

## Computer Bloopers and Blunders from the Technically Clueless

Safest way to buy online by credit card



VISA – It's just everywhere! Trying to buy something on-line, I suppose. No wonder it didn't work - note the card hasn't even been activated yet.

From 1994 to 2002 Rod Shelley worked as a PC technician at a major computer retail store in the US. After seeing all kinds of wacky, operator-induced computer issues, Shelley decided to start documenting them. He wanted to inject a little humour into the often-frustrating world of technology and hopefully educate a few of the technically clueless along the way.

In 2000, Rod published his collection of humorous photos online under the title "Stupid Computer Tricks". In 2002, his gallery turned into an overnight success. Unfortunately, due to bandwidth concerns and a series of hosting problems, Shelley was forced to take the gallery down.

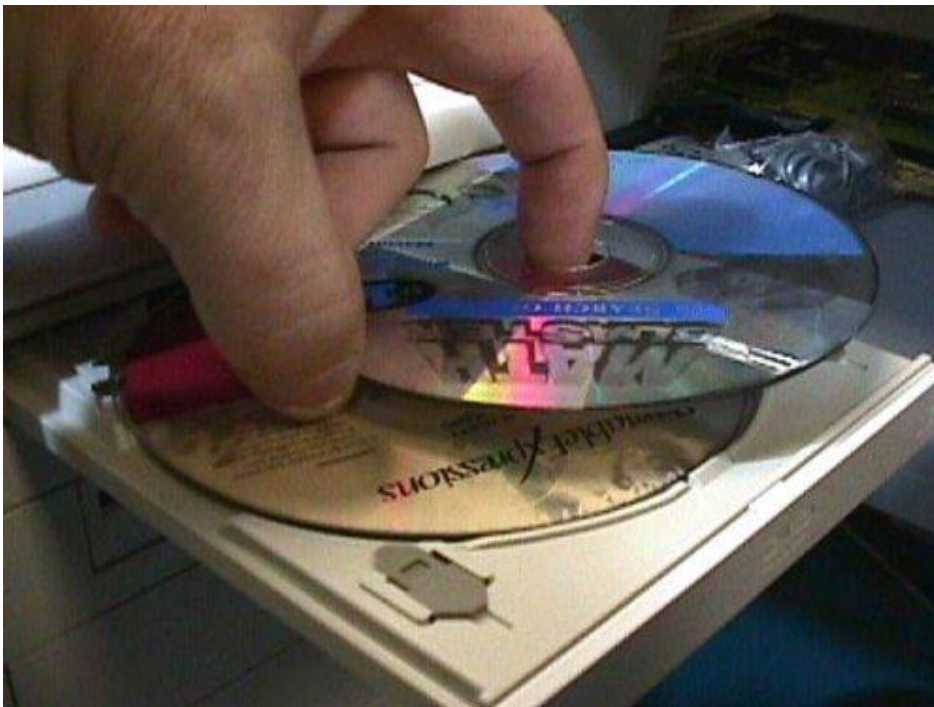
Lucky for us, Rod has graciously allowed TechRepublic to republish his photos. I've added titles to most of the photos, but the captions come straight from Rod. You can learn more about Rod and read his musings about photography, technology, and computer repair on his Web site – Rod's Lair (<http://www.rodslair.com/April.html>).

The more modems the better!



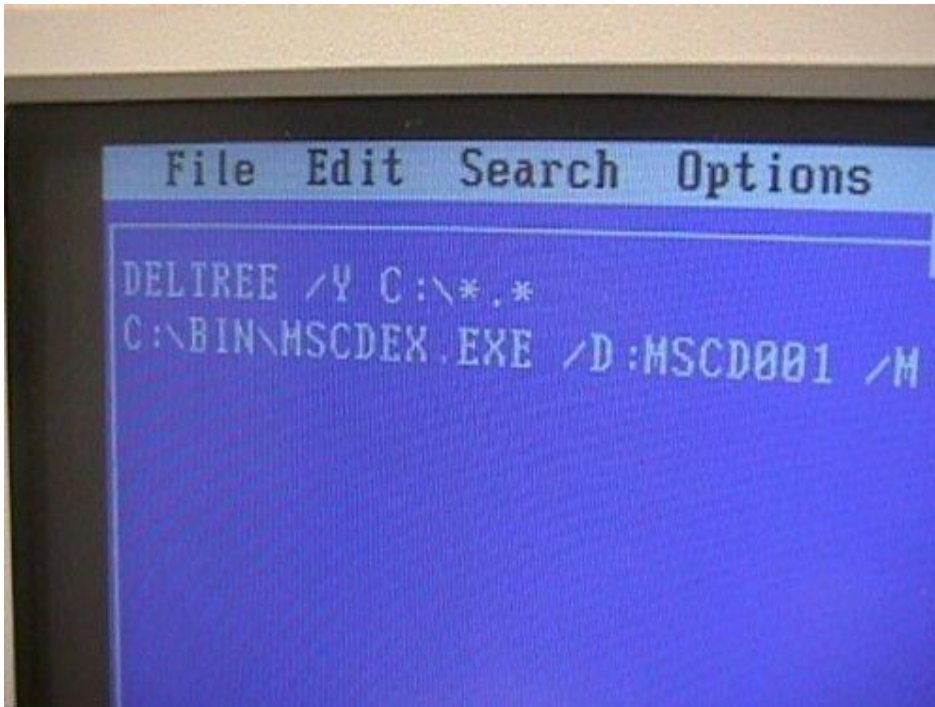
Here's a new activity - let's see how many modems we can load into device manager. Maybe we can load more web pages this way?

