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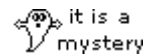
mAlfunkti0n

May 19, 2004

Fallen Rib

We had one of our users stop by to show us some goofy error she ran into one day .. I cant remember the exact wording, nor can I find it again but it went something like :

"An error has occurred where no error should have occurred"



Aug 30, 2011 01:28

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[QUOTE](#)



Vulture Culture

Jul 14, 2003



I was never enjoying it. I only eat it for the nutrients.

Longinus00 posted:

Error messages never have to be useful to the user. Be happy you get an error message at all rather than a segfault or something.

Just feel happy you don't have to deal with compiler error messages.

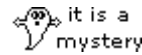
Oh God, no compiler error message is anywhere near as bad as Ruby's super-helpful "unexpected kEND" parser errors that tell you that, somewhere in this 2000-line file, someone forgot to end a control structure somewhere maybe.

mAlfunkti0n posted:

We had one of our users stop by to show us some goofy error she ran

into one day .. I cant remember the exact wording, nor can I find it again but it went something like :

"An error has occurred where no error should have occurred"



To seek out new life, and new civilizations!

Aug 30, 2011 01:41

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QUOTE



Lysidas

Jul 26, 2002



John Diefenbaker is a madman who thinks he's John Diefenbaker.

Pillbug

Since the phrase "Zen of Error Messages" has some positive connotations to me, I feel like posting about mediocre vs. great error messages instead of awful or perplexing ones.

Disclaimer: I thankfully don't have any experience developing for embedded systems with a 25-year-old compiler that only understands an anemic subset of C. Even with modern versions of GCC, I never really appreciated how bad its error messages are until I started using Clang.

[LLVM Project Blog: Amazing feats of Clang Error Recovery](#)

Aug 30, 2011 04:15

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QUOTE



Physical

Sep 26, 2007



by T. Finninho

Lysidas posted:

Since the phrase "Zen of Error Messages" has some positive connotations to me, I feel like posting about mediocre vs. great error messages instead of awful or perplexing ones.

Disclaimer: I thankfully don't have any experience developing for embedded systems with a 25-year-old compiler that only understands an anemic subset of C. Even with

modern versions of GCC, I never really appreciated how bad its error messages are until I started using Clang.

[LLVM Project Blog: Amazing feats of Clang Error Recovery.](#)

Wow that poo poo was hard to read.

Even worse than error messages is when you are programming using a third-party library and the poo poo crashes or freezes without really doing either. Took me an hour to figure out that the whole program had been wrapped in a try/catch statement, and no messagebox came up to tell me that there had been an exception caught. So after looking time and time again in only the files I edited I had to put a break-point somewhere where I thought the error was happening and kept moving it back one line at a time until it stopped the code BEFORE the exception. From there I stepped forward until the exception happened. Then I went back again and had to follow the call stack all the way up, checking to see if it was wrapped in a try/catch. The only reason I figured it out was because I treated it like a riddle: How can a program crash but still keep running? It occurred to me that maybe an exception was being caught somewhere with no message, turns out I was right.

 # ? Aug 30, 2011 05:32

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corgski

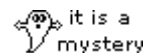
Feb 6, 2007



mAlfunkti0n posted:

We had one of our users stop by to show us some goofy error she ran into one day .. I cant remember the exact wording, nor can I find it again but it went something like :

"An error has occurred where no error should have occurred"



My favorite error message for edge cases that should never occur is "Buy Lotto"

Although I usually follow it with more useful information, I know it's stuck in some programs I've shipped.

   Aug 30, 2011 05:36

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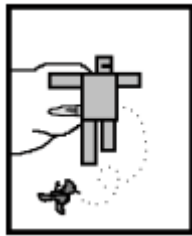
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 [QUOTE](#) 

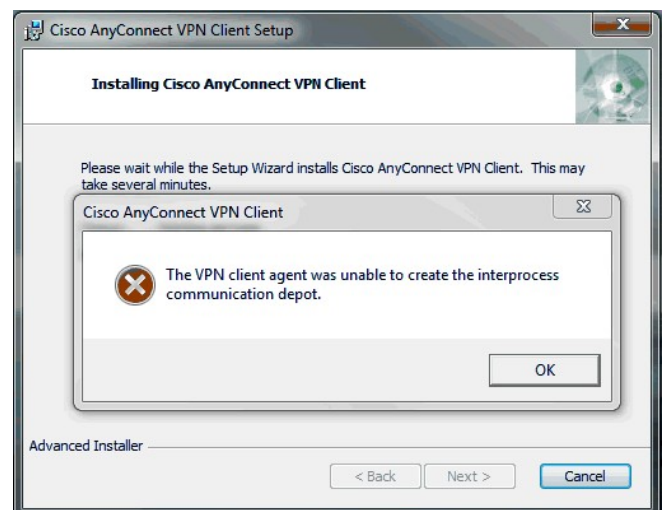
crumpuppet

Mar 22, 2007



ROBORT > EVERYTHING

I present to you, one of the most unhelpful error messages I've ever seen:



The problem? The VPN adapter couldn't be installed because connection sharing was enabled on the laptop's Wifi connection 😞

   Aug 30, 2011 06:42

[Profile](#)

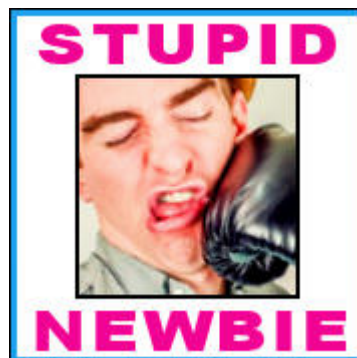
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Steamos

Jul 22, 2011



I was using some bullshit MIS when without warning the following message came up:

"Warning: An error has occurred"

After clicking ok, I got another message box with:

"Error: An error has occurred"

Felt it was a bit repetitive but its nice to be warned about the errors before you get them.

Aug 30, 2011 07:20

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QUOTE



SavageMessiah

Jan 28, 2009



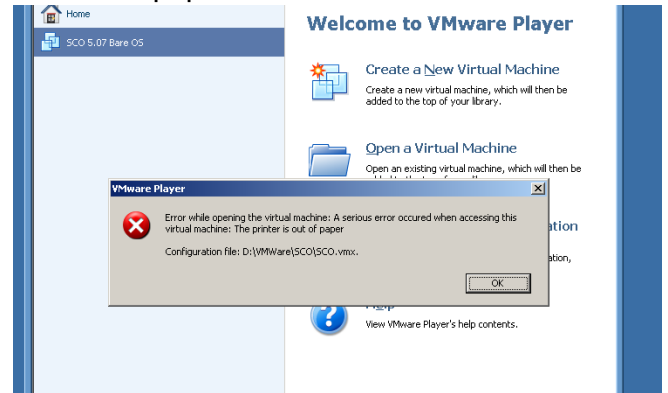
Emotionally drained and spookified



Toilet Rascal

Aug 30, 2011 13:23

Here's the paper one I mentioned earlier:



I never did figure out what exactly caused it.

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Rap Sheet

QUOTE



CollegeCop

Jul 11, 2005



You're right. I'm not a real cop. Those are imaginary handcuffs. And in a minute, we'll be going to the make-believe jail.

Aug 30, 2011 13:42

Our scheduling software occasionally throws up a standard error box that reads, "Oops!", with an "OK" button.

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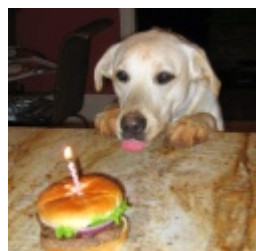
Rap Sheet

QUOTE



Maneki Neko

Oct 27, 2000



SavageMessiah posted:

I got one from vmware player once on trying to load a SCO vm:

Fatal Error: The printer is out of paper.

I have a screenshot of it floating around somewhere.

EDIT: I also recall a bizarre Oracle one involving flavors or something.

We see some straaange errors at my job.

Really I'd be more scared if you got an Oracle error message that was concise and helpful.

