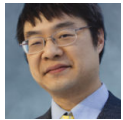


When a customer asks for something unsupported, and they promise not to get upset when it stops working, don't believe them

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A customer wanted to know how to do something extreme. Let's say for the sake of example that they wanted to disable clicking on things in Explorer. They understood that it might very well not be supported, but "they are fine with an unsupported way."

I asked why they wanted to disable clicking on things in Explorer, especially since clicking on things is one of the most common things people do with Explorer.

The customer liaison explained that the customer didn't want users clicking on one specific icon, so they just want to disable clicking.

I suggested that the customer was trying to kill a fly with a bazooka. If they don't want users clicking on one specific icon, then they can look for a policy to disable that one specific icon.

The customer liaison replied that the customer already did that, but they want to disable clicking on anything, just to make sure. The customer liaison reiterated that the customer would be fine with an unsupported technique, and that the liaison would apply all applicable disclaimers when providing the information.

In practice, these disclaimers have no value. I've seen it happen. A customer does some unsupported thing, and it works for a while. And then it stops working. And then they come back and say, "Hi, you helped us do this unsupported thing, and it worked great for a while, but it recently stopped working. Can you help us get it working again?" In other words, they are asking for support for the unsupported thing.

After all, the fact that we gave them an unsupported thing in the past proves that giving people unsupported things is one of the things we do. Which means that it becomes *de facto* supported.

Don't fall into this trap. If somebody asks for something unsupported, even if they say, "Yes, we understand that it's not supported," they will treat it as supported. Because their understanding is not "And we promise not to ask for help when it stops working." Their understanding is "We understand that this is something devious that you're giving us, and we appreciate your continuing assistance."

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