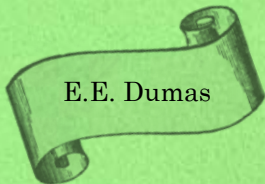




HOW TO NOT FEAR
YOUR COMPUTER
OR
SECRETS FROM A
CHEERFUL IT GUY



The “Path of Awesomeness” Manifesto

I believe everyone has the potential to be more awesome. There is no upper limit to awesomeness, and so there is no reason we should stop striving to be more awesome.

The “Path of Awesomeness” series has been written to show you the many different ways you can take steps toward boosting your ever-expanding awesomeness.

I hope you find the series helpful as you discover and develop the awesome person you are and will be.

Sincerely Enthused,
Your Friendly Author



IT can be learned:

I have worked as an IT (information technology) professional at Wieden and Kennedy, a busy ad agency in Portland. I helped support around 250 Mac computer users. What you should know is that I did this work for nearly 4 years but before that I didn't have much computer-fixing experience. I'm not an Apple fanatic, I don't program software, and the laptop I own is over 7 years old.

I didn't know how to fix computers, but I knew I needed a job, any job. I got offered a temp gig at W+K, I took it and learned from there. All I had was confidence and curiosity.

How to get Computer Confident:

Someone had to solve it first.

Know that for any problem, someone out there had to be the first person to solve it. They didn't know what the answer was, they didn't even know if there would be an answer. But by sticking with it until a solution was found, they solved the problem.

Think like a computer geek.

There's a near infinite amount of things your computer can do for you. If it's not working the way you want it to, there's likely a way to change that. Put yourself in the shoes of some computer geek. You're picky, have a short attention span, and want things to work as well as possible, so you'll

do anything it takes to get your way on your computer. You, the non-hardcore computer user, can only benefit from these desires of more involved users.

Firefox is free and awesome because a bunch of coders wanted a great browser. Google is awesome because two guys wanted to create a great search engine and share it with the world. There's a world of free operating systems, because coders have a DIY attitude and didn't want to shell out cash to Microsoft or Apple.

Play around!

Don't worry about "messing it up beyond repair" because there's no such thing as "beyond repair." Failure just means you get a chance to start from scratch and learn.

Secrets of an IT professional:

We don't always know how to fix the problem when we come to your desk or talk to you on the phone. It can be a lot of trial and error.

We forget how to fix our own computers sometimes. I can't count the number of times I've tried to get something working, only to realize it's not plugged in.

We make mistakes, but we try to minimize the damage. Backing up data is key when you're doing something risky. Because at all times, you know that no matter how bad you might mess something up, you can start from scratch and get it back to its original state.

We love tricky problems. Statistically the majority of problems we encounter we've most likely solved once before, and thus know the answer right away, but sometimes we get a doozy and it's a wonderful challenge to find the solution. As with any problem solving culture, once you make a discovery you want to tell the world because everyone could benefit from your knowledge.

Sometimes the problem you're encountering isn't a "bug" but instead it's a "feature." A lot of issues can be fixed by going into the Preferences or Options of the program and turning different options on or off. However, sometimes it just won't work the way you want it to and you'll just have to cope.

Virtues conducive to IT work:

Confidence

You know you're smart enough to adapt to any problem that might come your way, so use this confidence in your abilities to feel comfortable around computers.

Warning!

Confidence can be overdone and turn into an inflated ego (which you might have seen in the Cocky IT person).



Curiosity

There's a solution and better way of doing things out there, it just takes a little searching. You'll find it, because you love to learn.

Warning!

Curiosity can be overdone and turn into a short attention span (which you might have seen in the Flighty IT person).

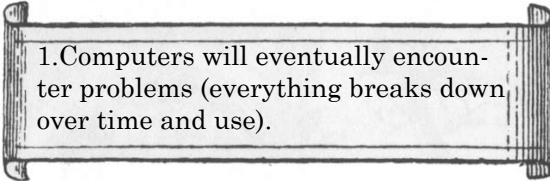


The basics of fixing a computer:

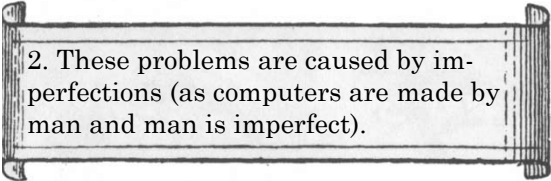
- When in doubt, restart. It'll give both you and the computer some time to cool off, and try things again with a fresh start.
- If you don't have time to restart the computer, don't worry! You can just restart the application that's causing you trouble. That might just do the trick.
- Be comforted in knowing that this error has probably happened before to someone else, so the chances of finding the the solution to it online are quite great!

- Sometimes the answer you're looking for isn't on the first page of Google, and sometimes you have to rephrase your question. Trust me, this gets much easier with practice.
- Sometimes the best answers to problems can be found on Forums or other community sites. These are often found by going to the company's website that made the software and looking for a "Support" section.

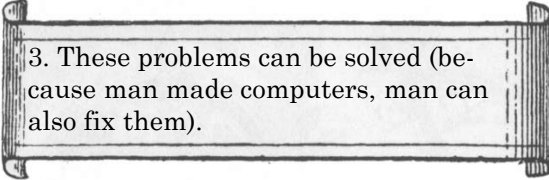
The Four Truths of IT



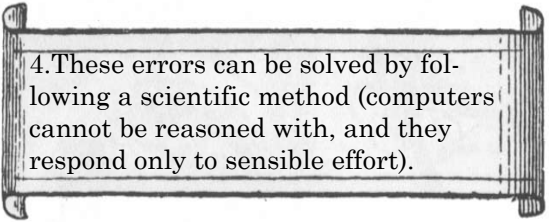
1. Computers will eventually encounter problems (everything breaks down over time and use).



2. These problems are caused by imperfections (as computers are made by man and man is imperfect).



3. These problems can be solved (because man made computers, man can also fix them).



4. These errors can be solved by following a scientific method (computers cannot be reasoned with, and they respond only to sensible effort).

Acknowledgments and Thanks

I'd like to thank my good friend BT Livermore for giving me the confidence to self-publish. His personal freedom and keen business sense are invaluable and inspirational.

I'd like to thank my family for showing me that growing up isn't just something you do in your teens.

Dan Wieden, Dale Carnegie, Steve Pavlina, and Ben Franklin have all been great rolemodels in the wide realm of Awesomeness.

The IPRC, Wieden+Kennedy, and all my friends have created an atmosphere of Awesomeness, one that fosters infinite success. Thank you one and all.

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