

*[address and receipt numbers removed]*

9 November 2006

PC World Customer Service  
PO Box 1687  
Sheffield S2 5YA

Dear PC World,

I have been awaiting a return phone call from 'Stuart' at your shop at 145 Tottenham Court Road since two weeks ago, Thursday 26 October. But this is only the most recent issue in a long line of issues with the Compaq Presario SR1420UK desktop computer that I purchased from you in June 2005. These are described at length on pages 3-7.

To summarise, I brought the computer back to the shop on Monday 23 October because it had completely failed yet again, in such a way as to indicate (to both myself and an IT engineer at my work) that the computer has a deep-seated, inherent flaw which transcends my warranty protection according to the Sale of Goods Act. In addition, PC World failed to replace my hard drive in May when I was still covered by warranty, despite your PC Service Call technicians having determined that it was faulty.

Within 28 days after I picked up the computer in June, having been told that the agreed repairs had been completed (even though Tottenham Court Road shop technicians had actually only run PC Recovery to return the PC to its default state, rather than replacing the hard drive as tech support had agreed with me), I experienced the same problems I have suffered throughout my ownership of the computer – constant hanging during very routine and undemanding activities.

As I was supposed to have been covered under a 28-day extension of the warranty due to the 'repairs', I rang tech support in early July. Unfortunately they refused to help me because there was no record of the 28-day warranty extension on their system. But on the last day of the warranty extension, the computer of course began to work perfectly again, so I could not return to the shop at that time to show staff the continued problems.

Of course a few weeks later the hanging began again, and finally in October I had no choice but to try to rebuild the computer from scratch. But after a full day of struggling with PC Recovery, I couldn't get the computer to work at all.

I now have a computer that can't even be returned to the default factory state through PC Recovery, because the recovery partition is corrupt and the recovery DVD also appears not to work. This clearly suggests that the fault is with either the hardware or the software that was originally provided within the PC, rather than being a problem with some combination of software that I'm using. (The recovery DVD was created by the PC itself in its default state soon after I purchased the computer – see 20-28 July on the attached timeline.)

Although I am very frustrated to still be wasting time trying to reach a satisfactory resolution with PC World, there is still an opportunity to recover this service failure and to make me a *not-too-dissatisfied* customer. To this end, **I hope you will agree with me that I deserve a full cash refund without any further inconvenience.**

However, if you force me to once again pick up the computer from your Tottenham Court Road shop and take it to an independent engineer in order to prove that you've sold me a faulty computer, then I can guarantee you that I will never purchase even the smallest item from PC World ever again, and I will use whatever online feedback websites I can find to ensure that other discerning customers are also aware of the unreliable merchandise sold by PC World and the poor customer service that is offered by your company.

Please see the timeline on the following pages for a detailed listing of all of the problems I have experienced with both the PC itself and PC World customer service. This I believe shows clearly that there has been an inherent fault with the computer from the beginning.

I look forward to your response, and a swift resolution to this pathetic service failure.

Yours sincerely,

*[name removed]*

## Timeline

13 June 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I purchase a Compaq Presario SR1420 desktop computer from PCWorld.co.uk</li> </ul>
20 July 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In response to my phone query about not having received any kind of Windows CD along with the PC, I'm told by PC Service Call that I would have to burn my own recovery DVD in order to have my own copy of Windows with which to reload my computer in case of hard drive failure</li> </ul>
28 July 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer freezes during the process of burning the recovery DVD</li> <li>• I hit a wrong button somewhere and end up running PC Recovery thus returning the computer to its factory state, and wiping out all software that I had loaded and requiring me to completely rebuild the computer before its next use</li> <li>• I'm advised by PC Service Call that I may need to try a different brand of blank DVD-R, which finally works</li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: £6 for 2 DVD-Rs, plus call costs, plus 12 hours for rebuild, talking with PC Service Call and two trips to the shops</i></li> </ul>
August 2005 to April 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The computer crashes more and more frequently</li> <li>• Internet Explorer (part of the default software suite) refuses to work, and there is no way to upgrade or even uninstall it because it is built into the Compaq configuration</li> <li>• I load Mozilla Firefox for internet browsing, but this means I can't use Windows Update, which requires IE</li> <li>• I experience constant errors in MS Outlook requiring the program to be closed and restarted, which means I have to use web-based email for two months</li> <li>• Sonic RecordNow (also part of the default software suite) repeatedly fails to burn successfully, so I load my own version of Nero 6 for burning CDs and DVDs</li> <li>• Computer freezes every time I attempt to copy files to or from my brand-new LaCie external hard drive</li> <li>• Eventually the computer refuses to start; and in my absence, my fiancé presses F10 to 'recover', thereby returning the computer to its factory state yet again, and requiring yet another complete rebuild</li> <li>• I purchase and load my own version of Windows XP to see if that helps, but similar problems persist especially when I try to use my USB 2.0 external hard drive and mp3 player</li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: £80 for Windows XP, plus 30 hours fiddling with various bits of software</i></li> </ul>
3 April 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finally driven to impatience by the recurring problems, I ring PC Service Call and am advised that there could be a problem with my USB 2.0 driver, and that I should try</li> </ul>