 Aug 30, 2011 15:19

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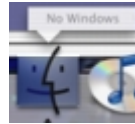
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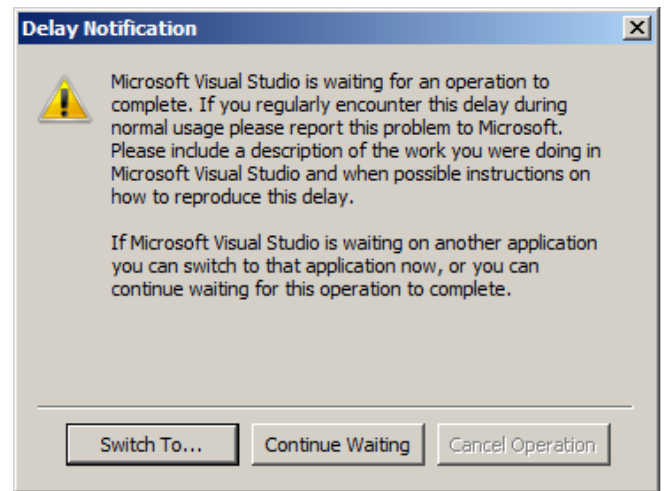
~Coxy

Dec 9, 2003



R.I.P. Inter-OS Sass - b.2000AD
d.2003AD

I like to call this one fuckyoudevenv.png



The X button does nothing, and the dialog stops you from killing an unresponsive IDE in the normal fashion. It also prevents the standard feedback of a non-responsive Windows program from occurring.

Someone at Microsoft actually thought that this would be a good idea?!

 Sep 15, 2011 01:51

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 [QUOTE](#) 

FISHMANPET

Mar 3, 2007



**Sweet 'N Sour
Can't**

I installed some lovely scanning server software, and it involves an Apache Tomcat server. On install it said starting the service returned 0, if this is a non Microsoft service, consult the vendor.

I try to restart the service, it doesn't start, I check the event log.

"The service failed to start: The operation completed successfully"

Melt Steel Beams



📄 # ? Sep 15, 2011 02:47

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The Glumslinger

Sep 24, 2008



Coach Nagy, you want me to throw to WHAT side of the field?



Hair Elf

📄 # ? Sep 15, 2011 05:00

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lazken

May 4, 2011



Do not feed the monkey

📄 # ? Sep 15, 2011 10:57

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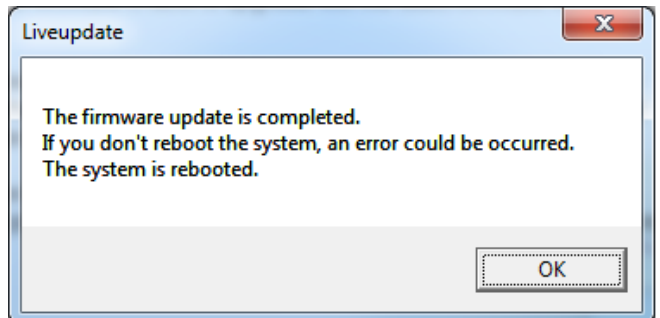
~Coxy

Dec 9, 2003

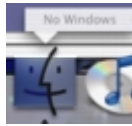
Dumb limitation.

Horribly worded error dialog (that cancels all changes you made when you click the only button.)

Unchanged in Windows 7 since presumably



I saved this when it happened a few months ago, so I can't quite remember what caused it. I think it was the firmware on my motherboard.



R.I.P. Inter-OS Sass - b.2000AD
d.2003AD

Windows 95ish.



   Oct 3, 2011 00:49

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 [QUOTE](#)



Red_October_7000

Jun 22, 2009

I love these. I have a huge textfile of them on my main machine that dates to the usenet days (and thus is mostly related to mainframes and minicomputers and such) so I'll post the whole drat thing later this evening, but here are a few choice ones I remember off the top of my head.

"You can't do that in horizontal mode!" (from a text editor)

"LINT's little mind is blown" (stack overflow, IIRC)

"You don't exist. Go Away." (trying to issue a command to a system that has forgotten you're logged in)

"Punt" (Supposedly generated by a "woefully misguided" attempt to boot a DEC-10)

Here it is. Or the first half of it, any way. It's too long for a single post. I found it on the internet with the email addresses rear end you see them; I'd bet money 90% of them are dead now too.

Subject: The Canonical List of Error Messages

>From Version 7 UNIX: "Values of B will give rise to dom."

(no, I don't know what it meant (or if it still exists!)

but it had something to do with removing a directory with a name beginning with '!')

-

/

/ Jerry CalmaSD UNIX SysAdmin +1 619 587-3065

/

Actually, my all-time favorite is:

FATAL system error #nnnn
CAUSE: We should never get here!

From: dondd@hpmwtd.HP.COM (Don Dillon)

my favorite happened while i was transferring a file from one machine to another. after about five minutes the machine still hasn't copied the file and responds with....

OHHHH.... I give up
>
>Core dumped

From: sethb@fido.morgan.com (Seth Breidbart)

In article <755@mgt3.sci.UUCP> dc@sci.UUCP (D. C. Sessions) writes:
>Actually, my all-time favorite is:
>
>FATAL system error #nnnn
>CAUSE: We should never get here!
>

My favorite is the PL/1 compiler message

"COMPILER UNABLE TO ABORT"

This is the message when the compiler has attempted to abort the compilation five times, and has failed each time.

I don't know what happens next.

From: nomann@rimfaxc.diku.dk (Ole Nomann)

Thomsen)

This is what the Univac 2200's os1100 os produces, when I fill my program file beyond its capacity:

```
I/O TYPE 01 CODE 22 CONT 12 REENT ADR:
015245 BDI: 403034
PACKET ADR 045301
AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO WRITE BEYOND
THE MAXIMUM ASSIGNED SPACE
FOR A MASS STORAGE FILE. AN ATTEMPT WAS
MADE TO EXPAND A MASS
STORAGE FILE BEYOND THE MAXIMUM
ASSIGNED SPACE. A READ
FUNCTION FOR A MASS STORAGE FILE
SPECIFIED AN ADDRESS (WORD 5
OF THE I/O PACKET) THAT IS BEYOND THE
MAXIMUM ASSIGNED SPACE.
A READ OR WRITE FUNCTION FOR A WORD-
ADDRESSABLE MASS STORAGE
FILE SPECIFIED A MASS STORAGE ADDRESS
(WORD 5 OF THE I/O
PACKET) AND A TOTAL DATA COUNT. WHEN
THE MASS STORAGE ADDRESS
IS ADDED TO THE TOTAL DATA COUNT, THE
RESULTING ENDING MASS
STORAGE ADDRESS IS GREATER THAN 2*/35-1.
A READ OR WRITE
FUNCTION FOR A SECTOR-FORMATTED MASS
STORAGE FILE SPECIFIED A
MASS STORAGE ADDRESS (WORD 5 OF THE I/O
PACKET) THAT IS
GREATER THAN 2*/30-1. ADI ONLY: REFERENCE
ATTEMPTED BEYOND THE
ASSIGNED FILE WHEN THE FILE IS
CONFIGURED AS A FH-432 OR
FH-1782 DRUM.
(Filename: FEK*ONT)
END MAP. ERRORS: 1 TIME: 33.978 STORAGE:
054203/014304/035416/3/0220776
ERR$ TYPE 03 CODE 00 CONT 12 REENT ADR:
045147 BDI: 000015
USER EXECUTED ER ERR$.
```

The fun thing is that the err.msg.s are usually more like:

```
I/O TYPE 01 CODE 22 CONT 12 REENT ADR:
015245 BDI: 403034
```

and a register dump.

From: jaa@spyy00.UUCP (Jeff Anderson)

My favorite error message that I have
INCLUDED in a program was:
ERROR: A really big gently caress UP has been
detected !!

From: insko@donner.SanDiego.NCR.COM
(Robert (Bob) Insko)

Disk drive error codes:

Momentarily writing while seeking
Constantly writing while seeking
Momentarily writing while reading
.....

From: ee5391aa@hydra.unm.edu (Duke
McMillan n5gax)

If you run "strings" on the executable of gawk
(the messdos version, at
least), you'll see a line with this message:

initstate: not enough state (%d bytes) with which
to do jack; ignored.

I've no idea how to get gawk (GNU awk) to spit
out this message, but it
appeals, somehow....

From: rickc@pogo.WV.TEK.COM (Rick Clements)

We have a PC clone with a flakey keyboard. It
often produces the error
message "Keyboard not present, press any key"

A friend of mine in a compiler writing class produced a compiler with one error message "you lied to me when you told me this was a program"

From: riclark@pyrtech.pyramid.com (Richard Clark)

My favorite was "PROGRAMMER GOOFED . . . YOU SHOULD NEVER SEE THIS MESSAGE"

From: msjohnso@ensub.Wichita.NCR.COM (Mark Johnson)

When I was at Purdue, the IE department had a DG Nova system that would respond to attempts to run object programs formatted for a DG Eclipse system with the message:

YOU CAN'T DO THAT!

From: hart@blackjack.dt.navy.mil (Michael Hart)

A library automation package I once worked on had the message:

Man the Lifeboats! Women and children first!

Management was not amused when the first customer called in for support with this message. :-)

No sense of humor, some of those mgt. types!

From: philn@hprmokg.HP.COM (Phil Nielsen)

Okay, I know this isn't rec.games.trivia, but...

