

Computers

Subject: The Y0Kegger...

While browsing through material in the recesses of the Roman Section of the British Museum, a researcher recently came across a tattered bit of parchment. After some effort he translated it and found it was a letter from a man called Plutonius with the title of "magister factorium," or keeper of the calendar, to one Cassius. It was dated, strangely enough, 2 BC, December 3 -- about 2,000 years ago. The text of the message follows:

Dear Cassius: Are you still working on the Y zero K problem? The change from BC to AD is giving us a lot of headaches and we haven't much time left. I don't know how people will cope with working the wrong way around. Having been working happily downward forever, now we have to start thinking upward. You would think that someone would have thought of it earlier and not left it to us to sort it all out at the last minute.

I spoke to Caesar the other evening. He was livid that Julius hadn't done something about it when he was sorting out the calendar. He said he could see why Brutus had turned nasty. We called in the consulting astrologers, but they simply said that continuing downwards using minus BC won't work. As usual, the consultants charged a fortune for doing nothing useful.

As for myself, I just can't see the sand in an hourglass flowing upward. We have heard that there are three wise men in the East who have been working on the problem, but unfortunately they won't arrive until it's all over. Some say the world will cease to exist at the moment of transition.

We're continuing to work on the Y zero K problem and I'll send you a parchment if anything develops.

Best regards,
Plutonius

Windows 98 Recall

It has come to our attention that a few copies of the West Virginia edition of Windows 98 may have accidentally been shipped outside West Virginia. If you have one of the West Virginia editions you may need some help understanding the commands.

The West Virginia edition may be recognized by looking at the opening screen. It reads WINDERS 98 with a background picture of General Lee superimposed on a Confederate flag. It is shipped with a Daisy Duke screensaver. Also note:

The Recycle Bin is labeled Outhouse
My Computer is called This Infernal Contraption
Dialup Networking is called Good Ol' Boys
Control Panel is known as the Dern Dashboard
Hard Drive is referred to as Four Wheel Drive
Floppies are them little ole plastic disc thangs.
And instead of an error message, you get a winder covered with a garbage bag and duct tape.

Other features:

OK = ats aww-right
cancel = hail no
reset = awa shoot
yes = shore
no = naaaaa
find = hunt-fer it
go to = over yonder
help = hep me out here

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stop = ternit off
start = crank it up
settings = sittins
programs = stuff at does stuff
documents = stuff I done done

Also note that winders 98 does not recognize capital letters or punctuation marks.

Some programs that are exclusive to WINDERS 98:

tiperiter = a word processor
colering book = a graphics program
addin mershene = calculator
scratch paper = notepad
jupe-box = CD player
inner-net = microsoft explorer
pichers = a graphics viewer
IRS = M/S accounting software
IRS2 = M/S accounting sofware with hidden files
coon dog = American Kennel Club records
fishin = Bass Anglers Sportsman Society records
NRA = National Rifle Association
shot gun = Remington arms price list
riffel = Winchester price list
pisstel = Smith and Wesson price list
truck = Ford and Chevrolet dealers in Kentucky by zip code
house = nearest mobile home repair service by zip code
car = same as truck
cuzzins = family history (usuall a 3 meg file)
tax records = usually an empty file
shells ammunition inventory (another 3 meg file)
bud = list of Budweiser sellers by zip code
racin = NASCAR racing schedule includes a list of tv stations that carry the races car n
truck parts = nearest junk yard by zip code
doc = vetrinarians by zip code

We regret any inconvenience it may have cause if you received a copy of the West Virginia edition. You may return it to Micrsosoft for a replacement version.

NEW VIRUS WARNING If you receive an e-mail with a subject line of "Badtimes," delete it immediately WITHOUT reading it. THIS IS THE MOST DANGEROUS E-MAIL VIRUS YET.

- It will re-write your hard drive.
- Not only that, but it will initiate your monitor's degauss function in turbo mode and the resulting magnetic flux will scramble any disks that are even close to your computer.
- It will reset your refrigerator's coolness setting so all your ice cream melts and your milk curdles.
- It will demagnetize the strips on all your credit cards, reprogram your ATM access code, screw up the tracking on your VCR and use subspace field harmonics to scratch any CDs within forty yards.
- It will give your ex-girlfriend/boyfriend your new phone number.
- It will mix antifreeze into your fish tank.
- It will drink all your beer and leave its dirty socks/bra on the coffee table when there's company coming over.
- It will hide your car keys when you are late for work and interfere with your car radio so that you hear only static while stuck in traffic.
- Badtimes will make you fall in love with a litterer.

