely from any PC you want to use.

Another good solution is to use Windows XP Professional’s built-in Remote Desktop ability. Use the free Remote Desktop client to remotely access everything on your main XP Pro PC as though you were there.

If you don’t have XP Pro, for about \$10 a month you can subscribe to a remote access service like [GoToMyPC.com](#).

if you need immediate access to Outlook data at all times, you can keep your Blackberry synchronized with your main PC. Just password-protect it in case it falls into the wrong hands.

Carrying a laptop with confidential data is inherent with security risks. If you must do this, at least have an experienced IT pro show you how to encrypt your files and harden the operating system against unauthorized access.

Q- “How can I tell if a software package is HIPAA or SOX compliant?”

A– There’s no such thing.

Security standards like the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act](#) and the [Sarbanes-Oxley Act](#), state the rules for handling confidential data. But, these are practices and procedures you follow in order to be compliant. Software cannot be compliant. Software can only *support* compliance. How you use it to accomplish those objectives is what ultimately determines whether or not your business is compliant.



“If Information Technology is a sword, management is the arm that wields it.”

GoToMyPC®

**Remote access
from anywhere**

Send your questions to:
questions@rhodenizer.com

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR DATA?

Last week, Skype's global VoIP and IM service suddenly went down leaving about 6 million people unable to login for 2 days because of a "software deficiency".

In July, Craigslist, LiveJournal, and CNET vanished from the Internet for a few hours when the San Francisco data center they shared went dark. A nearby transformer exploded and generators belonging to 365Main didn't kick-in as promised they would.

One morning in May of 2004, customers of iRW Services in GA, NC, and SC suddenly lost e-mail and Internet service.

For the next eleven hours, engineers struggled with "router problems". By the time service was restored that night, the guaranteed 99.4% uptime promised in sales brochures and service contracts had been broken.

No matter what you've been promised, no matter what you've paid, bad things happen. Machines fail. People fail. And, the consequences to your company's IT functions ultimately fall upon you. You can choose to outsource the work, but you can't outsource the responsibility. Assume that people will keep

their commitments. But, also prepare for when they don't. Never stop exploring contingency plans and "what if" scenarios. Identify acceptable and unacceptable failures. Then, plan for what you'll do if the unacceptable happens. Don't stop looking for ways to backstop vendors' "bulletproof" services just in case a bullet gets through.

Are you confident that all your files, databases, calendar, and contact information is being backed up to an alternate location? Could you continue on without it? If not, what are you doing about it?



"Assume that people will keep their commitments. But, also prepare for when they don't."

ABOUT RHODENIZER IT

Rhodenizer IT is a different kind of IT service provider for the north Metro Atlanta area.

We sell no hardware or software. We have no quotas or markups. We provide consulting services that include finding the best deals on what you need... and passing the savings along to you.

We also provide complete IT service for the needs of small businesses. Our mission is

not just fixing computers. It's providing the right solution for your needs, and for your budget.

We also help small businesses create strategic plans for reducing IT costs and increasing the security and protection of their most important asset: Information.

A well organized IT operation will save your business time and money in the long run.

Call to schedule your **free initial consultation with no obligation**. Tell us about your IT problems and concerns. Let us recommend a course of action.

It costs nothing to find out if we have the answers and the expertise you need.

"I don't want my clients to be satisfied. That's just not good enough. I won't rest till they're impressed!" - C.R.



P. O. Box 768122
Roswell, Georgia 30076

www.rhodenizer.com

The Rhodenizer Report is published and distributed by Rhodenizer IT, Inc. © Copyright 2007. All Rights Reserved.

DISCLAIMER: The information, opinions, and recommendations expressed within are for general knowledge and are not intended to be a substitute for personal consultation. Furthermore, some information may be based upon other information provided by third parties. Unless specifically stated, no form of independent verification is undertaken. The author is not responsible for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies. This information is provided free of charge and is without warranty, neither explicit nor implied. The reader assumes all risk when performing any computer modifications without the supervision of a qualified professional.