Two CDs is better than one



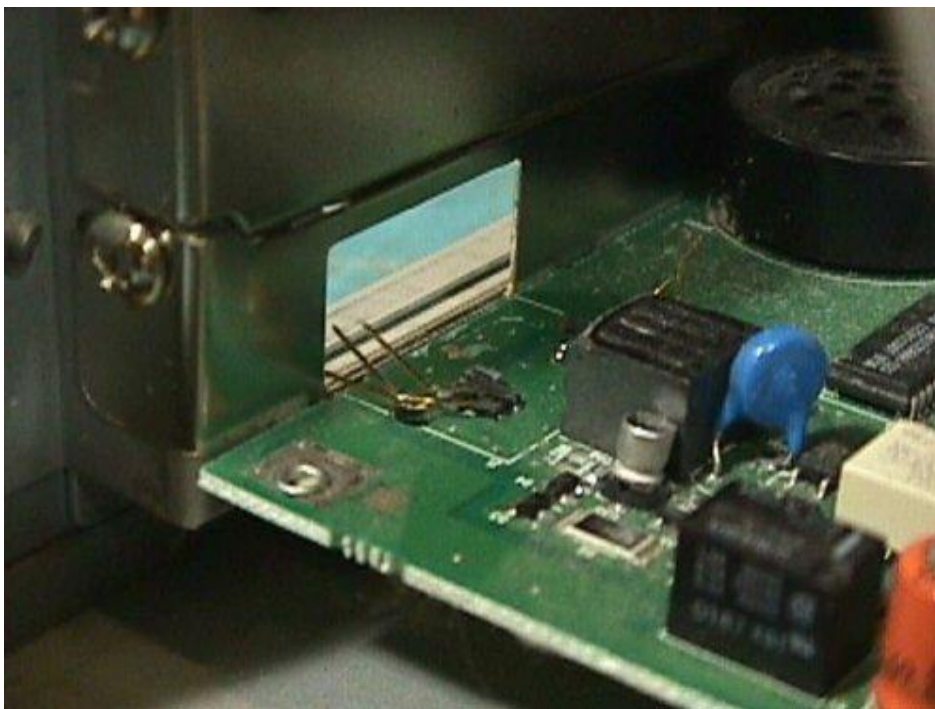
Save time - insert two CDs at the same time!

Unfriendly autoexec.bat



The autoexec.bat file isn't used much anymore in these non-DOS days. This one was used once. If I was this guy, I'd take stock of my circle of friends.

When in doubt – yank out the cord



This poor sap couldn't figure out how to unplug the telephone line from his modem. Solution? Just yank out the whole connector block. Then, get a shock when the service centre won't cover the modem under warranty!



Insert CD into drive D and a half



What was the complaint here you ask? It "Won't read CDs..." Gee – I wonder why? "Insert CD-ROM in drive D½:"?