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- It will give you nightmares about circus midgets.
 - It will replace your shampoo with Nair and your Nair with Rogaine, all while dating your current husband/wife behind your back and billing their hotel rendezvous to your Visa card.
 - It will seduce your grandmother.
 - It does not matter if she is dead, such is the power of Badtimes.
 - It reaches out beyond the grave to sully those things we hold most dear.
 - Badtimes will give you Dutch Elm disease.
 - It will leave the toilet seat up and leave the hairdryer plugged in dangerously close to a full bathtub.
 - It will not only remove the forbidden tags from our mattresses and pillows, it will refill your skim milk with whole.
 - It will make you dress funny (in some cases, funnier). Smell like elderberries, and turn your mother into a hamster!
 - It is insidious and subtle.
 - It is dangerous and terrifying to behold.
 - It is also a rather interesting shade of mauve.
 - These are just a few signs.
- Be afraid. Be very, very afraid.

A marketing director for a prominent computer manufacturer was devising a new advertising campaign for his company. While researching consumer response to his product, he asked "Naval ships are commonly referred to as 'she' or 'her.'

What gender would you assign to your computer? Give four reasons to support your answer..."

A large group of women reported that the computers should be referred to in the masculine gender because:

1. In order to get their attention, you have to turn them on.
2. They have a lot of data, but are still clueless.
3. They are supposed to help you solve problems, but half the time they are the problem.
4. As soon as you commit to one, you realize that, if you had waited a little longer you could have had a better model.

The men, on the other hand, concluded that computers should be referred to in the feminine gender because:

1. No one but the Creator understands their internal logic.
2. The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else.
3. Even your smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for later retrieval.
4. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your paycheck on accessories for it

OWED TO THE SPELL CHECKER

I have a spelling checker,
it came with my PC.
It plane le marks four my revue
miss steaks aye can knot sea.
Eye ran this poem threw it,
Your sure reel glad two no.
It's vary polished in it's weigh,
my checker tolled me sew.
A checker is a bless sing,
it freeze yew lodes of thyme.
It helps me right awl stiles two reed

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and aides me when aye rime.
To rite with care is sure a feet
of witch won should be proud.
And wee mussed dew the best wee can
sew flaws are knot aloud.
And now bee cause my spelling
is checked with such grate flare,
their are know faults with in my cite,
of none eye am a wear.
Each frays come posed up on my screen
I trussed two bee a joule.
The checker poured o're every word
to cheque sum spelling rule.
That's why aye brake in two averse;
my righting wants too please.
Sow now ewe sea why aye dew prays
such soft wear for pea seas!

<< HOW TO TELL YOU'RE AN E-MAIL JUNKIE

1. You wake up at 3 am to go to the bathroom and stop to check your e-mail on the way back to bed.
 2. You name your children Eudora, Aol, and Dotcom.
 3. You turn off your modem and get this awful empty feeling, like you just pulled the plug on a loved one.
 4. You spend half of the plane trip with your laptop on your lap...and your child in the overhead compartment.
 5. You decide to stay in college for an additional year or two, just for the free Internet access.
 6. You laugh at people with 14.4-baud modems.
 7. You start using smileys in your snail mail.
 8. You find yourself typing "com" after every period when using a word processor.com
 9. You refer to going to the bathroom as downloading.
 10. You can't call your mother...she doesn't have a modem.
 11. You check your mail. It says "no new messages." So you check it again.
 12. You don't know what gender three of your closest friends are, because they have neutral screennames and you never bothered to ask.
 13. You move into a new house and decide to Netscape before you landscape.
 14. You tell the cab driver you live at <http://1000.edison.garden/house/brick.html>
 15. You start tilting your head sideways to smile.
 16. After reading this message, you immediately E-mail it to a friend.
-

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Subject: Little Known Viruses