	<p>loading another one</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But an extensive and time-consuming internet search over the next few weeks reveals that the USB 2.0 driver is built into Windows XP, and is therefore not available on its own (and clearly should not be the actual problem)</li> <li>• My external hard drive (which works fine on other computers) remains unusable</li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: call costs, plus 3 hours talking with PC Service Call, fiddling with settings and searching for non-existent drivers</i></li> </ul>
6 May 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finally the computer grinds to a halt – even with guidance from PC Service Call ('Samuel', team 35, and 'Ukel', team 6), there appears to be no way to run PC Recovery</li> <li>• Ukel's manager suggests that the specific tests carried out indicate a failed internal hard drive, and they offer to send me a new one, or send an engineer out to replace it for me</li> <li>• I'm not convinced that a new hard drive will solve the problem, as the problems seem deeper than this, and I've already wasted enough time on this computer, but they are only willing to suggest a hard drive replacement rather than replacement of the PC or refund</li> <li>• They say I have to talk to PC World if I want to exchange the computer</li> <li>• I refer to the Terms and Conditions of online purchases, which (as below) seem to suggest that I have the choice to exchange the computer:  <i>"If there is a fault with your product within 12 months of delivery (or other defect with your order), we will normally offer a prompt repair, exchange or refund... To qualify for a refund or exchange the product must be:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>in otherwise in 'as-new' condition;</i></li> <li>• <i>complete with any accessories and free gifts offered with it (and, if possible, the original box and packaging).</i></li> </ul> <i>Please return the product to a PC World store..."</i> </li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: call costs, plus another hour talking with PC Service Call</i></li> </ul>
7 May 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I bring the computer to PC World at 145 Tottenham Court Road for exchange</li> <li>• However 'Matthew' tells me that I can't exchange the computer, despite what I've read in the Terms and Conditions, and that my only option is to have it repaired by PC Service Call as offered, and that I can either have those repairs carried out by PC Service Call at my home or at the shop</li> <li>• <b>Matthew also tells me that my warranty will be extended by 28 days after the repairs, and that if I</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>experience the same problems within 28 days after the repairs, then I will be offered an exchange</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I choose to have the repairs carried out at the shop</li> <li>• I inform Matthew that I am hoping to have the computer back before I leave for two weeks in Australia on 27 May, and he says they'll ring when the work is finished</li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: £10 for taxi, plus call costs, plus two hours</i></li> </ul>
25 May 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not having heard back from PC World or PC Service Call, and beginning to suspect that perhaps my computer has been completely forgotten in a corner, I ring PC Service Call</li> <li>• I'm told that the computer is ready for pick-up, but the very unfriendly customer service rep (whose name I didn't catch) refuses to explain why no one rang me when the repairs were done, refuses to apologise, and refuses even to tell me when the repairs were finished</li> <li>• I tell her that I can't pick up the computer until my return from Australia as I have no time in the last two days before departure</li> <li>• Frustrated with the way I've been treated during the previous call, I also speak to 'Nick Minshull' in Complaints (ext. 21535), who says not to be worried about the expiration of my warranty one year after purchase, as regardless of the actual cut-off date of the warranty coverage, I'm covered for 6 years against inherent faults in the computer under the 'Sale of Goods Act'</li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: call costs, plus another hour on two phone calls</i></li> </ul>
16 June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I pick up the computer from Tottenham Court Road</li> <li>• The gentleman at the counter says that PC World have a record of the date that I've picked up the computer, although I discover on 9 July 2006 that there is no record of my collection date anywhere on the system</li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: £10 for taxi, plus call costs, plus two months without use of the computer, plus another hour for the trip</i></li> </ul>