Can someone tell me the machine and editor which, when instructed to

MAKE WAR

would respond with

MAKE LOVE NOT WAR

(no, I don't know the answer; someone told me about this one once)

From: davidc@montagar.lonestar.org (David L. Cathey, SYSOP)

It's TECO, on VAX/VMS, and goes like this:

```
$ make := $ sys$system:teco32 make
$ make love
Not war?
*
```

Long live TECO!!!

From: chris@imagine.ADMS-RAD.Unisys.COM
(Chris Sterritt)

Here are some that I found in reading the string-pool from Knuth's TeX:
[Note that I included these from the actual file, so the one with 'can fix can fix' below is what's actually there!]

(That makes 100 errors; please try again.)

You can now delete more, or insert, or whatever.

Sorry, I don't know how to help in this situation. Maybe you should try asking a human?

Sorry, I already gave what help I could...

An error might have occurred before I noticed any problems.

``If all else fails, read the instructions."''

This can't happen.

I'm broken. Please show this to someone who can fix can fix

I can't go on meeting you like this.

One of your faux pas seems to have wounded me deeply...
in fact, I'm barely conscious. Please fix it and try again.

Interruption
You rang?

IMPOSSIBLE.

NONEXISTENT.

ETC.

BAD.

A funny symbol that I can't read has just been input.
Continue, and I'll forget that it ever happened.

I suspect you've forgotten a `}`, causing me to apply this control sequence to too much text. How can we recover?
My plan is to forget the whole thing and hope for the best.

I dddon't go any higher than filll.

Dimensions can be in units of em, ex, in, pt, pc, cm, mm, dd, cc, bp, or sp; but yours is a new one! I'll assume that you meant to say pt, for printer's points.

From: fax0112@uoft02.utoledo.edu

If things go amiss in Interactive Data Language, as they frequently do, you get :

Something Rotten in Denmark, Interp Stack Not ALigned

just before the core dumps.

From: sgs@grebyn.com (Stephen G. Smith)

My own favorite, from one of DEC's less successful versions of the RT11 linker:

<Assorted DEC ID fruitcake> ILLEGAL ERROR

From: dye@owm2.Eng.Sun.COM (Kenneth Dye [Contractor])

My first 'C' class was under 4.1 BSD. I forgot to name my first program with a ".c" suffix; hence the following error message:

```
% cc prog1
ld: bad magic number
```

which was a bit confusing to a person who didn't know about magic numbers or what even 'ld' was....

Then there is my favourite, 'sail', who asks for a scenario number from a list; if anything but a valid digit is input, 'sail' simply says "very funny" and exits.

From: rickc@pogo.WV.TEK.COM (Rick Clements)

The most common error message we got from a modula II compiler that I used at an other company was "Unexpected ';', expecting ';"

From: dmunroe@copper.WR.TEK.COM (David Munroe)

The early versions of TeX had this classic, which I believe the people at Stanford even had printed on T-shirts:

You can't do that in horizontal mode.

From: cy@dbase.A-T.COM (Cy Shuster)

My favorite was on the (gasp!) IBM 7094. Occasionally, the COBOL compiler would die with just:

"COMPILER THWARTED".

This was in '74. I remember, because we had a tenth anniversary party for the compiler (printed a date in '64 at the top of each listing).

From: jensting@skinfaxe.diku.dk (Jens Tingleff)

rickc@pogo.WV.TEK.COM (Rick Clements) writes:

>We have a PC clone with a flakey keyboard. It often produces the error
>message "Keyboard not present, press any key"

In which case it's not really compatible. *The* message is

"Keyboard error or no keyboard present. Press F1 to continue."

Pull the keyboard lead out of an IBM (while power of), power on and laaaugh.

From: BAE101@psuvm.psu.edu (Lemming)

A program called "junk" written by a student here at PSU gives the following error message:

"Argument is bleetchful."

On the Commodore Amiga, system crashes are always indicated by a black window with a red flashing border at the top of the screen with the words "Guru Meditation" and a number.

From: sgs@grebyn.com (Stephen G. Smith)

This is probably just another Urban Legend, but ...

A large company had just gotten their first Macintosh. As Macs do, it had a system crash, and popped up a window with a picture (uhh, excuse me, icon :-)) of a bomb on it.

Management ordered the building evacuated. And called the police ...

From: rca@fico2.UUCP (The OTHER Rick)

Adams)

Doing a strings on our version of lint yields this error message; I have no idea how to get it to spit out... stack overflow, maybe?

"lint's little mind is blown."

From: BAXTER_A@wehi.dn.mu.oz

And a graph plotting program on the Amiga uses the red box with:

"Hot drat! You need more ram!"

When it runs out of memory.

From: urlichs@smurf.sub.org (Matthias Urlichs)

Not to mention the MPW C compiler (not all of these may be funny to all of you)
:

String literal too long (I let you have 512 characters, that's 3 more than ANSI said I should)

.....And the lord said, 'lo, there shall only be case or default labels inside a switch statement'

a typedef name was a complete surprise to me at this point in your program

You can't modify a constant, float upstream, win an argument with the IRS, or satisfy this compiler

This struct already has a perfectly good definition

type in (cast) must be scalar; ANSI 3.3.4; page 39, lines 10-11 (I know you don't care, I'm just trying to annoy you)

Can't cast a void type to type void (because the ANSI spec. says so, that's why)

Huh ?

can't go mucking with a 'void *'

we already did this function

This label is the target of a goto from outside of the block containing this label AND this block has an automatic variable with an initializer AND your window wasn't wide enough to read this whole error message

Call me paranoid but finding '/*' inside this comment makes me suspicious

Symbol table full - fatal heap error; please go buy a RAM upgrade from your local Apple dealer

From: emartin@digilonestar.org (Edgar Martinez Martinez)

I just got this error message while trying to spell-check a document:

"It seem you are trying to check the output from a word-processor. Not only does this not make sense, but you would probably damage the file if you tried so I am not going to let you do this!"

Well, what if I wanted to damage it!!!

From: dfraser@ic.sunysb.edu (David W Fraser)

Well just now while switching newsgroups i got this message:

It looks like the active file is messed up. Contact

your news administrator
and leave the "bogus" groups alone, and they
may come back to normal. Maybe.

^^^^^

From: felton@eng3.UUCP (Ed Felton)

This one is not exactly an error message story,
but it's close, so here goes:

Our department is currently developing a
Diagnostics package for IBM-PC boxes,
and as one of our intermediate INTERNAL
releases, we added a new menu, with
help screen etc, for a set of functions we were
about to add. It went through
the normal internal review cycle, with the Dept
head spending some time looking
at it as well. Unknown to us, the dept head
shipped a copy to a customer to
get their comments. The memo we got back
from the customer was quite funny,
and I quote:

The SYSTEM UTILITY menu functions have not
been implemented. Therefore
no comments for this. Help for this menu is
somebody's idea of a joke!
I can only assume the help will be changed when
the menu functions have
been completed

The dept head had never looked at any of the
help menus, so he didn't know
what was going on. When he came back to us to
find out what the problem was
this is what he found:

Attention K-Mart shoppers: Blue Light special in
out SYSTEM UTILITIES
department. for the next 10 days we will be
taking requests for the
utilities that you think should be here. Thank you
again for shopping
K-Mart.

Needless to say, the dept head was P-Oed, but
he ignored the

INTERNAL USE ONLY
disclaimer we had put with the software.

probably not funny, just wierd

From: crick@bnr-rsc.UUCP (Bill Crick)

Error messages I've seen:

"Things are not looking good!"

"I didn't think this set of error conditions could ever happen"

"Now deleting all files. Goodbye" Then read a directory in order to make the hard drive rattle!

When I was new to UNIX -> "file qwerty.asdfg has bad magic."
sounds like a real OS, no rinkydink stuff here?

And I knew some guys that were writing some SW to be used by local clerical staff, and they got to a this should never happen, but we should put in a message. Someone said the only person that could ever get into this deep a mess is Linda, so they put a message that said "Hi Linda! We wondered how long it would take, for you to mess up this bad."
Well sure enough, six months later, Linda comes storming in mad as a wet hen, having discovered that error message.

From: andrew@earwax.pd.mwa.oz.au (Andrew Williams)

One amusing error message that I've seen is produced when you try to restart the 'nnmaster' news program with the -k option. This should kill

the existing nnmaster so you can restart a new one- But if things go wrong, you get the message "The running master will not die..."!!

From: bsmith@pluto.osf.org (Bruce Smith)

In article <3335@bnr-rsc.UUCP> crick@bnr-rsc.UUCP (Bill Crick) writes:

>
>Error messages I've seen:
>
>"Things are not looking good!"
>
>"I didn't think this set of error conditions could ever happen"
>

This would have been a good one; unfortunately, it got caught before the software went out (last place I worked):

"Shut 'er down, Clancy, she's a-pumpin' mud!"