- Woody Allen Virus - bypasses the motherboard and turns on a daughter card.
 - Tonya Harding Virus - turns your .BAT files into lethal weapons.
 - Paul Revere Virus - warns of an impending virus infection: 1 if by LAN, 2 if by C:\
 - Hillary Rodham Clinton - Virus instantly turns 1K of disk space into 1 Meg
 - Ollie North Virus - plays a patriotic .WAV while it shreds your files
 - Joey Buttafuoco Virus - only attacks minor files
 - Michael Jackson Virus - preys on child processes
 - Ronald Reagan Virus - saves your data, but forgets where it's stored
 - Jane Fonda Virus - attacks your hard drive's FAT
 - Oprah Winfrey virus - Your 200MB hard drive suddenly shrinks to 80MB, and then slowly expands to 300MB
 - AT&T Virus - Every three minutes it tells you what great service you are getting.
 - MCI Virus - Every three minutes it reminds you that you're paying too much for the AT&T virus - -
 - Politically Correct Virus - Never calls itself a "virus," but instead refers to itself as an "electronic microorganism."
 - Ross Perot Virus - Activates every component in your system, just before the whole darn thing quits
 - Arnold Schwarzenegger Virus - Terminates and stays resident. It'll be back
 - Government Economist Virus - Nothing works, but all your diagnostic software says everything is fine
 - Federal Beaurocrat Virus - Divides your hard disk into hundreds of little units, each of which does practically nothing, but all of which claim to be the most important part of your computer
 - Adam and Eve Virus - Takes a couple of bytes out of your Apple computer
 - Congressional Virus #1 - The computer locks up, screen splits erratically with a message appearing on each half blaming the other side for the problem
 - Congressional Virus #2 - Runs every program on the hard drive simultaneously but doesn't allow the user to accomplish anything
 - Airline Virus - You're in Dallas, but your data is in Singapore
 - Freudian Virus - Your computer becomes obsessed with its own motherboard, or becomes very jealous of the size of your fiend's hard drive.
 - PBS Virus - Your computer stops every few minutes to ask for money
 - Jimmy Hoffa Virus - Your programs can never be found again
 - LAPD Virus - It claims it feels threatened by the other files on your PC and erases them in "self-defense."
 - O.J. Virus - It claims that it did not, could not and would not delete two of your files and vows to find the virus that did it
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The purpose of this memo is to announce the development of a new company wide software system. We are currently building a data warehouse that will contain all plant manufacturing data. The program is referred to as the "Manufacturing Information Access Software System" or more simply: MIASS. Next Monday at 0900 there will be a meeting in which I will display MIASS. We will continue to hold demonstrations throughout the month so that all employees will have an opportunity to get a good look at MIASS.

As for the status of the implementation of the program, I have not addressed the networking aspects yet, so currently only one person can be in MIASS at a time. This should change as MIASS expands. Several people are using the program already and have come to depend on it. Just this morning, I walked into a subordinate's office and was not surprised to find that he had his nose buried in MIASS. I've noticed, though, that some of the less technical personnel are somewhat afraid of MIASS. Just last week, when asked to enter some information into the program, I had a secretary say to me, "I'm nervous; I've never put anything in MIASS before." I volunteered to help her through her first time, and when we were done she admitted that it was relatively painless and that she was actually looking forward to doing it again. She went so far as to say that after using SAP and Oracle, she was ready to kiss MIASS.

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I know that there are some concerns over the virus that was found in MIASS upon initial installation, but I am pleased to say that the virus has been eliminated and we were able to save MIASS. In the future, however, protection will be required prior to entering MIASS.

We planned this database to encompass all information associated with business, so as you begin using the program, feel free to put anything you want into MIASS. As MIASS grows larger, we envision a time when it will be commonplace to walk by an office and see a manager hand a paper to an employee and say, "Here, stick this in MIASS".

The program has already demonstrated great benefit to the company during recent OSHA, ISO, EPA and FDA audits. After requesting certain historical data, the agency representatives were amazed at how quickly we provided the information. When asked how the numbers could be retrieved so rapidly, our Environmental Manager proudly stated, "Simple—I just pulled them out of MIASS."

