

Re: Incoherent E-mails

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In the Usenet newsgroup alt.computer.security, in article <8Je4f.1213\$q%.433@newssvr12.news.prodigy.com>, BillW50 wrote:

*>Funny Moe... I hated Windows and I wouldn't have it until '93. My father
>purchased a Windows 3.1 machine and wanted me to help him set it up. And
>I found it quite pleasing and went out and bought the same machine as he
>did. And I've been happy ever since. In fact, I still enjoy working on a
>Windows 3.1 machine. <grin>*

I was assigned a PC (a genuine PC-AT) in 1983 because the system development tools (basically assemblers for the TI 9900, Intel 8080/8085 and Fairchild F8 microprocessors and a EPROM zapper with the interface program running on DOS) were only available for that platform. I finished that program in 1992, and there went the need for DOS/windoze. It was far to limiting an O/S – single user, single tasking, lacking much of the capabilities that I had in the UNIX boxes I was also using.

*>And while I believe you actually don't always have to have experience to
>be some sort of expert with a given subject. But in this case, I believe
>you are in trouble.*

Actually, not – we don't have any windoze boxes, either at work (an R&D facility) or at home. So, I really could care less what happens to windoze.

*>As you have no idea whether the reports of Windows problems are really
>do to Windows or not. Believe it or not, most have nothing to do with
>bugs within the software at all.*

I think everyone is aware that most people using computers really shouldn't be – they lack the incentive to learn, and therefore don't – which results in a huge number of cracked or bOrken boxes. However, if that were the only reason, microsoft wouldn't be issuing those monthly updates, would they.

Of course, another problem is users who can't be bothered to learn more than one piece of software, and insist on using the only tool they've partially learned (a web browser) for mail, news, web, and the auto-installation and operation of malware. The "brighter" ones then go out and buy extra crap like spyware removal tools, anti-virus, and

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anti-trojan tools – and don't bother to think why the huge after-market even exists in the first place. Is Symantec (one example) capable of writing more secure code than microsoft? Seems so.

>Say, did you know Linus Torvalds secretly runs Windows? Yup, he says so
>right in his book.

You want to think about that? If it's secret, why would he be writing it in his book? I run windows too – except it's called "The X Window System" and is just a shade incompatible with the stuff from Redmond. I assume you realize microsoft isn't the only one using that term.

>I guess his own Linux isn't as productive (and fun) as Windows.

What ever. It does seem to keep him occupied, and Bill Allen was happy as a clam to have him working for Transmeta. I really don't care what he, or anyone else uses. You seem to not understand GPL or the BSD license and what they imply.

>I don't know what Bugtraq is saying,

Surprise yourself – take a look. Some of it is hilarious. You don't even have to subscribe if you don't want to

```
[compton ~]$ grep -c bugtraq .newsrc
19
[compton ~]$
```

The news server I use (giganews) carries 19 separate feeds.

>Unfortunately, including the viruses, trojans, etc. But that is
>the users fault, now isn't it?

Yup – thats why microsoft.com got shut down in early 2003 with the Slammer (aka Sapphire) worm. Personally, I don't follow the latest malware – I'm seeing more reports of unopened mail on windoze boxes managing to bypass all security, but that's of passing interest at most. Sort of like your daily fix from rec.humor.funny.

>Maybe better, stay away from XP if you can help it and use Windows
>2000 instead.

Why? I haven't seen a need to run any version of windoze at home or at work in years.

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>>> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO\_8859-1
>>
>> I've never considered them an authority.
>
>So what are you saying?
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wikipedia.org isn't noted as being the final authority.

>Every RFC document seems to me to be a draft standard. Is it just me?

```
[compton ~]$ zgrep -c '^[0-9]' rfcs/rfc-index.10.14.05.txt.gz
4176
[compton ~]$ zgrep -A1 Status rfcs/rfc-index.10.14.05.txt.gz | tr -s ' '
'n' | tr '\n' ' ' | tr ')' '\n' | grep 'Status: [A-Z]' | sed s'/.*(//'
| sort | uniq -c | column
  112 Status: BEST CURRENT PRACTICE 1269 Status: INFORMATIONAL
  116 Status: DRAFT STANDARD 1220 Status: PROPOSED STANDARD
  241 Status: EXPERIMENTAL 86 Status: STANDARD
  145 Status: HISTORIC 909 Status: UNKNOWN
[compton ~]$ zgrep -c '^[0-9]* *Not Issued' rfcs/rfc-index.10.14.05.txt.gz
78
[compton ~]$
```

I could say "it's just you" – but I won't. There are a few. For example, RFC0821 and 0822 are standards for SMTP and text messages and both have been "obsoleted" (by RFC2821 and 2822), but the original docs remain listed as "STANDARD", and the replacements are only a "PROPOSED STANDARD". (In case you can't follow the commands above – first one says there are 4176 RFCs. The second strips out the status term and counts them – the last notes that 78 were not issued.)

>You could do what I do. View most (or in your case all) HTML messages as
>ASCII.

Why? The people who send me legitimate mail know I don't do HTML – in fact, their mail server bounce the mail so they know they screwed up. Others – obviously I could care less.

>But to be able to, but delete them without reading doesn't
>make any sense to me (unless they are spam).

Spam, noise – I don't have to care. They are irrelevant.

>Yup, the ASCII standard is about 50 years old now. Remember daisywheel
>printers? I still have one. Ah life before GUI. <grin>

So, you don't count Baudot? It's just a bit older, though I haven't used a Teletype since the late 1950's. Most people don't know what they are unless they've seen movies made in the 1930's and 1940's where these were seen/heard clanking away in "the news room".

>I'm using a character based OS, I love color monitors. As the colorful
>menus allows one to make things easier to find.

Where's the menu item that runs that zgrep/strip/count routine above?
I do run a GUI – there are 20 text terminals on six panes of this desktop.
Funny thing is – not one icon. Not one menu in sight, although there is

one used to stop the desktop, or create a new terminal. Old saying:
"A mouse is a device used to point at the xterm you want to type in."

*>Same is true for HTML email as well. And all of this linking sure beats
>plain text only messages.*

Funny – I have four browsers on this box – lynx, links, opera and netscape in order of use. I don't recall the last time I used either of the last two. The first two are text only – lynx doesn't do frames, though links does. I also have 'wget' but I don't count that as a browser. I can often do a google search with lynx and be done in less time than it takes to kick netscape out of hibernation. As I say – I haven't seen much use of HTML, except for the occasional web search engine visit.

One of the major security holes with HTML is klowns clicking on URLs. A lot of problems are eliminated with just a cut and paste (never mind manually typing the URL), but as noted above – that's way to hard for the average computer user, and the bad guys can exploit this trivially.

*>Making things easier to see and understand are fine uses of CPU time. As
>let the computer do most of the work while you relax a bit. That makes
>sense to me.*

That's what I use them for.

>No I also use other word processors and text editors as well.

I use precisely three editors. You can see one of them demonstrated above, called 'sed'.

>the original WordStar is still better IMHO.

When I was using a PC, the guy in the next office used WordStar over DOS 3.1. I honestly can't recall that much about it, other than he had it set with a light blue background and white text, and he could make it produce ASCII. I used something else – I think it was called SpellBinder – but after 14 years, I've recycled those neurons.

Old guy