The front cover won't fit (1 of 2)



This front cover won't fit (2 of 2)



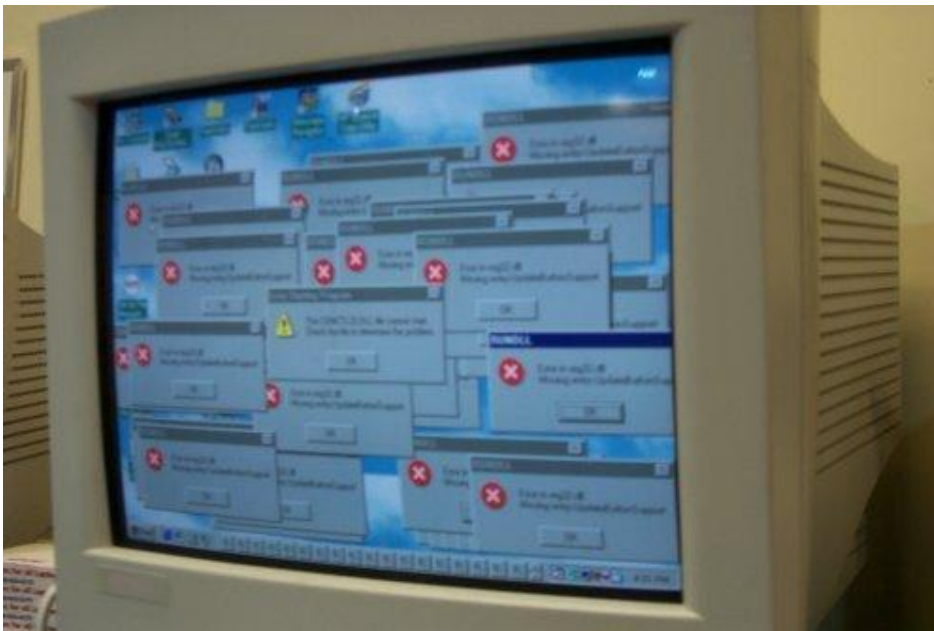
This is what happens when you replace an OEM drive with a standard one!

Rubber band floppy drive



This laptop floppy drive was "choking" on a large rubber band!

Uhhh... Is this an error?





Just a little dust



"Grampa Computer" appears to need a shave! This was brought to the service centre because the floppy drive was intermittent. I can't imagine why.

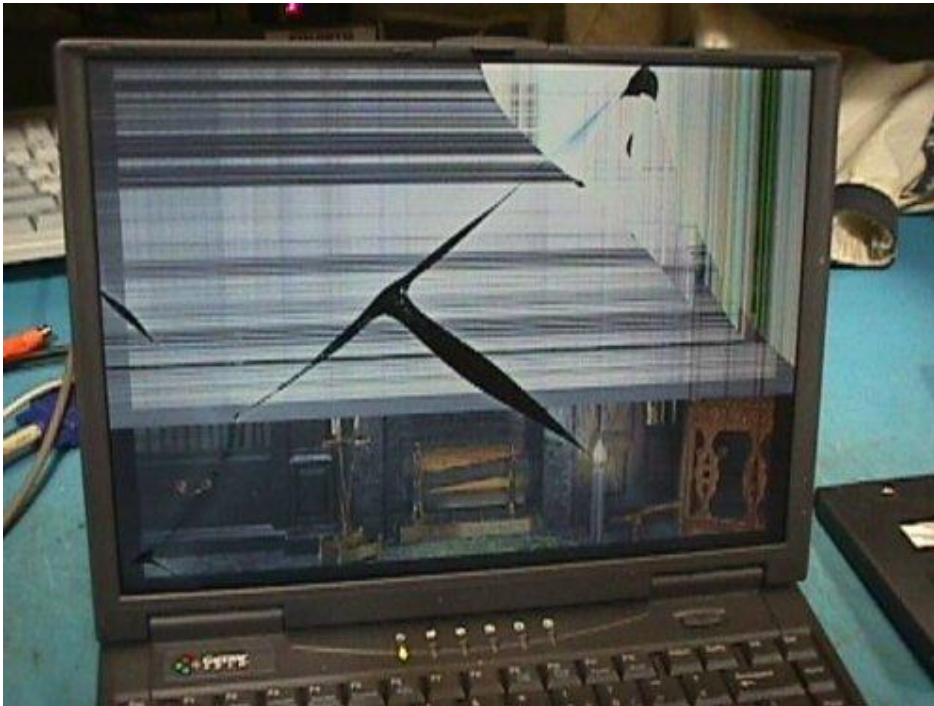
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### Desktop icon overload



"Wadd'ya mean 'out of memory?' I still have some room on my screen!"

### Shattered laptop screen



The owner of this shattered laptop was actually expecting this to be covered under warranty!



Two My Computer shortcut too many



Three shortcuts - all to the same place! Just in case they get confused...

Antistatic bags? We don't need any stinking antistatic bags!