Windows 98 Recall

Dilbert's latest vocabulary additions ---- NEW WORDS FOR 2000

BLAMESTORMING: Sitting around in a group, discussing why a deadline was missed or a project failed, and who was responsible.

SEAGULL MANAGER: A manager who flies in, makes a lot of noise, craps on everything, and then leaves.

CHAINSAW CONSULTANT: An outside expert brought in to reduce the employee headcount, leaving the top brass with clean hands.

CUBE FARM: An office filled with cubicles.

IDEA HAMSTERS: People who always seem to have their idea generators running.

MOUSE POTATO: The on-line, wired generation's answer to the couch potato.

PRAIRIE DOGGING: When someone yells or drops something loudly in a cube farm, and people's heads pop up over the walls to see what's going on.

SITCOMs: (Single Income, Two Children, Oppressive Mortgage) What yuppies turn into when they have children and one of them stops working to stay home with the kids.

SQUIRT THE BIRD: To transmit a signal to a satellite.

STARTER MARRIAGE: A short-lived first marriage that ends in divorce with no kids, no property and no regrets.

STRESS PUPPY: A person who seems to thrive on being stressed out and whiny.

SWIPED OUT: An ATM or credit card that has been rendered useless because the magnetic strip is worn away from extensive use.

TOURISTS: People who take training classes just to get a vacation from their jobs. "We had three serious students in the class; the rest were just tourists.

TREEWARE: Hacker slang for documentation or other printed material.

XEROX SUBSIDY: Euphemism for swiping free photocopies from one's workplace.

GOING POSTAL: Euphemism for being totally stressed out, for losing it.

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Makes reference to the unfortunate track record of postal employees who have snapped and gone on shooting rampages.

ALPHA GEEK: The most knowledgeable, technically proficient person in an office or work group.

ASSMOSIS: The process by which some people seem to absorb success and advancement by kissing up to the boss rather than working hard.

CHIPS & SALSA: Chips = hardware, Salsa = software. "Well, first we gotta figure out if the problem's in your chips or your salsa."

FLIGHT RISK: Used to describe employees who are suspected of planning to leave a company or department soon.

GOOD JOB: A "Get-Out-Of-Debt" Job. A well-paying job people take in order to pay off their debts, one that they will quit as soon as they are solvent again.

IRRITAINMENT: Entertainment and media spectacles that are annoying but you find your-self unable to stop watching them. The O.J. trials were a prime example. Bill Clinton's shameful video Grand Jury testimony is another.

PERCUSSIVE MAINTENANCE: The fine art of whacking the heck out of an electronic device to get it to work again.

UNINSTALLED: Euphemism for being fired. Heard on the voice-mail of a vice president at a downsizing computer firm: "You have reached the number of an Uninstalled Vice President. Please dial our main number and ask the operator for assistance. *(Syn: deruitment.)

VULCAN NERVE PINCH: The taxing hand position required to reach all the appropriate keys for certain commands. For instance, the arm re-boot for a Mac II computer involves simultaneously pressing the Control key, the Command Key, the Return Key, and the Power On key.

YUPPIE FOOD STAMPS: The ubiquitous \$20 bills spewed out of ATMs everywhere. Often used when trying to split the bill after a meal, "We each owe \$8, but all anybody's got are yuppie food stamps."

SALMON DAY - The experience of spending an entire day swimming upstream only to get screwed and die in the end.

CLM - Career Limiting Move - Used among microserfs to describe ill-advised activity. Trashing your boss while he or she is within earshot is a serious CLM.

ADMINISPHERE - The rarefied organizational layers beginning just above the rank and file. Decisions that fall from the adminisphere are often profoundly inappropriate or irrelevant to the problems they were designed to solve.

DILBERTED- To be exploited and oppressed by your boss. Derived from the experiences of Dilbert, the geek-in-hell comic strip character.

"I've been dilbereted again. The old man revised the specs for the fourth time this week--and it's only Tuesday."

404 - Someone who's clueless. From the World Wide Web error message "404 Not Found," meaning that the requested document could not be located. "Don't bother asking him . . . he's 404, man."

GENERICA- Features of the American landscape that are exactly the same no matter where one is, such as fast food joints, strip malls, subdivisions. Used as in "We were so lost in generica that I forgot what city we were in."