The perpetrator, to my knowledge, was not found.

Bruce Smith

x

From: jpl5@cunib.cc.columbia.edu (Jay P. Lessler)

An error has occurred on the error logging device.

From: fax0112@uoft02.utoledo.edu

I ran a program once which had a menu of commands, including one to get help. If you pressed the help key you got:

"Out of order"

Very helpful!

In a simialr program, if you typed in an invalid command you got either

"Hey are you talking to me? Try again!"

or

"Invalid command. Feel ashamed for yourself and try again."

or

"Of all the commands available you picked the wrong one!"

From: zap@savage.UUCP (Zap Savage)

In article <13450@paperboy.OSF.ORG>

bsmith@pluto.osf.org (Bruce Smith) writes:

>"Shut 'er down, Clancy, she's a-pumpin' mud!"

I've never seen this error occur, but I noticed while hacking graphics routines into the Z80 portion of Radio Shack's (Microsoft's) TRS-80 Model 16 M68000 Xenix. (Note that for a while, this computer supported the largest Unix (-like) base in the world).

The Z80 handled all the of the IO in the machine and somewhere imbedded in the code was the message "Shut her down, Scotty, she's sucking mud again!"

From: jcmorris@mwunix.mitre.ORG (Joe Morris)

Back in the dark ages (1967 or so) I rewrote a large part of the IBFTC

Fortran compiler for the IBM 7040 to add in most of the goodies which

were becoming available in compilers for other machines. (The primary

models I used were S/360 FORTRAN G and the Sigma 7 Fortran, but I

stole ideas wherever I could.) Keeping track of the data within the

compiler was a complex chore (at the time I was

in grad school, and
I was the only staffer on the project...can you
say "long hours"?)

I wrote in numerous checks on the internal
procedures, but didn't have
much in the way of recovery code if inconsistent
data were detected
except to abort with an error message. I swiped
the error message from
a GE system; as I wrote it the text was:

ERROR 1164 HOW IN THE HELL DID YOU GET
HERE

From: del@thrush.mlb.semi.harris.com (Don
Lewis)

Here are a few gems from our Harris VOS
system.

We got used to seeing this one a lot.

JOBCTRL ER 512 : WARNING: FILE
GENERATED.
>he 512
THE FILE WHICH WAS SPECIFIED AS THE 'COPY
TO' OR DESTINATION FILE WAS
NOT THERE AND WAS THEREFORE GENERATED
BY JOBCONTROL. IF YOU DID NOT
MEAN TO COPY TO A NEW FILE ELIMINATE THE
FILE.

The next few are pretty amusing.

JOBCTRL ER 76 : NO ACCESS FOR \$TOAD
SERVICE
>he 76
A USER PROGRAM MADE A CALL TO A \$TOAD
SERVICE AND THE USER DOES NOT HAVE
THE PROPER ACCESS TO BIT TO USE THAT
SERVICE. ACCESS RESTRICTIONS
ARE PLACED ON THE \$TOADS SERVICES IN
GENERAL, AND \$CPRIOR, \$PABORT,
AND \$\$SUSP FOR INDIVIDUAL RESTRICTIONS.

JOBCTRL ER 2167 : NO ACCESS TO

VULCANIZE PROGRAM

>he 2167

AN ATTEMPT HAS BEEN MADE TO VULCANIZE A REAL-TIME, MONITOR, OR NRH TYPE PROGRAM, OR A PROGRAM WITH HIGH ACCESS, ACCOUNTING FILE ACCESS, OR SUB-SYSTEM ACCESS. THE VULCANIZE REQUEST IS IGNORED BECAUSE THE USER DOES NOT HAVE ACCESS TO GENERATE SUCH A PROGRAM.

JOBCTRL ER 2211 : IT'S NOT NICE TO FOOL POP!

>he 2211

YOU JUST TRIED TO FAKE-OUT MOTHER NATURE, AND SHE CAUGHT YOU! SUPER-VULCAN NOW HAS YOUR NAME ON HIS ENEMY LIST, AND YOU CAN BE CERTAIN THAT FUTURE ATTEMPTS TO RESOURCE LFN 0,3,OR 6 WILL RESULT IN YOUR BEING ABORTED, SPINDLED, MANGLED, FOLDED, PUNCHED, DELETED, AND DEALLOCATED.

This last message was often the cause of a sinking feeling late at night.

JOBCTRL ER 44 : PROGRAM FILE DESTROYED.

>he 44

THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN ABORTED DUE TO INCONSISTENCIES IN THE INFORMATION GENERATED BY THE VULCANIZER. THE DISC COPY OF THE PROGRAM MAY HAVE BEEN DESTROYED OR THE PROGRAM MAY NOT HAVE BEEN RE-VULCANIZED AFTER A MAJOR SYSTEM RELEASE. IN ANY CASE RE-VULCANIZE THE PROGRAM (RLIBS ALSO).

Fortunately I don't have use this machine anymore :-) :-) :-)

From: grayt@spock (Tom Gray)

>From the telephone switch world -

Outputs required from the ALARM SYSTEM
minor alarm

major alarm
critical alarm

alarm system failure alarm

From: pat@cscnj (Patrick Hester)

Trailblazer for the Atari ST has a good one.
You press the [Help] key and the machine laughs
at you.

From: twpierce@amherst.bitnet (Tim Pierce)

A friend of mine screwed up somehow when he
installed Windows 3.0 on his 386
running DOS 4.01, and now he can hardly run the
drat thing without receiving
the following ominous-sounding declaration:

This application has violated system integrity
and must be terminated.

No one at Microsoft seems to have heard of it.

Also, I've been told that on VMS, if you attempt
to send out e-mail with an
invalid header, it will respond with "You are a
charlatan."

From: kgb8752@cs.rit.edu (Brayton Kevin Grant)

Here's another one:

Occasionally our ultrix system will forget who
you are and if you want
to "talk" to another user, the talk daemon will
come back with

Go away. You don't exist.

My OS (QNX) has a command called TSK (short for TASK) which allows you to view information to do with tasks (code size, id's, son, dad, etc) when I first saw it a friend of mine showed me the list of commands, of which one is tsk tsk, I tried it, and it came up with the following message:

Tsk tsk? Have I been a bad computer?

From: ljp@sm.luth.se (Johan Persson)

When I tried to compile a program, (which had compiled nice on a SUN workstation with both gcc and cc) on one of our old VAX 11/750 I got the fantastic error

.. line 2706 compiler error: schain botch

(4.3 BSD and cc)

Does anyone have any clue to what that means ?

From: ph@ama-1.ama.caltech.edu (Paul Hardy)

In an earlier version of BSD (4.1?) if you did [I think it was a] "who" and you were the only one on the system, it would print something like

Are you lonely?

Anyone have a better memory of this than I do?

From: cd5340@mars.njit.edu (David Charlap)

I remember my old TRS-80 Color Computer. It only had 2-letter abbreviations for all errors. The one for "file not open" when you tried to read/write a file was:

?NO ERROR

It amused me when it happened.

From: dondd@hpmwtd.HP.COM (Don Dillon)

I got an error message on time while I was copying a file, and the system seemed to be hung up. Just as I was going to attempt to abort out the machine came back.

oh..... I give up.... dumping core now!

and the drat thing did !!!!!

From: dag@gorgon.uucp (Daniel A. Glasser)

When I was working at Mark Williams Company, I had a midnight project to take the Atari-ST version of make and put much of the shell functionality (as far as command line parsing, wild card expansion, and a few built-in functions) and 'cc' into the make executable, thereby improving the speed of builds and such. I never did finish this, but I changed the standard

\$ make love

Not war?

...

to

\$ make love

For heavens sake, doesn't anyone just talk anymore?

...

and considered adding a random selection of other comments, like

Not tonight, I've got a headache.

I beg your pardon?

Your place or mine?

Maybe someone else has managed to hide

something like this into a commercial package.

From: dag@gorgon.uucp (Daniel A. Glasser)

When I was in college the entire school was using a single PDP-11/40 under RSTS/E. We had somewhere around 20 DECwriter II's (LA36's) for use by the students in various places around the campus. One evening I encountered a terrified beginning FORTRAN student who had encountered a bug in the FortranIV compiler we were running at the time. Something like:

```
FORTRAN FATAL INTERNAL ERROR  
FATAL COMPILER DAMAGE REPORT FOLLOWS
```

followed by a page and a half of register and stack dump info. This student was convinced that he'd broken the compiler, and that he'd be in big trouble for breaking the compiler for everyone else.

