DEAD PARROTS AND SECURITY SNAKE OIL

Today I was once again listening to the "Dead Parrot" skit by Monty Python, I find a periodic listening to such classics is good for the mind. Anyway, as I was listening I was suddenly struck by a realization. Now before I can explain it, it is necessary to explain the skit. The basis of the act is that a man has bought a parrot (the infamous 'Norwegian Blue') from a pet store and has realized it is actually dead. He takes it back and tries to confront the pet store owner, here is an extract..

> *C: Um...now look...now look, mate, I've definitely 'ad enough of this. That parrot is definitely deceased, and when I purchased it not 'alf an hour ago, you assured me that its total lack of movement was due to it bein' tired and shagged out following a prolonged squawk.*
>
> *O: Well, he's...he's, ah...probably pining for the fjords.*
>
> *C: PININ' for the FJORDS?!?!?!? What kind of talk is that?, look, why did he fall flat on his back the moment I got 'im home?*
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> *O: The Norwegian Blue prefers kippin' on it's back! Remarkable bird, id'nit, squire? Lovely plumage!*
>
> *C: Look, I took the liberty of examining that parrot when I got it home, and I discovered the only reason that it had been sitting on its perch in the first place was that it had been NAILED there.*

The owner attempts to distract and argue with the disgruntled customer in spite of overwhelming evidence. Now here comes my little epiphany. I have over the course of years had to deal with many vendors, and I suddenly realized I had lived through this sketch, except from an IS/IT slant..

> *ME: Right, I went to install this product, and I found that while it runs it does not do what you said it would. You assured me it would be able to handle the environment*
>
> *VENDOR: Well, it's ... ah ... it's probably not configured properly*
>
> *ME: Not configured properly! What talk is that? Look, why did it flood my switches when I plugged it in?*
>
> *VENDOR: That product prefers a non-switched setup. Remarkable product id'nit? Beautiful interface!*
>
> *ME: Look, I took the liberty of examing the code when I got to the office and I discovered the only reason it had worked in your demo was because it was hardcoded!*

Well you get the idea. This has happened in other cases with slight circumstantial changes, but the message is the same, I had been sold a Norwegian Blue (or if I was lucky I realized it during the sales pitch). How many times has the media or a company or a salesman told us about something and when we question what seem to be the obvious flaws, we are told "Lovely Plumage!". Well I do not care about the flashing lights (unless they are blue) or about the lavish interface, I want to know that it works. But we live in an 'Apple' world, where if it looks good and lasts at least a few days, it will sell millions. Do you know that even now there are company's where the standard practice is to reboot all Microsoft servers each weekend - 'just in case'! I truly shudder at what we have wrought.

When will enough be enough? I wish I knew, and I am not sure if there is an answer, I just hope when the 'parrot' starts to stink I am standing downwind with my perfectly servicable mutt that happens to be metabolically active.