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OHNOSECOND- That minuscule fraction of time in which you realize that you've just made a BIG mistake.

UMFRIEND- A sexual relation of dubious standing or a concealed intimate relationship, as in "This is Dyan, my ... um ...friend."

Backwoods computer terminology...

1. LOG ON: Makin a wood stove hotter
2. LOG OFF: Don't add no more wood.
3. MONITOR: Keepin an eye on the wood stove.
4. DOWNLOAD: Gettin the farwood off the truck.
5. MEGA HERTZ: When yer not kernful gettin the farwood.
6. FLOPPY DISC: whatcha git from trying to carry too much farwood.
7. HARD DRIVE: Gettin home in the winter time.
8. WINDOWS: Whut to shut wen it's cold outside.
9. SCREEN: whut to shut when it's black fly season.
10. BYTE: Whut them dang flys do.
11. CHIP: Munchies fer the TV.
12. MICRO CHIP: Whut's in the bottom of the munchie bag.
13. MODEM: Whut cha did to the hay fields 14: DOT MATRIX: Old Dan Matrix's wife.
15. LAP TOP: Whar the kitty sleeps.
16. KEYBOARD: Whar ya hang the dang keys.
17. SOFTWARE: Them dang plastic forks and knifes
18. MOUSE: Whut eats the grain in the barn
19. PORT: Fancy Flatlander wine.
20. ENTER: Northerner talk fer "C'mon in y'all"
21. RANDOM ACCESS MEMORY: Wen ya cain't 'member whut ya paid fer the rifle when yore wife asks.
22. MOUSE PAD: That hippie talk fer the rat hole.

WARNING!!!

Please take time out of your busy lives to check your toilet paper stockpile. Make sure it's Y2K compliant!!! Word has it, if it isn't, come Jan 1, 2000, it will roll back to 1900, then turn into Sears Catalogs!!!!

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!!

LIFE BEFORE THE COMPUTER

An application was for employment
A program was a TV show
A cursor used profanity
A keyboard was a piano.

Compress was something you did to the garbage
Not something you did to a file
And if you unzipped anything in public
You'd be in jail for a while!

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Log on was adding wood to the fire
Hard drive was a long trip on the road
A mouse pad was where a mouse lived
And a backup happened to your commode!

Cut - you did with a pocket knife
Paste you did with glue
A web was a spider's home
And a virus was the flu!

I guess I'll stick to my pad and paper
And the memory in my head
I hear nobody's been killed in a computer crash
But when it happens they wish they were dead!

The gospel according to Gates

1. In the beginning GOD created the Bit and the Byte. And from those he created the Word.
2. And there were two Bytes in the Word; and nothing else existed. And God separated the One from the Zero; and he saw it was good.
3. And God said - Let the Data be; And so it happened. And God said - Let the Data go to their proper places. And he created floppy disks and hard disks and compact disks.
4. And God said - Let the computers be, so there would be a place to put floppy disks and hard disks and compact disks. Thus God created computers and called them hardware.
5. And there was no Software yet. But God created programs; small and big...And told them - Go and multiply yourselves and fill all the Memory.
6. And God said -I will create the Programmer; And the Programmer will make new programs and govern over the computers and programs and Data.
7. And God created the Programmer; and put him at Data Center; And God showed the Programmer the Catalog Tree and said You can use all the volumes and sub-volumes but DO NOT USE Windows.
8. And God said - It is not Good for the programmer to be alone. He took a bone from the Programmer's body and created a creature that would look up at the Programmer; and admire the Programmer; and love the things the Programmer does; And God called the creature: the User.
9. And the Programmer and the User were left under the naked DOS and it was Good.
10. But Bill was smarter than all the other creatures of God. And Bill said to the User - Did God really tell you not to run any programs?
11. And the User answered - God told us that we can use every program and every piece of Data but told us not to run Windows or we will die.
12. And Bill said to the User - How can you talk about something you did not even try. The moment you run Windows you will become equal to God. You will be able to create anything you like by a simple click of your mouse.
13. And the User saw that the fruits of the Windows were nicer and easier to use. And the User saw that any knowledge was useless since Windows could replace it.

