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Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052
ATTN: Windows Explorer Marketing Department

Dear Computer Savvy Salesmen:

I like to explore and I also like to use Windows Explorer on my personal home computer. Well, my dear friends, I have found a way to finally put these two explorative hobbies of mine together in one super way. I am currently planning a single manned expedition* in Antarctica to the South Pole. I went to the store last week and bought some extra thick socks and a new pair of consternations (which I believe you folks may refer to as mittens). I have a few friends who think I am nuts for doing this alone, but they are entitled to their opinion I guess. They have asked me over and over again, why I want to do this alone without any help. Whenever they ask me this, I just shake my head gently and reply with a simple, "Ta."

So now I can imagine you are wondering why on earth I am telling this story to you and where the explorer connection comes into play. It is quite simple. I intend to prepare a daily journal and broadcast that back to all of my friends and loved ones detailing my progress and findings. To do that I will need a wireless laptop computer with Microsoft Explorer software loaded on it. So are you beginning to get the picture now? ;-) See, I will be exploring in real life and I will document that exploration with Explorer! I should write a letter to the Ford Motor Company to see if they would donate a new 2004 Ford Explorer to me on my completion of the expedition. That would be a hoot!

What I need to know from you is whether you can set me up with a system that will be connected to the Internet while I am moving toward the South Pole. I have just one major concern though. Would the magnetic fields near the South Pole damage my computer or its data? I should probably get a good back up system in place for that reason. What would you recommend?

You know, it was almost exactly 200 years ago that Merriweather Lewis and William Clark started their quest to find the Northwest passage to the Pacific Ocean. I don't know if I can capitalize on that anniversary, but it may be enough to get a local community band to play *When the Saints Go Marching In* at my departure. That might work out well because you know that is a popular song in New Orleans and Lewis and Clark were out exploring the Louisiana Purchase.

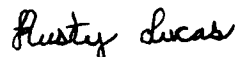
In fact, I bet I could get cardboard cutouts of some of the saints and take them with me to the South Pole. I wonder what the Catholic Church's position is on something like that. I surely could use the likes of St. Christopher and St. Francis with me when I go. St. Christopher could help me with the actual traveling and St. Francis could help me in dealing with the penguins that I am sure to encounter once I get there. (Which reminds me of an off color joke I once heard involving the seven dwarves, a priest, and a penguin)...

*You don't think that this method of taking Francis and Christopher with me will jeopardize my status as making this a single manned expedition (as I noted on page one of my letter just before the asterisk) do you? Because I cannot decide which is more important to me at this point... (1) the recognition of going alone or (2) the idea that two of the cooler saints are with me in spirit and cardboard. These do not have to be exclusive and I am thinking that this is only a technicality.

So what do you think? Can I take along a laptop computer with your Explorer software and still be safe as I approach the magnetic fields generated by the South Pole? What is the best way for me to protect and preserve my data and communications -- both in the short term of my actual journey through the magnetic fields and in the long term for future generations to behold?

Frank and Chris ROCK!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rusty Lucas".

Rusty Lucas

p.s. I hope the Justice Department will get off your back about Monopoly and antitrust. In my opinion, Monopoly is one of the best board games ever made, and while it is good to feel like you can trust people, sometime we get burned if we are too trusting, so a little bit of antitrust never really hurt anybody. You just can't be too careful in this world, unfortunately.

p.p.s.s. Do you have any baseball caps with your company's logo on them. If you could send me one for free I would be sure to wear it each day on my expedition when I take my updated picture to journal my progress. It would be some good advertising for you as my trek is sure to generate a few newspaper stories and maybe even a front page photo in the Sandusky Register and the local newspapers in Antarctica.