9 July 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I ring PC Service Call to report that the computer has begun freezing again, while copying files to the external hard drive, while using MS Outlook, and during startup</li> <li>• He advises that he cannot help me because my warranty has expired and that there is no record of my promised 28-day warranty extension as a result of the recent repairs – and anyway, that he can't run any tests unless I return the computer to its factory state</li> <li>• I inform him that my warranty should have been extended as a result of the repairs, and that I don't want to return to the factory state <i>again</i>, and that I was told I would get an exchange if I experienced the same problems within 28 days after the repair</li> <li>• He says I have to speak to 'Customer Care'</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Resource costs: call costs, plus another hour</i></li> </ul>
10 July 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I ring the number given to me on 9 July only to find that they say I have to speak to 'PC World Customer Care'</li> <li>• This pattern continues for three more phone calls until I finally find out from 'Skander' (PC Service Call, team 20) that the Tottenham Court Road store carried out the 'repairs' themselves, and that in fact... <b>NO REPAIRS WERE CARRIED OUT!</b></li> <li>• I am advised once again that PC Service Call can't help me because my warranty has expired, and that I'll have to discuss the matter with PC World</li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: call costs, plus another four hours on four phone calls and writing this letter</i></li> </ul>
11 July 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I plan to return the computer to PC World Tottenham Court Road, but that morning the PC works reliability for the first time in days and I can't show shop staff the problems I've been having</li> </ul>
Aug to Oct 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The freezing problems return, but having received no help from PC World I resolve to sell the PC</li> <li>• When I finally get time to look into this near the end of October, PC Recovery does not work, thus preventing me from selling the computer</li> <li>• The recovery partition is corrupt, and the recovery DVD freezes many times during recovery</li> <li>• On three occasions the DVD recovery succeeds, but the PC always freezes up again before I've been able to restart the computer even once, and a dialogue box tells me 'setup' will have to be run again, which of course means running the whole 45-minute recovery process again</li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: eight hours running PC Recovery unsuccessfully</i></li> </ul>
23 October 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I return the PC to 145 Tottenham Court Road again</li> <li>• I speak to 'Stuart' who reads a draft version of this timeline and agrees that it seems strange that the hard drive was not replaced when I was told it would be</li> <li>• He agrees to investigate, and he thinks he should be able to do something for me, though probably store credit rather than a cash refund</li> <li>• He tells me he will ring me back by the end of the day</li> <li>• I inform him that PC World store credit doesn't really have any value for me after all I've been through, but I appreciate his sincerity after all the poor customer service I've received</li> <li>• Before the shop closes that day I ring to see what progress is made, but customer service can't connect me with Stuart and I don't hear back from him that night</li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: £10 for taxi, plus call costs and three hours</i></li> </ul>
24 October 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stuart finally rings me back and tells me that after investigating, he cannot offer me a refund of any kind</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He does agree to have a technician look at the PC to determine what is wrong, 'as a gesture of goodwill'</li> </ul>
25 October 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The technician rings me back and says he has been unable to run PC Recovery because the recovery partition is corrupt</li> <li>• I inform him that I was already well aware of this fact and ask him if he has tried the recovery DVD which is in the box with the PC</li> <li>• He says he hasn't tried this and will do so and get back to me</li> </ul>
26 October 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I ring to speak to Stuart about the technician's finding, but have to leave a message as he is unavailable</li> <li>• Stuart does not ring me back for the rest of the day</li> <li>• <i>Resource costs: call costs</i></li> </ul>
9 November 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still not having heard back from Stuart or anyone else at Tottenham Court Road, I resolve to put my disappointments in writing to give PC World one more chance to resolve my complaints</li> </ul>

**Total costs due to PC failure: approximately £400**