

Date: Fri, 8 Dec 1995 08:58:35 -0500
From: Craig Everett <Craig_Everett@WYATTCONSULT.COM>
Subject: Re: ScoutWare 1.3 Support

Someone asked about ScoutWare support yesterday, and it would seem appropriate for me to respond, since I am, in effect, Tagus Software.

First, I apologize to anyone who has had delays in getting questions answered recently. I travel a great deal in my job, so sometimes my e-mail can go a week or two without getting answered. That is particularly the case in December.

Second, there are limits to what you can expect for support when you pay \$10 for a software package. The fact that I only charge \$10 should indicate to most people that I do this for fun, and not for a living. I do, however, try to promptly answer everyone's questions about the software, but you have to realize that it's not at the very top of my priority list. Offhand, I can think of several things that take precedence, including family, church, job and scout troop. Overall, though, there have been very few complaints about technical support, except for the occasions when I've been out of town for an extended period of time.

Third, there is *no* difference between the shareware version and registered version, except that the annoying registration form goes away once you register. I've made this clear in every piece of documentation, but I still constantly get the question "What additional features will I get if I register?" The reason why you register shareware is because it's the right thing to do, not because you want additional features. Normally, software companies "shut off" features in their shareware versions which get turned on again once the person registers. ScoutWare was originally designed the same way, but the beta testers complained, saying that it represented an implied mistrust of scouters, which was offensive and inappropriate. I concurred, and decided that ScoutWare would be fully functional as shareware, and that I would trust the scouters to be honest. More than a few times I've had people register their copy of ScoutWare, discover that there aren't any additional features, then gripe about it, asking "well, why did I bother to register, then?" It completely floors me when I hear this from someone who has taken a specific pledge to be honest.

Sorry about the ranting, but I'm experiencing a certain level of frustration about this. I really tried to do the right thing in the way I structured ScoutWare registration, but if all I get is complaints about it, then maybe I'll have to shut off a few of the new features in the shareware version of the next release just so that people feel that they've been materially rewarded for being honest. The code is already in the program to shut off features to shareware users, but I just haven't used it thus far.

I'd really be interested in hearing any comments or suggestions than any of you might have concerning this.

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