

Another type of misplaced apology: Apologizing for not knowing the penalty

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20070914-01

September 14, 2007



Raymond Chen

You may remember this story from a few years ago. A college student printed his own bar codes (for inexpensive items), placed them over the bar code for expensive items, then went through the register and ended up paying \$4.99 for a \$149.99 iPod, for example. Ironically, he would have gotten off lighter if he had merely shoplifted the items, because manufacturing fake bar codes brings the crime to the level of forgery, a felony.

But what really struck me was the nature of the apology. He didn't say, "I should not have done it," or even the unconvincing "I didn't know it was wrong" He said, "I did this not knowing of the serious penalty that lies behind it." In other words, "I only break the law when the penalty is mild!"

Raymond Chen

Follow

