

## Management Article – “Dude, You Might Not Be Getting Your Dell Back”: One Traveler’s Story

“Listen, I left my new Dell 6400 at security earlier today. Did you find it?”

“We did recover a computer today. I can’t release any more information without a serial #.”

“What if I gave you my password, and you turned on the computer and logged in. Only the owner would know that, right?”

“I wish I could, but we need a serial number. That’s how it works.”

“But dude, Dells don’t have serial numbers.”

“That sounds like a personal problem to me, dude.”

I recently visited San Diego and I happened to be unfortunate enough to have to go back through airport security three times so that they could check my carry ons. In the end, I forgot my brand new laptop at the security checkpoint.

I didn’t realize it until I got home.

I frantically called the San Diego airport, and got a recording that said airport security was only open from 1 to 5 p.m. on weekdays and wouldn’t be open the next day, which was a holiday.

What would it be like for you if you lost your laptop and all of its files? Read on for tips to assure you don’t get wiped out like I nearly did.

First – Make sure that your laptop has a large label on the top with your cell and office numbers and full mailing address. If my laptop had been marked, I am confident that within minutes of my leaving it in security, they would have paged me. (My old laptop *was* marked, but shame on me for not having marked the new one.) If yours isn’t, do it now!

Second - Make sure that you have a means to get at the information about your computer when you need it. In my case, I had recorded the information in MS Outlook under Dell and synched it with my iPhone for my *old* laptop. Make sure you put your serial number, service tag number, model number, ANYTHING that you might need!

My lost laptop story gets even worse... It seems that Dell doesn’t assign serial numbers to laptops; they assign a service tag number. I didn’t have mine, so I did some work on line to find my invoice and get the service tag number. I called back, and they said they couldn’t use the service tag number. Security regulations required a serial number to be verified by a law enforcement officer I explained that Dell laptops didn’t have serial numbers, and asked her to kindly look at the computer to verify that it had none. NOPE. I thought I might never get my laptop back!

After a lot of hassle, common sense prevailed, and I did reach someone who would accept the service tag number, and he promptly called a law enforcement officer to release it to my friend after I faxed a notarized release. **BOTTOM LINE** – save yourself the heartache by marking the property and making sure you record all the pertinent identifying information in a readily available place.

While you are marking your laptop, do the same for your cell phone. My iPhone has a case on it, though it is marked. When I left it in a restaurant recently, the person who found it didn’t remove the cover to see the information. I was lucky. I called the number, and someone answered. When I got it back, (it was

password protected), it showed 13 attempts to get in. Now, I've notched a hole in the rear cover and the label shows when the cover is on.

You may even wish to include the word "reward" on the contact label.

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