At another point that year, (April 1) someone (I won't say who) edited the system error message file.

```
?Invalid Character At Terminal -- Please Go Away  
?Unibus timeout -- send in a new quarterback  
?Ouch, That HURTS!
```

And other gems. The computer center manager was not thrilled.

From: pat@megatest.UUCP (Patrick Powers)

I worked on a UNIX system that had an editor called e. Once entered it took control of the screen and required some highly unlikely sequence of key strokes to exit. It was fairly easy to type e



by accident so
to avoid this annoying fate some fellow aliased e
to the message
You must be joking.
One day an e user decided to use his terminal
and got a surprise.

From: kurt@tc.fluke.COM (Kurt Guntheroth)

> "Error: Error occurred when attempting to print
error message."

I once blew away my VMS shell process by
redefining the standard error file
SYS\$ERROR (I think, it's been awhile). You
execute the command and things
are fine, then you run your pascal program which
dies with an error printed
to PAS\$ERROR. PAS\$ERROR is assigned to
SYS\$ERROR, which is assigned to
something invalid. The OS wants to tell you that
the error channel is
invalid, and what does it try to do? Print on
SYS\$ERROR. At this point, I
got a hexadecimal register dump(!!) and blown
off the system. And this was
on a "commercial" OS. How graceful.

Red_October_7000 fucked around with this message at 06:03 on Oc

   Oct 3, 2011 02:05

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Red_October_7000

Jun 22, 2009

Second half of huge list of error messages from the mists of time

From: farren@sat.com (Michael J. Farren)

cd5340@mars.njit.edu writes:

>"Error #1: Power supply not found"

Or my favorite real error message, found in the
User's Manual for the Atari

800 computer, which produced only numbers for errors, so you had to look up the translation in the manual:

ERROR 0: POWER NOT ON

From: fmayhar@hermes.ladc.bull.com (Frank Mayhar)

Shortly after I started work at the Stephen F. Austin State University computer center as a support person, we had a coed come in with a very strange problem. She had been trying to do her FORTRAN homework, and had run across a bug in the FORTRAN compiler (ANSF on Honeywell CP-V). On her printout was some diagnostic information, followed by the words:

Break Rob's knuckles.

I've always wondered who Rob was, and what he did wrong.

From: raf@karl.cs.su.OZ.AU (A Stainless Steel Rat)

In article
<1991Feb22.224448.18015@servalan.uucp>
rmtodd@servalan.uucp (Richard Todd) writes:

>I think it was a remark in the BUGS section of the manpage for tunefs(8),
>something along the lines of "You can tune a filesystem, but you can't tuna
>fish"... Alas, all I can check right now is the Apple Unix man pages, which
>seem to have had the fishy witticisms excised.
:-(.

The unix system we used at this university a few years back had two strange man entries that went something like:

\$ man fish

would give you:

Don't say "fish", Bishop. It doesn't mean anything.

and

\$ man overboard

would give you:

```
# # ##### # ##### ###
# # # # # ###
# # # # # ###
##### ##### # ##### #
# # # # #
# # # # # ###
# # ##### # ##### # ###
```

BUGS: No life raft

raf

From: roberts@edsews.eds.com (Ted Roberts)

In article
<91049.154321DSB100@psuvm.psu.edu>,
DSB100@psuvm.psu.edu (David Barr
)

writes:

> My personal favorite: "Oops! Error while
handling error!"
> (a concurrent C compiler)

My favorites were from the older Apollo OS's,
two of the systems errors
were (I believe I remember them correctly):

Can't find wicked faraway objects.
and
Can't fit 27" tape through 25" door.

These were actually given in response to a
request for meaning from
the stcode.

From: smb@data.com (Steven M. Boker)

In article <27c11888@ralf>

Ralf.Brown@B.GP.CS.CMU.EDU writes:

>}On the venerable Model I Trash-80, the DOS had a vector reserved for what the >}manual listed as "Unprintable Error". The exact meaning was never defined.

The MSDOS 1.0 manuals had a listing for "Invalid Error".

Talk about getting it wrong.

From: hagan@ecs.umass.edu

error messages. get this one (today, friday, MARCH FIRST, 1991) our mainframe decided not to allow logins.

why was that?

Nobody was validated for access on february 29th, 1991 (btw, what day of the week was that?!)

From: scott@bbxsda.UUCP (Scott Amspoker)

In article <525@bria> uunet!bria!mike writes:

>[in regards to the expression "if (a = b)" instead of "if (a == b)"]

>

>Think *lint*. IMHO, there is nothing we need less than a compiler spitting >out more useless verbage.

The only problem with that is that many PC based C compilers don't include a lint program. It makes sense that the programmer at least have the option of enabling various warning messages. Strangely enough, I once comitted the exact opposite mistake. I had a C statement like this:

```
i == j;
```

The compiler (bless its little heart) gave me the warning:

```
"code has no effect"
```

From: twpierce@amherst.bitnet (Tim Pierce)

(Sorry if this is a well-known one. I'm new to Unix.)

Just to rehash an old thread... Today, I accidentally sent an empty mail message, and Ultrix said, "No message, no subject; hope that's ok."

From: umpfaif0@ccu.umanitoba.ca (Mike Pfaiffer)

Here is another first time post to the net. Hope it meets with your approval...

I was learning PL/1 a couple years ago and for our first or second assignment we had to split one file into two files based on the first char on the line. The program compiled correctly and I even got output of sorts. The result was the following line...

I the most critical examiner of all have determined that there is an error on line 42.

From: david@kessner.denver.co.us (David Kessner)

Computers running a DTK BIOS report a parity error as:

Parity Error But Segment Doesn't Found

From: wex@cs.ULowell.EDU (Paul Wexelblat)

Then there was level D of TOPS (before DEC gave releases numbers, and TOPS was the PDP-10 OP Sys; there was no TOPS-10 (or even Texex yet)).

MORE CORE AVAILABLE, BUT NOT FOR YOU

From: jjb@sequent.com (Jeff Berkowitz)

I love these. In the SunOS 3.0 source code, somewhere in the VM system I think, there was a line that said:

panic ("Shannon and Bill say this can't happen");

I saw this one for myself, in 1986, working for a now-defunct company that was a Sun source licensee at the time. (Saw it in the source, that is - never saw it happen :-).

....

A DEC oldtimer told me that a DEC-10 once printed

PUNT

after a particularly misguided attempt to get it to boot, is this one apocryphal?

Does anyone collect these things?

From: kenw@skyler.arc.ab.ca (Ken Wallewein)

I've heard -- or read, I think -- about some code that contained the comment "you aren't expected to understand this". Seems

to me it was in TCP/IP.

From: jbertoia@medar.com (Jeffrey A. Bertoia)

In article

<KENW.91Jul15225254@skyler.arc.ab.ca>

kenw@skyler.arc.ab.ca (Ken Wal

l

ewein) writes:

>I've heard -- or read, I think -- about some code
that contained the comment

>"you aren't expected to understand this". Seems
to me it was in TCP/IP.

>/kenw

The Whitesmiths 'C' manual had a line like that
in the bugs section
of the manual page after a particularly harrowing
description of,
as I remember, an internal function.

From: ardai@bass.bu.edu (Michael Ardai)

>From article

<KENW.91Jul15225254@skyler.arc.ab.ca>, by

>kenw@skyler.arc.ab.ca (Ke

n Wallewein):

> I've heard -- or read, I think -- about some code
that contained the comment

> "you aren't expected to understand this".

Seems to me it was in TCP/IP.

Deep inside the Teradyne hardware modeler
code is a routine that feeds a
whole bunch of hex numbers into a SYS\$QIO
call. The only comment is
'Weird magic happens here'.

From: whatis@wookumz.gnu.ai.mit.edu (...What
Is?....)

I don't collect these things, but I have one to add,
and I'm hoping

someone has an Earthly explanation for it. This happened on a VAX 11/750 running 4.3 BSD. We've all seen the "You have new mail." message after the csh prompt, but ONCE it actually said instead "Thou hast new mail." It's only happened once! And I swear it happened! Has anyone else ever seen this? I don't even know what triggered it!

--

Steve Boswell | This opinion is distributed in the hopes that it whatis@ucsd.edu | will be useful, but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY... whatis@gnu.ai.mit.edu |

From: gmat@kauri.vuw.ac.nz (Nathan Torkington)

Aaah, but then I want to know about *these* strings, found (here) in /usr/local/bin/mail:

Too much "sourcing" going on.
 Okie dokie
 Mail's idea of conditions is screwed up
 ~h: no can do!?
 Too many regrets
 detract asked to insert commas
 metoo
 Somethings amiss -- no @ or % in arpafix
 Made up bad net name
 ubluit
 Who are you!?
 ; why =

From: fisher@qut.edu.au

The Algol compiler for the ICL 1900 used very occasionally collapse with the message:

"The impossible has happened!"

