

## FROM THE PASFAA TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

### TIPS (Technical Info for the Puzzled and Stupefied)

#### Also Known As....

*Tasty TidBits and TidBytes of Techy, Baudy, Binary, Sometimes Hexadecimal, RAMmed-Down-Your-Throat-Daily, Mouse-Moving, Web-Site-Surfing, Disk-Driving, Mainframe-Mashing Stuff Relished Most Especially By Those Who Peddle Pocket Protectors and Speak in Sentences of Algorithms, But Commonly Abhorred and Otherwise Often Found to Be Distasteful By Normal, Don't-Wear-Horn-Rims, Don't-Do-Windows, Don't-Unzip-Files-in-Public Financial Aid Administrators*

The TIPS listed below are taken from the PASFAA Technology Handbook's "E-Mail, Discussion Lists, and On-Line Etiquette" section. The Handbook is a resource created by financial aid administrators for financial aid administrators, and it is one of the many benefits that accrue to members of PASFAA. Refer to the Handbook anytime you're feeling technically puzzled or stupefied!

#### GENERAL

- Keep paragraphs and messages short and to the point.
- Include pertinent subject titles with messages, so users can locate messages quickly.
- Include your "Signature" at the bottom of messages. The signature should include at a minimum your name, position, affiliation, and Internet address, but should not exceed four lines.
- Capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title of heading. \*Asterisks\* around a word can also be used to make a stronger point. Capitalizing whole words that are not titles is generally termed SHOUTING.
- Be professional and careful in what you say about others. E-mail is easily forwarded...
- Cite all quotes, references, and sources, and respect copyright and license agreements.
- Never forward personal e-mail to mailing lists without the original author's permission.
- Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications, sarcasm and humor can easily be interpreted in a negative way.

## LISTSERVES

- When you join a list, monitor the messages for a few days to get a feel for what questions are asked, what questions seem to be off-limits, etc. This is called “lurking”. When you feel comfortable with the group, then start posting.
- See if the list has a “FAQ” (Frequently Asked Questions) resource. Veteran members get annoyed when they see the same questions being asked repeatedly.
- Follow any and all guidelines established by the list’s owner/postmaster.
- Keep in mind that many lists have members from all over the world. Don’t assume that everyone will understand references to TV shows, movies, pop culture, etc.
- Use discretion when forwarding a long message to group addresses or distribution lists. It’s preferable to reference the source of a document and provide instructions on how to access or obtain a copy. If you must post a long message, warn the readers with a statement at the top of the message: **WARNING – LONG MESSAGE.**
- When posting a question to a discussion group, request that responses be mailed to you personally. Post a summary of the responses to the list (only listing the identities of the respondents with their permission, of course).
- When responding directly to a person, ensure that your message is truly addressed to that person and not to the listserve! There are many cases where people have thought they were sending a “private” message, only to find that thousands of people worldwide saw it!

In the next issue of the Newsletter, we’ll dive into some Internet terminology, like “Archie”, “Backbone”, “Browser”, “Java”, “TCP/IP”, and the like. Be sure to check it out!

---

Another thing to look for: The Handbook has a really nifty (and detailed) history of the Internet, dating back to its beginning in the 1960’s. It is very interesting reading.

---

By the way, as you’re scanning your computer for viruses (and we all do this on a regular basis, RIGHT?), be sure to be on the look-out for these:

# New Computer Viruses

- OPRAH WINFREY VIRUS -- Your 1.25 GB hard drive suddenly shrinks to 250 MB, then slowly expands back to 1.25 GB.
- AT&T VIRUS -- Every three minutes, your computer tells you what great service you're getting.
- MCI VIRUS -- Every three minutes, it tells you you're paying too much for the AT&T virus.
- PAUL REVERE VIRUS -- This revolutionary virus does not horse around. It warns you of impending hard drive attack: once if by LAN and twice if by C:>
- POLITICALLY CORRECT VIRUS -- Never calls itself a "virus"; rather, it claims to be "an electronic microorganism."
- MARIO CUOMO VIRUS -- It would be a great virus, but it refuses to run.
- ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER VIRUS -- Terminates everything in its path. If it ever leaves, it will be back.
- GOVERNMENT ECOMONIST VIRUS -- Nothing works, but all of your diagnostic software says everything is fine.
- FEDERAL BUREAUCRAT 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.
- GALLUP VIRUS -- Sixty percent of the computers infected will lose 38 percent of their data 14 percent of the time (plus or minus a three percent margin of error).
- TEXAS VIRUS -- Makes sure it is bigger than any other file.
- ADAM AND EVE VIRUS -- Takes a couple of bytes out of your Apple.
- CONGRESSIONAL VIRUS -- The computer locks up and the screen splits erratically, with a message appearing on each half blaming the other side for the problem. Fortunately, this virus takes frequent, long recesses.
- AIRLINE VIRUS -- You are in Dallas; your data is in Singapore.
- OEDIPUS VIRUS -- Your computer becomes obsessed with the notion of merging with its own motherboard.
- PBS VIRUS -- Every few minutes, your computer stops its activity to ask for money.
- ELVIS VIRUS -- Your computer runs well for a while, then grows larger, gets slower and self-destructs, only to resurface at shopping malls and service stations across rural America.
- OLLIE NORTH VIRUS -- Causes your printer to begin shredding documents.

- NIKE VIRUS -- Just does it.
- SEARS VIRUS -- Your data won't appear unless you buy new cables, power supply, and a set of shocks.
- CONGRESSIONAL VIRUS #2 -- Runs every program on the hard drive simultaneously, but doesn't let the user accomplish anything.
- KEVORKIAN VIRUS -- If your computer ever becomes damaged, this virus will help it shut down as an act of mercy.
- HEALTHCARE VIRUS -- Tests your system for one day, finds nothing wrong, then sends you a bill for \$4,500.