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This motherboard was mailed to our service centre in this nice box--wrapped in a plastic bag and cushioned by static-generating foam! The letter asked us to check the board for problems. If it didn't have any problems before, I'm sure it does now!

Mysterious black spots



The story on this one? "I don't know what did this. It was fine, and then the next morning, it looked like this!" Right. A gnome crept inside the case, and exploded during the night.

Why use two screws when one will do?



Here's an elegant example of precision hard drive mounting. Hey, it saved 20 cents on screws!

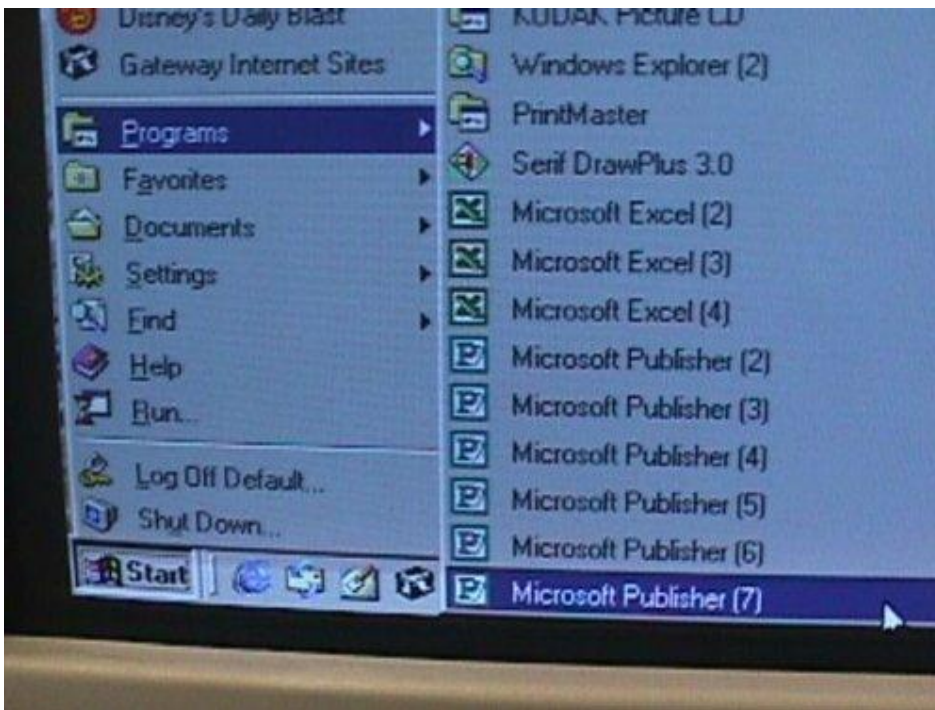


Floppy drive slot machine



Uh, sorry, guy. This is NOT the right slot for this casino token! My service manager was watching over my shoulder as I removed this rattling floppy drive from an ailing computer. I shook the drive, and this token fell out. The manager just walked away shaking his head.

What? You can delete shortcuts?



Here's a variation on the multiple shortcuts idea. I guess this is in case they get confused?





Floppy disk label lock



Here's another "floppy drive won't read..." problem. Note the disk label. Note the label sealing the disk's protective access cover shut. His Quicken data should be quite safe.

Duct tape that hard drive





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Can't get the IDE cable to reach the hard drive? No problem--remember, you can fix anything with duct tape!

Lipstick laptop



Okay - I have NO idea what was behind this one. The red stuff was semi-gooey, like lipstick. Either the kid got into some mischief, or someone ticked off the girlfriend/wife/significant other.

It's a 3.5 floppy/mini-CD combo drive!



Yet more floppy torture. This is almost understandable, but still, there's reason floppy disks look the way they do, and CDs look the way they do. Duh! That little indentation on the CD drive tray really isn't for holding your coffee! It's for those 3-inch mini-CDs! Roo-Hoo, Scooby-Doo!



An IDE cable to nowhere



This one came in for "Operating system not found." Please note the two blue sockets on the motherboard at bottom centre. Note that these are the IDE controller sockets. Note the black socket next to them. That is the floppy drive cable socket. Note that there are no cables in ANY of them! Note the IDE cable going from the hard drive to the CD ROM drive - and nowhere else!

Not-so-cool PC case mod



This is one of those half-size cases. Wanting an add-on (full-size) sound card, this ingenious owner decided to do a little "modification" on the case. Still can't use the game port, though! Try ARC-welding it next time.

Credit: Reprinted with permission from Rod Shelley