

Chris's Corner: The EULA or the Great Unknown

A EULA is the end user license agreement that is connected the computer software and applications. Basically it tells you what you can and can't do with the program and application and what the software company can and can't do to you or your business as a result of your agreeing to their terms.

Those of you, who use Facebook in some form or another, may have recently heard about people getting upset about the separation of Facebook messenger from Facebook itself. More specifically as a result of install the new messenger application, some people were amazed or upset over the potential loss of privacy to users.

Many people actually got around to reading the EULA after being woken up by the installation of messenger and the realization of how your private data can be used. After reading what they had blindly agreed to when first installing the application, many people have made the decision to uninstall Facebook and stop using it.

Personally, I am not worried about Facebook and my privacy, because if you bother to check your settings, you can limit how much and what type of information YOU are making available, but that is another story.

My whole point is that every time we install software, applications and things like that we agree to the software company's terms and conditions. What could happen to American industry if buried in the EULAs of Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Server, etc was some arcane clause that it is within the rights of Microsoft after a period of 5 years that you have to pay a renewal fee or face the removal of your

software and subsequent loss of associated data. What could you do about it? You agreed to it when you signed up.

I am not being cynical or paranoid here. I am just pointing out that today's economy runs on computer power. Take away the computers and businesses would grind to an abrupt halt. How much would businesses and governments be willing to pay when held ransom by a EULA?

What about software updates? Every time you get a software update you are agreeing to a new EULA. Do you read them? If you do, do you understand them? If not, do you take them to a lawyer? Is your lawyer tech savvy enough to make sense of it? If you don't like what you find out, what do you do?

I don't know if there are laws and protections in place to protect us, but I sure hope so.

This is just something to think about.