Bill

From: kfitzpa@hubcap.clemson.edu (Kevin Fitzpatrick)

In <1663@cvbnetPrime.COM>
mkaminsk@cvbnet.prime.com (mailhost) writes:
>Anyway it was a Tandy 6000 (their successor to the Tandy 16)
>running XENIX (a beta version I believe). The memory has gotten
>a little foggy over the years, but I recall the wording as:

> panic: Z80 panic: shut her down Scotty, she's sucking mud again.

Tandy was big on the hidden Trek messages. On of their TRS-80 6.x upgrades had an ASCII quote buried way out on an unused track. Something like...

Beam me up Scotty, there's no life out here.

From: kline@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu (Charley Kline)

Gavin.Flower@comp.vuw.ac.nz (Gavin Flower) writes:

>Well anyway... I often used the Algol compiler on a B6700 mainframe
>and sometimes got the message:

> "NO ERRORS DETECTED".

>I rather thought this was a more honest message than other compilers
>gave! I felt it was not so subtle hint that one should not be
>complacent!

The VS/PASCAL compiler under VM/CMS (there, that's two V's already and I

haven't even gotten to the real point yet) goes one step further in compiler honesty. If your program compiles successfully, it will issue

NO COMPILER DETECTED ERRORS.

I swear I can see the italicization on the words "COMPILER DETECTED."

From: carroll@cs.uiuc.edu (Alan M. Carroll)

Epoch has a few funny messages in it for disastrous circumstances. Some of them are:

"Holy Panes Batman, the window's missing!" - when a X window structure isn't there.

"Holy PH, Batman, the buffer's missing!" - a window without a buffer. This one has actually been seen outside the lab.

"Holy Vectors Batman, I can't get more lines!" - malloc failed.

The error message I want to put in, but never have had the chance, is "System Error - Sureness out of Bounds". You PLATO heads know what I mean.

From: stanger@otago.ac.nz (Nigel Stanger)

Expressionist (a Mac application for doing equations) has the following error messages in it:

Mysterious Error -nnn

Internal Error: Illegal hedge TV number. (huh?? what?!)

Internal Error: BlinkThere or HiliteThere messed

up.

Bad External File System: Boy, is your system messed up. 😊

From: dm@think.com (Dave Mankins)

Honeywell's customer service department once got a very concerned message from a confused customer whose MULTICS system had printed:

Hodie natus est radici frater

before giving up the (holy?) ghost. ``Today unto the root is born a brother".

This is a hack on ``Hodie natus est filius nobis", or ``Today unto us is born a son". I don't know the reference exactly, but it's in Handel's Messiah.

It seems a Multics hacker (allegedly Bernie Greenberg) at MIT had inserted the liturgical allusion when it detected the ``impossible event" of the filesystem deciding it had two roots.

[Greenberg is also known for having taken notes in Latin (``for clarity and precision") when in the fever dream induced by first exposure to a Rubik's Cube.]

From: BUBOO@livid.uib.no

In the IRC-server there are some "nice" messages, and here's a couple of them:

Looks like mere mortals are trying to enter the Twilight Zone
FATAL: Major security hack. Notify

Administrator.
Identity problems, eh ?
Bad Craziness
'tis is no game for mere mortals
Go away and get a life
Death before dishonour ?
Dave, don't do that...
Good afternoon, gentelman, I'm a HAL 9000
Computer
Only few mortals may try to enter the Twiligth
Zone
Only real wizzards know the spells to open the
gate of paradize
Trying to unlock the door twice eh ?
Use the force, Luke !
Change balls, please

My favorite is definitivly the "Bad Craziness" ... :-)

/Ruben

From: BJGLEAS@auvm.american.edu (bj
gleason)

On an old Perkin-Elmer Machine, the Pascal
Compiler would say:

"NONE of your errors have been found"

The compiler was smart enough to know that
your program had errors anyway :-)

From: greywolf@unisoft.UUCP (The Grey Wolf)

Now, granted, this is something one of us here
did, but our VAX precedes
its panics with the message

"Well, you ran into something and the game is
over."

From: jhawk@panix.com (John Hawkinson)

My favorite RSTS/E error message is "Unused error message #xxx". Somehow I managed to get these when hitting ^C as a certain program loads.

From: kenw@skyler.arc.ab.ca (Ken Wallewein)

Take this for what it's worth, but at a shop where I once worked, an overnight processing run would sometime fail with the error message:

"FALL DOWN GO BOOM"

From: tbray@watsol.waterloo.edu (Tim Bray)

Well, this is just a story, picked up from the early days of Usenet, so it's possibly unfounded and furthermore some folks have likely already seen it, but it gave me days of snickers.

Story goes that that some little text-edit subsystem of something or other which had very few things that could go wrong had only one error message, used for both user and internal errors:

Data potato doo-wop doo-wop

When pressed for an explanation, the programmer said: "well, I figured it had to print *something* when there was an error."

From: jkp@cs.HUT.FI (Jyrki Kuoppala)

> When you type your mail and type ~C (typo for ~c) my unix mail tells me:

>

> Okie dokie, core dumped.

bash\$ cat > x.c

```
main() { execl ("/bin/mail", 0); }  
^D  
bash$ gcc x.c  
bash$ ./a.out  
puke  
bash$
```

//Jyrki

From: mkaminsk@cvbnet.prime.com (Mark B. Kaminsky)

On the old NCR Towers I used to get the following message on the console whenever someone on a terminal would hold down the left (or right - I forget which) arrow key:

spurious multibus interrupt

It took us a long time to figure out what was causing the messages since nothing else bad happened and the people on the terminals would be looking at their own screens while typing. Anyone on the console, on the other hand, would look at the process table for suspicious processes, etc.

NCR took the bug report with a great deal of disbelief, but their next release of UNIX didn't have the problem.

From: bhoughto@hopi.intel.com (Blair P. Houghton)

I predict that Eighth Generation computers will compile no programs, run no applications, and access no data. Instead they will be designed and tuned to give a continuously variable spectrum of elegant and precise error messages describing your failure to induce them to do so.

-Blair
"And I'm not even married..."

From: gamble@hawk.rice.edu (Ben Gamble)

As long as we're running strings on everything
from here to
Berkeley...

Someone in a now-junked message pointed out
something from lint. I
don't remember what it was, but here's one I did
find in lint, SunOS
4.1.1 (I think):

EDOTDOT!!!!

Your guess is probably much better than mine.

From: aem@aber.ac.uk (Alec David Muffett)

In article
<NICKEL.91Jul19181940@desaster.cs.tu-berlin.de>
nickel@cs.tu-berlin.

d

e writes:

>In article

<OTTO.91Jul19112520@kalikka.jyu.fi>
otto@kalikka.jyu.fi (Otto J. Ma

k

ela) writes:

>

>- on SunOS 4.1 and did, in fact, see the string
"Thou hast new mail."

You think THATS funny (it is), but strings
"/usr/lib/sendmail" for a few laughs
:

>From the silly:-

You wascal wabbit! Wandering wizards won't
win!
savemail: HELP!!!!

to the plausible but still silly:-

Who are you ?
Can't parse myself!

to the plain ridiculous:-

MAIL DELETED BECAUSE OF LACK OF DISK
SPACE

- not to mention all the SMTP "HELO" dialogue...

From: dw3w+@andrew.cmu.edu (Database
Work)

What about this one (present in SunOS 4.1.1 and
who knows where else)
when attempting to use the csh builtin 'suspend'
from a login shell:

Can't suspend a login shell (yet).

What's that supposed to mean??? Not until later
in the afternoon? Not
until they rewrite the shell? Not until you get rid
of stopped jobs?

:-) I got quite a chuckle out of that one.

Tod McQuillin

From: jn11+@andrew.cmu.edu (Joseph M.
Newcomer)

The SAIL compiler had a number of puns on
sailing, one of which was the
compiler internal error message which referred
to "dryrot" (if you don't
know anything about boats and sailing, be aware
that "dryrot" is the
bane of a boatowner's existence, and once it
sets in your boat is
doomed...). The modula "dryrot" message seems
to indicate that at least
one implementor had used SAIL.

From: jn11+@andrew.cmu.edu (Joseph M. Newcomer)

The classic short message was from JOSS, one of the early interactive languages (from the mid-1960's; it ran on a machine at RAND Corporation called the JOHNNIAC). It was on a small machine. It had one catchall message:

EH?

this was based on the premise that the error would be so blindingly obvious to the programmer that no further indication of the nature of the error was required.

Wrong.

