

Sun Solaris Gets a new Life  
By Joseph Marion

The roles that secondary market dealers, maintenance and leasing companies play in the secondary market very often are 100% in line with the goals of the IT Manager. Take for example Sun Microsystem's new policy on Solaris, Sun's Operating System.

At the end of last year, Sun Microsystems quietly announced a new policy as it relates to Solaris.

Prior to that announcement Sun would provide a copy of Solaris with each new system purchased from Sun. However, when that system was sold, the new end user had to purchase the right to use Solaris all over again. In some cases the cost for the right to use Solaris was more expensive than the cost of the Sun hardware on the secondary market.

I believe that, like many manufacturers, Sun felt that by making it very expensive to buy a used Sun System, an end user would be driven to buy a new system from Sun. Driven they were, but not to buy a new Sun box. All it did was drive the customers away!

Take for example an end user who might have purchased a V1280 system for around \$50,000. A right to use fee for Solaris for that box was priced at \$35,000. If that user wanted to sell his Sun box two days after he purchased it, the actual value would be \$35,000, which is his cost for the system less the \$15,000 the new end user would have to pay for the operating system.

That kind of practice does not build customer loyalty. Secondary market dealers understood the impact this practice had on the value of their end user's IT installations. Leasing Companies complained that this policy was killing the residual value of their equipment after it came off lease. And end users who thought they had the right to buy and resell their Sun Systems found that they had not right to resell the software that came with it. The market was in a mess!

The Secondary Market Dealers, Leasing Companies and end users all complained to Sun. The "battle" was led by the Association of Service and Computer Dealers, International (ASCDI). To its credit, Sun listened. In November of last year, Sun quietly announced a new and improved policy for Solaris. That policy can be found at <http://www.ascdi.com/IndPolicies/sunsolarisfree.asp>

The New Sun Solaris Policy

Under Sun's new Solaris plan users can download a FREE copy of Solaris from Sun's website, <http://www.sun.com/software/solaris/> That copy can be installed on a used system which an IT Manager can purchase from the Secondary Market dealer of their choice. (You can find a list of Secondary market Dealers at [www.ascdi.com](http://www.ascdi.com).) After installing Solaris, a user has a few choices to make. In order

to continue to receive updates to Solaris, they need to purchase some type of Support program from Sun Microsystems.

### Solaris Support Options

The three choices are Premium, Standard and Basic. The three options are priced based upon the number of processors you have in your system. Premium support includes 24/7 Sun Technical support and interoperability support. Standard support offers Sun Technical Support from 8-6, Monday thru Friday. Basic includes no Sun Tech Support at all. Interoperability support is Sun's way of offering support to end users who use hardware from a multitude of manufacturers.

Other features which they all include are:

Solaris OS Updates- Remember, that when you download your free copy of Solaris you must chose one of these service plans in order to receive the majority of updates and patches.

Sun update connection- Sun update connection will notify you of new Solaris OS software updates as well as the ability to perform single-system or multi-system remote updating.

Online Services- Online Services includes access to administration resources including the Sun knowledge bases and online ticket tracking.

Support Bulletins- Support Bulletins are email alerts from Sun.

### HARDWARE MAINTENANCE

If you would like to "bundle" your Solaris Support with a hardware maintenance contact from Sun, you should look at the Sun Spectrum option. However, you can save some money on maintenance and still get quality service by choosing a Secondary Market Service provider. Secondary market service providers know Sun Hardware as well as anyone. More importantly, they provide services second to none. You can find a list a [www.ascdi.com](http://www.ascdi.com) under Public Information/Search for Tech Services.

We are in this together

The policy which Sun has adopted for its operating system should be applauded. They now offer end users a real option. Users can now choose to buy new or buy used and still have the option of getting Solaris at a fair price.

IT managers (and Leasing Companies) should take note of the fact that the battle waged by the Secondary Market Dealers to get Sun to change its policy was one that helped all end users to maintain the value of their IT Equipment. Without a strong secondary market industry end users would not have the choices they have today as manufacturers

would rule. In fact, if the manufacturers were your only source for equipment, there might not even be a secondary market for your used IT gear.