

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 "New Technologies on Campus" 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!

The two topics covered by this quarter's article are Interactive Voice Response Technology and Document Imaging Technology. As with all other technology-based topics, these are rapidly changing fields, and the words written below will no doubt become obsolete within days after being printed. Nevertheless, if your institution is considering these technologies, this article will at least get you headed in the right direction.

*Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Technology*

1. **Description:** IVR connects telephones, computer databases, fax machines, and the customer in powerful new ways. Through this sophisticated technology, customers with touch-tone phones can directly access computer systems and communicate "interactively" with the host computer database (some newer systems do not require a touch-tone phone, working exclusively on voice recognition!) In addition to standard voice response, many IVR systems are capable of automatically sending fax transmissions or even prompting the host computer to take action; e.g., produce a precertified student loan application, award letter, or other document, all without human intervention.
2. **Benefits:**

- Customers have ‘round-the-clock access to the computer – any time your phone system is available.
  - Improves consistency/accuracy of information provided to customers.
  - Minimizes individual contact with customers by office staff members.
  - Collects and updates information without manual intervention.
  - Frees employees to work on other tasks.
3. **Features:**
- Fully integrated automated attendant/voice mail
  - Fax capability
  - Touch Tone and/or voice recognition command
  - User-defined voice response scripts
  - Helpful phone call statistics
4. **Resource Information:** Please see the PASFAA Technology Handbook for lots more “meat” on this topic, including a sample financial aid IVR flowchart.
5. **Other Resource Information:** A great deal of help can be found by simply searching on the Web (using Yahoo!, Infoseek, Magellan, or some other search engine). Search for “Voice Recognition Systems” or “Interactive Voice Response Systems” and you will find more than enough material to help you become an IVR expert!

## **Document Imaging Technology**

1. **Description:** Document Imaging or Optical Scanning is a rapidly changing, emerging technology that replaces existing paper filing/retrieval systems with a highly efficient paper-less system. Due to the enormous amount of information that can be stored on a single optical disk (equivalent to many five-drawer file cabinets), organizations who implement document imaging systems are often able to reclaim physical space in the office that can then be used for functions other than housing paper files. Sections 674.19(e)(1), 675.19(c)(1), and 676.19(c)(1) of the Federal Regulations permit an institution to store many financial aid records in optical disk format.
2. **Benefits:**
- Significant space-saving capabilities.
  - Optimum efficiency in storing and retrieving documents.
  - Improved work flow and productivity
  - Single or multiple user access
  - Significant indexing capabilities
3. **Types of Storage Vehicles:**

- Magneto-optical disk cartridges
- Write Once Read Many (WORM) optical disks
- CD-ROM
- Chained hard drives

4. **Types of Imaging Systems:**

- Desk-top archiving system
- PC-based systems/windows driven software
- Mainframe/SIS integrated systems

5. **Resource Information:** Please see the PASFAA Technology Handbook for further information on this topic, including an extensive Q&A that will help you determine your office's imaging hardware and software needs.

6. **Other Resource Information:** Once again, a great deal of help can be found by simply searching on the Web (using Yahoo!, Infoseek, Magellan, or some other search engine). Search for "Document Imaging".

That's quite enough serious information for one Newsletter, so now it's time for your quarterly dose of technology-based humor.....

**Geek Speak (A new vocabulary from computer folks)**

**404**

Someone who's clueless. From the World Wide Web message "404, URL Not Found," meaning that the document you've tried to access can't be located. "Don't bother asking him...he's 404, man."

**Alpha Geek**

The most knowledgeable, technically proficient person in an office or work group. From wolf pack terminology, where the dominant wolf is the alpha wolf. "Ask Larry, he's the alpha geek around here."

**Beepilepsy**

The brief seizure people sometimes suffer when their beepers go off, especially in vibrator mode. Characterized by physical spasms, goofy facial expressions, and stopping speech in mid-sentence.

**Career-Limiting Move (CLM)**

Used among microsersfs to describe an ill-advised activity. Trashing your boss while he or she is within earshot is a serious CLM.

**CGI Joe**

A hard-core CGI script programmer with all the social skills and charisma of a plastic action figure.

### Cobwebsite

A World Wide Web Site that hasn't been updated for a long time. A dead web page.

### Dilberted

To be exploited and oppressed by your boss. Derived from the experiences of Dilbert, the comic strip character. "I've been dilberted again. The old man revised the specs for the fourth time this week."

### Egosurfing

Scanning the net, databases, print media, or research papers looking for the mention of your name.

More Geek Speak will be included in the next Newsletter, so don't be 404, dudes and dudettes.....