(I worked in another interactive system that thought this was such a cute idea that they used it. This was a mistake. If you knew the language, the cause of the error may have been obvious, but if you didn't know the language you were in deep trouble. They extended this philosophy to the printed documentation!)

From: jdavis@noao.edu (Jim Davis)

Well, I've seen the "You are a charlatan" in a mail context before, though only on a DEC-20. Lessee, any DEC-20s left... :-)

Oh yeah, sri-nic ..err.. nic.ddn.mil.

```
bordeaux$ telnet nic.ddn.mil 25
Trying 192.67.67.20 ...
Connected to nic.ddn.mil.
Escape character is '^'.
```

220-NIC.DDN.MIL SMTP Service 6.1 at Fri, 26 Jul
91 18:21:06 PDT
220 Don't Worry.
helo nonesuch.noao.edu
250 NIC.DDN.MIL - Never heard of that name,
bordeaux.kpno.noao.edu
helo cc.utah.edu
250 NIC.DDN.MIL - You are a charlatan,
bordeaux.kpno.noao.edu
quit
221 NIC.DDN.MIL -- Be Happy!

From: fisher@qut.edu.au

In article
<ocY7bU200Vs3leFxYy@andrew.cmu.edu>,
jn11+@andrew.cmu.edu (Joseph M.
Newcomer) writes:
> The classic short message was from JOSS,
one of the early interactive
> languages (from the mid-1960's; it ran on a
machine at RAND Corporation
> called the JOHNNIAC). It was on a small
machine. It had one catchall
> message:
>
> EH?

We used a language called JEAN on ICL's 1900
series. We knew this was a
dialect of JOSS but it must have been closer
than we knew as it used the
same error message.

The JEAN error message I liked was "Your
expression has defeated me" which
was generated by a program such as
1.1 X=X
1.2 PRINT X

I never understood this until I was explaining to
someone the meaning of
recursion in Algol. To demonstrate that simpler
languages could not
handle recursion I gave JEAN a recursive
definition of a factorial and
to my surprise it gave the right answer!

To understand this you also need to know that in
JEAN
SET X=3 gave the variable X a value.
LET X=3 defined X as a function.
and the default verb was LET, not SET.

Hence "Your formula has defeated me" meant
that it had run out of store
because of infinite recursion.

What a pity Basic defeated the much more
elegant JOSS.

Bill

From: jot@fig12.cray.com (Otto Tennant)

Twenty or so years ago, the Fortran IV compiler
for the SDS Sigma 2
would occasionally comment at the bottom of
your listing:

WARNING: 54 - PROGRAM NOT RECURSIVE

(That *looks* right. I'm pretty sure about the
number and the text.)

I was somewhat startled by the message, since I
knew Fortran programs
were not recursive.

Eventually, in a fit of boredom and despair, I
wrote a recursive
program which produced the error message.
Worked fine, too. So far
as I know, it may still be running. Wasn't RE-
ENTRANT tho.

From: gpwrmdh@gp.co.nz

In article
<1991Jul29.080544.10301@kcbbs.gen.nz>,
Roger_Hicks@kcbbs.gen.nz (Rog
e

r Hicks) writes:

>

> Another fascinating message of the DEC10 at that time was the MAKE

> command, used to load the editor with a new text file.

>

> Typing MAKE LOVE, gave the message NOT WAR, before starting the editor.

This carried over into other operating systems, including RT-11. Another one I remember is HELP ME, which came back with:

Help is not available for you.

--

Martin D. Hunt

GP Print Limited USEnet address :

martinh@gp.co.nz

Wellington

New Zealand Phone : +64 4 4965648

From: shane@inferno.peri.com (Shane Bouslough)

>From article <1887@balrog.ctrn.com>, by dj@ctrn.com (DJ Delorie):

> We just got this one (source file name changed to protect the innocent):

>

> "foo.cc", line 204: internal <<AT&T C++ Translator 2.1.0 03/31/90>> error:

> bus error (or something nasty like that)

Masscomp C compiler:

"Insane structure member list"

From: jcmorris@mwunix.mitre.org (Joe Morris)

In most cases I've found that a good way to find out what you can do with

a language is to read well-written descriptions of what you **can't** do with it. I got into systems programming in the early 1960s by reading the error message listings in the FORTRAN compiler, first for the 7090 FMS and later in IBSYS. Of course, in today's world the vendors would have collective apoplexy if anyone seriously asked to see the compiler sources, and the error message descriptions seem to routinely go something like this:

Error ABC123D: User Error

Explanation: An unknown error has occurred in an unidentified program while executing an unimplemented function at an undefined address.

User Response: Correct error and resubmit.

From: rvdp@cs.vu.nl (Ronald van der Pol)

jdavis@noao.edu (Jim Davis) writes:

>Well, I've seen the "You are a charlatan" in a mail context before,
>though only on a DEC-20. Lessee, any DEC-20s left... :-(

(this is what an older version of MMDF says)

```
telnet deskpro.sow.econ.vu.nl smtp
Trying 130.37.48.1 ...
Connected to deskpro.sow.econ.vu.nl.
Escape character is '^]'.
220 deskpro.sow.econ.vu.nl Server SMTP
(Complaints/bugs to: postmaster)
helo foo.bar
250 deskpro.sow.econ.vu.nl - Liar, Liar! Pants on
Fire!
quit
221 deskpro.sow.econ.vu.nl says goodbye to
kappl.cs.vu.nl at Tue Jul 30 22:13:4
```

3

Connection closed by foreign host.

From: brad@arkham.wimsey.bc.ca (Brad Murray)

I was just installing PCSA version 4.0 for DOS on a machine here, and after the boot I got a system error. Okay, no problem, I do a quick

USE \\HOSTNAME

to see if the machine knows anything about the host. Lo and behold, it does but it refuses to tell me:

Error: Success

   Oct 3, 2011 06:05

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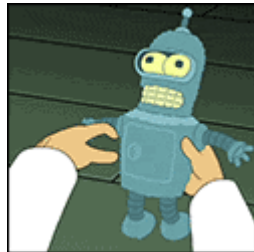
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 [QUOTE](#)






PopeOnARope

Jul 23, 2007



Hey! Quit touching my junk!



   Oct 3, 2011 10:16

Let's not forget the Granddaddy of the error messages:

Lp0: Printer on fire

I also see plenty of fuckity ones when going to update Dell BIOSes without elevating the process. Usually something along the lines of "Warning, your privledge is not enough. Acquire more privledge and retry"

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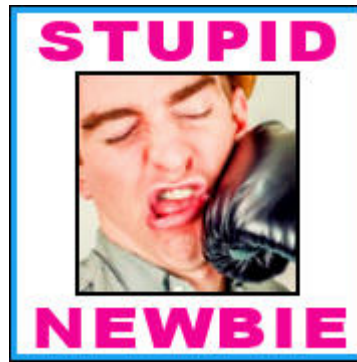



Tongsy

Aug 22, 2007

One of our products has a log message: "Process XXXXXX went away, but nobody cares"

A customer found it one day, and message was promptly changed for all future versions




   Oct 3, 2011 16:56

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Dilbert As FUCK

Sep 8, 2007



by Cowcaster

Pillbug

   Oct 3, 2011 17:05

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 [QUOTE](#)



Bone Storm

Aug 3, 2011




BUY ME BONESTORM
OR GO TO HELL

   Oct 3, 2011 20:19

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Lysidas

Jul 26, 2002

"Kernel panic" is good, but the **best** phrase is "undefined behavior occurs" 🤖

I also love the idea of undefined behavior: you tried to do something that doesn't make sense, so who knows what'll actually happen. Your code might even work correctly until you change compilers, or compiler flags, or libc versions, or the phase of the moon, or, or, or ...



John Diefenbaker is a madman who thinks he's John Diefenbaker.

Pillbug

Oct 3, 2011 21:28

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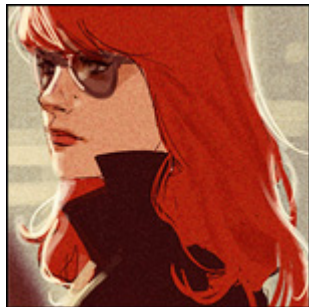
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Elector_Nerdlingen

Sep 27, 2004



Oct 4, 2011 04:26

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[QUOTE](#)



Vulture Culture

Jul 14, 2003



I was never enjoying it. I only eat it for the nutrients.

AlphaDog posted:

My friend had a job which involved translating Japanese-English program comments and output into actual-English (that's horribly unclear, I mean that the original Japanese programmers would try to write in English, and then he would have to turn it into actual English, because hey, they're programmers not translators). He said his favorite thing that he saw again and again was the phrase "It is working, but you may be disappointed".