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14. So the User installed the Windows on his computer; and said to the Programmer that it was good.
 15. And the Programmer immediately started to look for new drivers. And God asked him - What are you looking for? And the Programmer answered - I am looking for new drivers because I can not find them in the DOS. And God said - Who told you need drivers? Did you run Windows? And the Programmer said - It was Bill who told us to!
 16. And God said to Bill - Because of what you did you will be hated by all the creatures. And the User will always be unhappy with you. And you will always sell Windows.
 17. And God said to the User - Because of what you did, the Windows will disappoint you and eat up all your Resources; and you will have to use lousy programs; and you will always rely on the Programmers help.
 18. And God said to the Programmer - Because you listened to the User you will never be happy. All your programs will have errors and you will have to fix them and fix them to the end of time.
 19. And God threw them out of the Data Center and locked the door and secured it with a password.
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REDMOND, Wash. - Oct. 21, 1997 -- In direct response to accusations made by the Department of Justice, the Microsoft Corp. announced today that it will be acquiring the federal government of the United States of America for an undisclosed sum. "It's actually a logical extension of our planned growth", said Microsoft chairman Bill Gates, "It really is going to be a positive arrangement for everyone".

Microsoft representatives held a briefing in the oval office of the White House with U.S. President Bill Clinton, and assured members of the press that changes will be "minimal". The United States will be managed as a wholly owned division of Microsoft. An initial public offering is planned for July of next year, and the federal government is expected to be profitable by "Q4 1999 at latest", according to Microsoft president Steve Ballmer.

In a related announcement, Bill Clinton stated that he had "willingly and enthusiastically" accepted a position as a vice president with Microsoft, and will continue to manage the United States government, reporting directly to Bill Gates. When asked how it felt to give up the mantle of executive authority to Gates, Clinton smiled and referred to it as "a relief". He went on to say that Gates has a "proven track record", and that U.S. citizens should offer Gates their "full support and confidence". Clinton will reportedly be earning several times the \$200,000 annually he has earned as U.S. president, in his new role at Microsoft.

Gates dismissed a suggestion that the U.S. Capitol be moved to Redmond as "silly", though did say that he would make executive decisions for the U.S. government from his existing office at Microsoft headquarters. Gates went on to say that the House and Senate would "of course" be abolished. "Microsoft isn't a democracy", he observed, "and look how well we're doing".

When asked if the rumored attendant acquisition of Canada was proceeding, Gates said, "We don't deny that discussions are taking place".

Microsoft representatives closed the conference by stating that United States citizens will be able to expect lower taxes, increases in government services and discounts on all Microsoft products.

About Microsoft Founded in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software for personal computers. The company offers a wide range of products and services for public, business and personal use, each designed with the mission of making it easier and more enjoyable for people to take advantage of the full power of personal computing and free society every day.

Headquartered in Redmond, WA, the company is a publicly owned corporation.

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About the United States Founded in 1789, the United States of America (USA) is the most successful nation in the history of the world. The organization offers a beacon of democracy and opportunity, and has done so for over 200 years. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the United States is a wholly owned subsidiary of Microsoft Corporation.

MICROSOFT Bids to Acquire Catholic Church

By Hank Vorjes

VATICAN CITY (AP) -- In a joint press conference in St. Peter's Square this morning, MICROSOFT Corp. and the Vatican announced that the Redmond software giant will acquire the Roman Catholic Church in exchange for an unspecified number of shares of MICROSOFT common stock. If the deal goes through, it will be the first time a computer software company has acquired a major world religion.

With the acquisition, Pope John Paul II will become the senior vice-president of the combined company's new Religious Software Division, while MICROSOFT senior vice-presidents Michael Maples and Steven Ballmer will be invested in the College of Cardinals, said MICROSOFT Chairman Bill Gates.

"We expect a lot of growth in the religious market in the next five to ten years," said Gates. "The combined resources of MICROSOFT and the Catholic Church will allow us to make religion easier and more fun for a broader range of people."

Through the MICROSOFT Network, the company's new on-line service, "we will make the sacraments available on-line for the first time" and revive the popular pre-Counter-Reformation practice of selling indulgences, said Gates. "You can get Communion, confess your sins, receive absolution -- even reduce your time in Purgatory -- all without leaving your home."

