

Technologically Challenged

By Hap Hansen

I have previously disclosed my problems with a personal computer. I now realize that thousands of other folks also have problems understanding their computers. I was talking to a friend of mine the other day and we discussed about how people like me, who are technologically challenged, manage to use their computers. Here are some examples:

Compaq is considering changing the command 'Press Any Key', to 'Press Return Key', because of the flood of calls asking where the 'Any' key was.

A Compaq technician received a call from a man complaining that the system wouldn't read word processing files from his old diskettes. The customer had stuck labels on the diskettes, then rolled them into his typewriter to type on the labels. Another customer was asked to send a copy of her defective diskettes. A few days later, a letter arrived from the customer along with photocopies of the floppies. A Dell technician advised his customer to put his floppy back in the drive and close the door. The customer was heard putting the phone down, getting up, crossing the room and closing the door to his room! Another Dell customer called to say he couldn't get his computer to fax anything. After about 40 minutes of trouble-shooting, the tech discovered the man was trying to fax a piece of paper by holding it in front of the monitor screen and hitting the 'send' key. Yet another Dell customer was enraged when he called a technician to say the computer had called him "bad and an invalid." The tech explained that the computer's 'bad' command and 'invalid' responses shouldn't be taken seriously.

A confused caller to IBM said he was having trouble printing documents. He told the tech that the computer had said it 'couldn't find printer.' The user had tried turning the computer screen to face the printer, but that his computer still couldn't 'see' the printer.

A customer called tech support to say her brand-new computer wouldn't work. She said she unpacked the unit, plugged it in and nothing happened. When asked what did happen when she pressed the 'power' switch, she answered, "What power switch?"

Unfortunately, many of those calls could have come from me; however, my computer ignorance is not quite that bad. After hearing about all those computer users' troubles, I now consider myself to be only 'semi- technologically' challenged!