To be fair, the Japanese do have a reputation as being rather small.

   Oct 4, 2011 14:06

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Bone Storm

Aug 3, 2011



BUY ME BONESTORM
OR GO TO HELL

It never startled me too much, but I have always loved the terrified reactions less computer-inclined folks have to "fatal error."

 OH GOD, IT WAS FATAL? WHAT IS DEAD OH NO 

To be fair, I had the same reaction the first time I saw my aforementioned favorite Kernel Panic. The idea of the fundament of my operating system seeing something so confusing or abnormal that it is hiding in the corner wide-eyed and shaking was at first very alarming and now rather hilarious.

   Oct 4, 2011 16:00

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GigaPeon




Apr 29, 2003



Go, man, go!

Back when I worked at the University, we supported Eudora. We sometimes got complaints about the program telling the user to be more polite. We were confused until we Googled this up:

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   Oct 4, 2011 16:19

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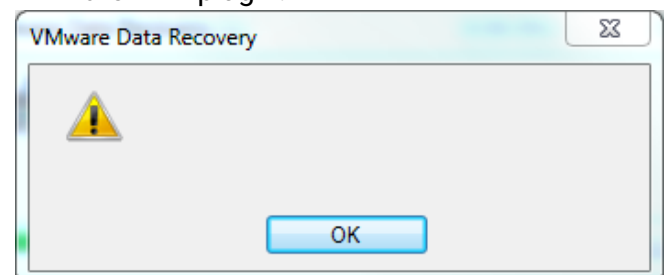
Erwin


Feb 17, 2006



I WANT NOTHING
I WANT NOTHING

Got this beauty today when uninstalling the VMware VDR plugin:



The uninstall failed with that error, but completed fine when I tried again.  it is a mystery

   Oct 4, 2011 21:46

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Griz

May 21, 2001



One of my company's programs has 4 error messages, I've never seen any others.

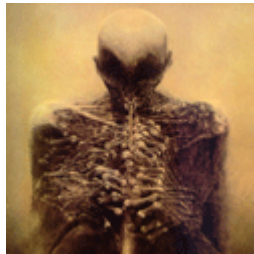
Error 99
Error 9999
Bad news error
Program problem error: there is a problem with the program

   Oct 4, 2011 23:44

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bitreaper

Jan 1, 2007



This is from the old, horrible version of my company's shader compiler which I've just finished rewriting to potentially be less horrible:

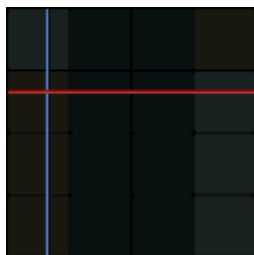
WARNING: Ambiguous call to the function "break". The compiler has chosen "" instead of:

   Oct 5, 2011 05:33

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Jabor

Jul 16, 2010



#1 Loser at SpaceChem

SavageMessiah posted:

Here's the paper one I mentioned earlier:



I never did figure out what exactly caused it.

The way most error messages work is that you call a function that returns an error code, and then you use a (usually system-standard) mechanism that maps that code to a string

when deciding what message is associated with that.

When a given error code is not meant to be interpreted in that context, but the program does so anyway, it gives you an error message that's probably unrelated to what actually happened.


A similar bug is why you get the occasional "Error: The operation completed successfully" messages - the operation failed, but the error code that the program is stringifying is the "successful completion" value.

   Oct 5, 2011 05:53

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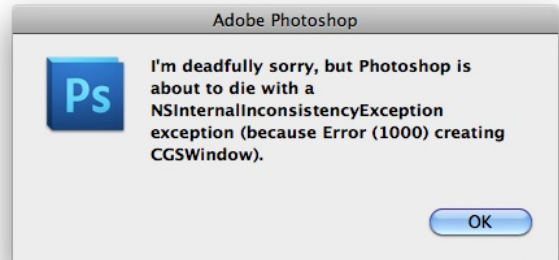
Small White Dragon

Nov 23, 2007



No relation.

An artist I was working with got this one one day, and it gave him pause.




   Oct 5, 2011 06:14

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Unsound Logic



Jul 12, 2002



"Why don't you mosey along, pardner."




Found this one on a heavily infected laptop that was dropped off.

   Oct 8, 2011 02:34

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less than three

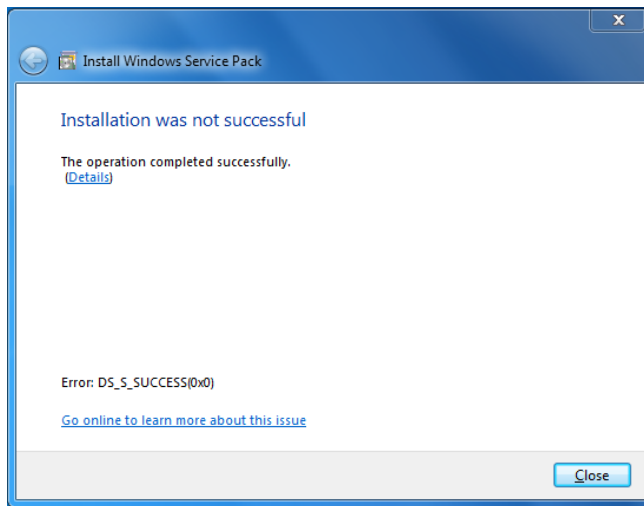
Aug 9, 2007



Fallen Rib

Nov 18, 2011 20:10

Windows 7 (Attempt) SP1



Profile Post History Rap Sheet QUOTE

pokeyman

Nov 26, 2006



That elephant ate my entire platoon.



Nov 19, 2011 08:00

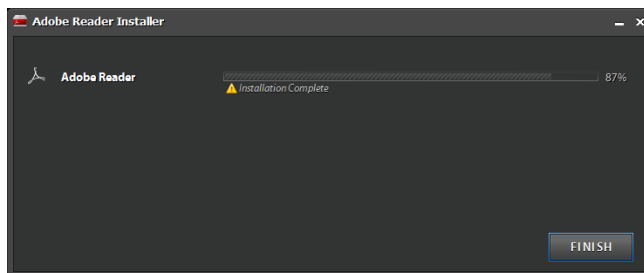
Along similar lines

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GWBBQ

Jan 2, 2005





Jan 24, 2012 21:23

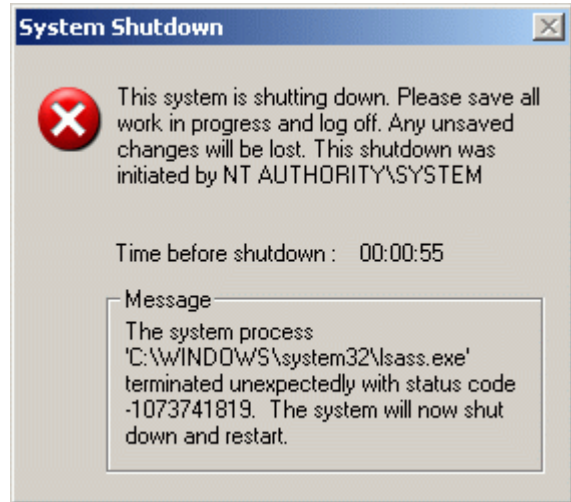
Profile Post History Rap Sheet QUOTE

GIMMEL

Jan 24, 2005



by Lowtax



never forget

Jan 25, 2012 17:08

Profile Post History Rap Sheet QUOTE

Zhentar

Sep 28, 2003



Brilliant Master Genius

Thanks, Microsoft. Linking me to a knowledge base article to guess why IE9 couldn't install is so much better than giving an error message. (Naturally, the problem isn't related to anything listed in the KB article, either)

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Jan 26, 2012 04:33

Profile Post History Rap Sheet QUOTE

love truncheon




Feb 1, 2006

toot toot!

In a very enterprise application with a foul flash based interface, when cancelling a job that is certainly running:

quote:


Error: There is no tasks that can be stopped. No tasks can be stopped because there are no tasks that are in progress or stopping. Stop tasks that are in progress or stopping. ()

   Jan 27, 2012 03:08

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brc64

Mar 21, 2008



I wear my sunglasses at night.

Every once in a while when shutting down or restarting Windows (XP at least) I'll see something like "Should not see me" ending.

   Jan 27, 2012 03:34

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The MUMPSorceress

Jan 6, 2012



^SHTPSTS

Any of you work with as400? It constantly throws inane errors about various esoteric paper types needing to be inserted into the printer, despite everything printing totally normally once you force-print the job on letter paper.

I swear it asked me for 4x13 paper once.



Gary's Answer

Jan 27, 2012 04:28

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VAULT



« Serious Hardware / Software Crap › The Zen of Error Messages



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10 »

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