A new software application, MICROSOFT Church, will include a macro language which you can program to download heavenly graces automatically while you are away from your computer.

An estimated 17,000 people attended the announcement in St Peter's Square, watching on a 60-foot screen as comedian Don Novello -- in character as Father Guido Sarducci -- hosted the event, which was broadcast by satellite to 700 sites worldwide.

Pope John Paul II said little during the announcement. When Novello chided Gates, "Now I guess you get to wear one of these pointy hats," the crowd roared, but the pontiff's smile seemed strained.

The deal grants MICROSOFT exclusive electronic rights to the Bible and the Vatican's prized art collection, which includes works by such masters as Michelangelo and Da Vinci. But critics say MICROSOFT will face stiff challenges if it attempts to limit competitors' access to these key intellectual properties.

"The Jewish people invented the look and feel of the holy scriptures," said Rabbi David Gottschalk of Philadelphia. "You take the parting of the Red Sea -- we had that thousands of years before the Catholics came on the scene."

But others argue that the Catholic and Jewish faiths both draw on a common Abrahamic heritage. "The Catholic Church has just been more successful in marketing it to a larger audience," notes Notre Dame theologian Father Kenneth Madigan. Over the last 2,000 years, the Catholic Church's market share has increased dramatically, while Judaism, which was the first to offer many of the concepts now touted by Christianity, lags behind.

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Historically, the Church has a reputation as an aggressive competitor, leading crusades to pressure people to upgrade to Catholicism, and entering into exclusive licensing arrangements in various kingdoms whereby all subjects were instilled with Catholicism, whether or not they planned to use it. Today Christianity is available from several denominations, but the Catholic version is still the most widely used. The Church's mission is to reach "the four corners of the earth," echoing MICROSOFT's vision of "a computer on every desktop and in every home."

Gates described MICROSOFT's long-term strategy to develop a scalable religious architecture that will support all religions through emulation. A single core religion will be offered with a choice of interfaces according to the religion desired -- "One religion, a couple of different implementations," said Gates.

The MICROSOFT move could spark a wave of mergers and acquisitions, according to Herb Peters, a spokesman for the U.S. Southern Baptist Conference, as other churches scramble to strengthen their position in the increasingly competitive religious market.

NERDS

This truck driver hauling a tractor-trailer load of computers stops for a beer. As he approaches the bar he sees a big sign on the door saying:

"**NERDS NOT ALLOWED -- ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK!**"

He goes in and sits down. The bartender comes over to him, sniffs, says he smells kind of nerdy, asks him what he does for a living.

The truck driver says he drives a truck, and the smell is just from the computers he is hauling. The bartender says OK, truck drivers are not nerds, and serves him a beer.

As he is sipping his beer, a skinny guy walks in with tape around his glasses, a pocket protector with twelve kinds of pens and pencils, and a belt at least a foot too long. The bartender, without saying a word, pulls out a shotgun and blows the guy away.

The truck driver asks him why he did that. The bartender said not to worry, the nerds are overpopulating the Silicon Valley, and are in season now. You don't even need a license, he said.

So the truck driver finishes his beer, gets back in his truck, and heads back onto the freeway. Suddenly he veers to avoid an accident, and the load shifts. The back door breaks open and computers spill out all over the freeway. He jumps out and sees a crowd already forming, grabbing up the computers. They are all engineers, accountants and programmers wearing the nerdiest clothes he has ever seen. He can't let them steal his whole load. So remembering what happened in the bar, he pulls out his gun and starts blasting away, felling several of them instantly.

A highway patrol officer comes zooming up and jumps out of the car screaming at him to stop.

The truck driver said, "What's wrong? I thought nerds were in season."

"Well, sure," said the patrolman, "But you can't bait 'em."

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Whoever decided to create this note and forward it on should receive some type of humanitarian award. It says it all!

