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SOFTWARE

Serials 2000

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The Gist: One-stop Serial Number Shop
Free

Windows has gone belly-up and demands a reinstall. You unearth the CD, but can't find the little orange sticky-label with the serial number. Or perhaps you bought the software online, and lost the key for good in an email message you deleted last century. Long story short: You're hosed.

Or are you? A group of independent-minded individuals has put together Serials 2000, a clearinghouse of serial numbers for thousands of commercial and shareware

STREET CRED

airFX

Twisted Metal: Black

Sony DCR-TRV830

Extensis

Intoxicating Minds: How Drugs Work, by Ciaran Regan

programs. Click on the free downloadable database, find the app or system for which you need a number, and browse through a list. The serials are updated frequently by users who contribute them. Because publishers disable heavily used codes in new software releases, not all of the numbers will work. Hang in there - one is bound to get you back up and running in no time. After my son's system crashed, I got a valid Windows 98 key on my second try, and I can't count how many times I've used Serials 2000 to reinstall the copy of WinZip I purchased way back when.

With Serials 2000, you can also activate disabled features of demo products and test-drive apps before you buy them. Of course, you can use the codes to appropriate software you don't own, though you'd be ill-advised to call customer support. I used the program to try out Windows Me. After learning that it wouldn't solve my driver-incompatibility problem, I deleted it and reinstalled my registered copy of Windows 2000.

Another trick is finding Serials 2000 itself. Most Web-hosting services prohibit the posting of software that can be used for piracy, and ISPs aren't typically thrilled to find the application residing on their systems, so it tends to shuffle from site to site. If the link below doesn't work when you click on it, your best bet is to run "Serials 2000" or "Serials2K" in a search engine.

- *James Turner*

Serials 2000: surf.to/serials2000.

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