

Great While It Lasted

By Reg P. Wydeven
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Shortly after we had kids, my wife got a Toyota Camry wagon. It was a great, safe car for her to go back and forth to school and to lug the kids around with diaper bags and the rest of their accessories. When the kids got to be older and out of car seats, they loved riding in the far rear seat so they could ride backwards and look at the cars behind us.

After many miles and much love, it was time to replace the wagon and we got a new Camry. The only problem was about a week after selling the wagon, my wife realized she left her Alan Jackson CD in the car's player. She played it all the time and was very bummed to have bought the CD only to never be able to listen to it again.

Well, she may not be alone.

Recently, a young man from Canada attempted to watch a movie he had purchased in the Apple iTunes store. When he looked in his library, he noticed the movie, along with a few others, were not there. He contacted Apple only to learn that the company's content provider removed them from the store, and hence, his library.

Confused, the man indicated that he had purchased the movie in the iTunes store and wanted to know how it could be removed. Apple responded that if he read iTunes terms and conditions, he would realize that consumers never purchase movies or music – they just paid a licensing fee to enjoy the content whenever they want. That is, until the content provider decides to remove it.

Understandably upset, the man wanted a refund. Apple refused, but did give him a coupon for two free movie rentals.

Apple is not alone. Amazon has the same deal – any movies or music customers purchase, or books they download on their Kindles, can disappear if the company's licensing agreements change.

Online retailers clearly state this arrangement in their terms and conditions. For example, Amazon's reads that "Kindle Content is licensed, not sold, to you by the Content Provider. The Content Provider may include additional terms for use within its Kindle Content." Likewise, Apple's agreement states that the licensor "reserves the right to change, suspend, remove, disable or impose access restrictions or limits on any External Services at any time without notice or liability to you."

So while retailers aren't necessarily hiding things, the fact that customers click "purchase" or "buy" to obtain content certainly implies the song, movie or book is theirs forever, just like a DVD, paperback novel or Alan Jackson CD.

Since learning of this, many people have converted their ebooks to PDFs, and some have even printed them. In addition, they have downloaded all their movies and music to a hard drive in case the provider changes content.

On Tuesday, *'Star Wars: Solo'* comes out on DVD and Blu-Ray. Like I have with all the other *'Star Wars'* movies, I'll be buying a physical copy, as opposed to a digital one. You would think a nerd would have more faith in technology.

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