1. Big companies don't do business via chain letters. Bill Gates is not giving you \$1000, and Disney is not giving you a free vacation. There is no baby food company issuing class-action checks. Procter and Gamble is not part of a satanic cult or scheme, and its logo is not satanic. MTV will not give you backstage passes if you forward something to the most people. You can relax; there is no need to pass it on "just in case it's true". Furthermore, just because someone said in a message, four generations back, that "we checked it out and it's legit", does not actually make it true.
2. There is no kidney theft ring in New Orleans. No one is waking up in a bathtub full of ice, even if a friend of a friend swears it happened to their cousin. If you are hell-bent on believing the kidney-theft ring stories, please see: <http://urbanlegends.tqn.com/library/weekly/aa062997.htm> And I quote: "The National Kidney Foundation has repeatedly issued requests for actual victims of organ thieves to come forward and tell their stories. None have." That's "none" as in "zero". Not even your friend's cousin.
3. Neiman Marcus doesn't really sell a \$200 cookie recipe. And even if they do, we all have it. And even if you don't, you can get a copy at: <http://www.bl.net/forwards/cookie.html> Then, if you make the recipe, decide the cookies are that awesome, feel free to pass the recipe on.
4. If the latest NASA rocket disaster(s) DID contain plutonium that went to particulate over the eastern seaboard, do you REALLY think this information would reach the public via an AOL chainletter?
5. There is no "Good Times" virus. In fact, you should never, ever, ever forward any email containing any virus warning unless you first confirm that an actual site of an actual company that actually deals with viruses. Try: <http://www.norton.com>. And even then, don't forward it. We don't care. And you cannot get a virus from a flashing IM or email, you have to download...ya know, like, a FILE!
6. There is no gang initiation plot to murder any motorist who flashes headlights at another car driving at night without lights.
7. If you're using Outlook, IE, or Netscape to write email, turn off the "HTML encoding." Those of us on Unix shells can't read it, and don't care enough to save the attachment and then view it with a web browser, since you're probably forwarding us a copy of the Neiman Marcus Cookie Recipe anyway.
8. If you still absolutely MUST forward that 10th-generation message from a friend, at least have the decency to trim the eight miles of headers showing everyone else who's received it over the last 6 months. It sure wouldn't hurt to get rid of all the ">" that begin each line either. Besides, if it has gone around that many times we've probably already seen it.
9. Craig Shergold (or Sherwood, or Sherman, etc.) in England is not dying of cancer or anything else at this time and would like everyone to stop sending him their business cards. He apparently is no longer a "little boy" either.
10. The "Make a Wish" foundation is a real organization doing fine work, but they have had to establish a special toll free hot line in response to the large number of Internet hoaxes using their good name and reputation. It is distracting them from the important work they do.
11. If you are one of those insufferable idiots who forwards anything that "promises" something bad will happen if you "don't," then something bad will happen to you if I ever meet you in a dark alley.
12. Women really are suffering in Afghanistan, and PBS and NEA funding are still vulnerable to attack (although not at the present time) but forwarding an e-mail won't help either cause in the least. If you want to help, contact your local legislative representative, or get in touch with Amnesty International or the Red Cross. As a general rule, e-mail "signatures" are easily faked and mean nothing to anyone with

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any power to do anything about whatever the competition is complaining about. (P.S.: There is no bill pending before Congress that will allow longdistance companies to charge you for using the Internet.)

Bottom Line... composing e-mail or posting something on the Net is as easy as writing on the walls of a public restroom. Don't automatically believe it until it's proven false... ASSUME it's false, unless there is proof that it's true.

Now, you can forward this message to your friends, or not forward it, I really don't care—but in any event, you probably won't win the Publishers Clearing House sweepstakes anyway.

Before Computers...

An application was for employment, A program was a TV show, A cursor used profanity, A keyboard was a piano!

Memory was something that you lost with age, A CD was a bank account, And a floppy disk was something > Terribly wrong in your back.

Compress was something you did to garbage, Not something you did to a file.

And if you unzipped anything in public, You'd be in jail for awhile!

Log on was adding wood to a fire, Hard drive was a long trip on the road.

A mouse pad was where a mouse lived, And a backup happened to your commode!

Cut - you did with a pocket knife, Paste you did with glue.

A web was a spider's home, And a virus was the flu!

I guess I'll stick to my pad and paper, And the memory in my head.

I hear nobody's been killed in a computer crash, But when it happens, they wish they were dead!