



Users Do the Darnedest Things

We continue to receive letters from *Novell Connection* readers who have had humorous experiences while supporting their company's and clients' networks. In this article, we share a few more of our favorite reader-submitted experiences. As always, the names have been omitted to protect the embarrassed.

IT HAPPENS TO EVERYONE

About two months into my first, fresh-out-of-school networking job, I received a call from one of our department heads. He could not print to the networked Engineer's printer. Because I was not very familiar with HP LaserJet printers, I read the "Won't Print" troubleshooting section of the printer user's manual. The first thing the manual recommended was to check the paper trays for paper.

When the department head walked into the room, he said, "Can you fix it?"

I looked at him and said, "Does that thing have paper in it?"

A little embarrassed, he said, "Please don't tell me that's all that is wrong with it."

I started laughing as he pulled out both trays and filled them with paper.

STOP THAT INFERNAL BEEPING

A couple of months ago, I received a call from a user complaining that his computer was beeping. As I was heading over to the user's workstation, I thought that maybe a key on his keyboard was stuck or one of his programs was not working.

When I reached the user's office, I heard the beeping that seemed to be coming from the computer under the user's desk. I told the user to shut down his computer, but that did not stop the beeping. Next, I removed the power cord, but the beeping continued.

Out of instinct, I opened a drawer next to his computer and found the culprit—an Employee of the Year alarm clock going off. I handed the clock to the user and laughed all the way back to my office.

FROM THE TOP

Our company hired a new vice president who had little experience with computers. Unfortunately, all of the company's network and computing resource requests had to pass through her. After her first 72 hours on the job—and five calls to the help desk—we knew this was going to be a rocky relationship. Her first five calls are listed below:

1. Problem: "When I double-click on Netscape, nothing happens."
Cause: Seven seconds between mouse clicks does not constitute a double-click, no matter how slow the double-click setting in Windows is set.
2. Problem: "Web pages on our intranet are not available to my browser."

Cause: The vice president had changed her browser startup page from the company intranet to the Yahoo portal page. She then typed the names of the company's documents into Yahoo's search field.

3. Problem: "I can't print."

Cause: She left the network cable to the laptop at home.

4. Problem: "I can't get my e-mail messages."

Cause: Again, she left the network cable to the laptop at home. (We eventually gave her another network connector for her laptop so she could have one at work and one at home.)

5. Problem: "I am expecting an important e-mail message and it hasn't arrived, although the sender assures me he sent it hours ago."

Cause: The network cable to her laptop was not connected to the laptop—but this time, the cable was not at home. This time, the network cable was sitting right beside the laptop.

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

In our small, four-person IT Department, we found that we were developing a bad habit of using crude and vulgar language when things got a little too stressful—a habit that undermined our professional status. To break the habit, we created our *IT Cup-O-Joy*, which is filled with slips of paper, each with a sentence or phrase written on it.

When things get stressful and we are tempted to let loose our typical string of profanities, we take a slip out of the cup and shout the sentence or phrase out loud. By doing this, we prevent the vulgar language. In addition, we all have a good laugh during especially stressful moments. Below are some examples of sentences and phrases in our *IT Cup-O-Joy*.

- Oh SCSI!
- What the HERTZ is going on?
- Gigibit!
- BYTE me!

THE MAIL MUST GO THROUGH

We installed Burroughs B20 workstations in post offices all over Australia. Most of the employees at these post offices had never used or seen a computer before and had absolutely no idea how to use one. For example, one user could not get the workstation to read a 5.25-inch floppy diskette. When we investigated the problem, we discovered that she had assumed that the large arrow printed on the floppy diskette cover meant "this side up" instead of the intended "insert this side first."

Another user was trying to install an application using floppy diskettes. When she got to the fourth diskette, she could not continue installing the application. When we investigated the problem, we found four diskettes stuffed into the drive. The installation instructions read "insert floppy diskettes as requested." However, the documentation never mentioned removing the diskettes. The user did say that the fourth diskette had been a bit difficult to insert. ●