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## FATAL ERRORS

You're driving down the highway and your dashboard suddenly flashes the message **A**this car has performed an illegal operation and will be shut down.@ While you're away at work, your refrigerator commits a fatal error and frozen food is leaking from your freezer when you return. You come back to find that your washing machine has performed an **A**unspeakable error@ and ripped all your clothes to shreds on hyperactive cycle. What is the first thing you would think? Why, of course, that Bill Gates had finally purchased General Motors, General Electric and Sears. The truth is that we would not tolerate these problems in any non-computer product. We would buy some other brand that the market would readily create for us. But there is no market for computer operating systems. And so we whimper and curse and go on to accept that the 20 page report which just disappeared in a flash of digital smoke, must now be recreated from scratch.

If you think things are bad now, you are in for a big surprise. There are new, even more infuriating, error messages under development and they will be appearing soon on a computer near you. Here are some of the errors we've heard about in addition to **A**fatal error@ and **A**illegal operation.@

Nearly fatal error: Your computer has come to the brink of death and will remain in a comatose state for the rest of its natural life.

Illegal covert operation: Your computer has just smuggled 50 million dollars worth of arms to Albufistan and will be shut down until Congressional hearings are concluded.

Legally insane operation: Your computer has gone over the edge and will shut down until it has completed a full course of psychiatric treatment.

**A**We got your error right here@error: Your computer has done something so bad that the mob has been notified and will be at your door shortly. Your computer will try to run, but it cannot hide.

Gone postal error: The computer is pissed that you keep punching the same keys over and over again. When will it ever stop? The computer goes on the web and takes out a contract on you.

Paranoid delusion error: The computer believes that you are out to get it. Electric shocks shoot up your arm when you try to type. And the computer secretly begins to stash weapons and food.

Romantic miscalculation error: Your computer has determined that you don't love it any more and shuts down until you apologize pathetically and buy it flowers (from the Internet).

Impersonation error: The computer has detected that you are using someone else's computer because you couldn't get your own computer to work. All computers will now stop working for you and the foolish friend who lent you theirs.

Metaphysical error: The computer has detected that you doubt whether Bill Gates is God. You are condemned to eternal damnation in computer hell. No computer will ever work for you ever again. You are excommunicated from the Internet. Die digital scum.

These are just the ones we've heard about. Write us and tell us the latest that you've heard. But, PLEASE, only handwritten notes through the U.S. mail.

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