



IT (under breath): "How DO these radiologists put their shoes on in the morning? PICNIC."

IT Part Deux: Yes. I Tried Turning it Off.

C Douglas Phillips, MD, FACR

"Idiots emit bogons, causing machinery to malfunction in their presence. System administrators absorb bogons, letting machinery work again."

—Charles Stross, *The Atrocity Archives*

Mr Stross hit the nail on the head. Most of us cause our own IT malfunctions.

Have you heard the term for radiologists who kill IT? PICNIC, meaning "problem in chair, not in computer." Now maybe we didn't know that asking our PACS to pull up an image was wrong, but at that time, it was. And the system rewarded you for asking it to do something it didn't want to do by shutting down.

Here's the scenario:

Your system fails. Something isn't working. You want to dictate, and the system tells you that you don't have a microphone, which is disturbing as you sit there with a microphone in your hand. So, what do you do? Well, I'm pretty sure I know what you do. You turn the damned thing off and back on again.

Reboot. Reboot. Reboot.

Why is it that with computers we have to start using the magic numbers again? I always do everything in threes now, not that it should matter. Some weird superstition.

But it's still not working. Hmm... time to call IT.

Me: "Hi, my workstation isn't working."

IT: "Did you reboot?"

Me: "Of course. Three times."

IT: "What's the tag on the system?"

Me: "The what?"

IT: "The tag. It identifies it. Bottom of the CPU."

Me: Silence.

IT: "You've got to turn it over. Bottom of the CPU."

At this point, I am out of this loop. I didn't sign up for this. I usually feign ignorance, or say, "*No hablo inglés*" over and over. Get someone here to fix it.

And what about the times you've been asked to play computer sleuth, like this:

Me: "Hi, my workstation isn't working."

IT: "Did you reboot?"

Me: "Of course. Three times."

IT: "What do you see on the screen?"

Me: "A small blue box that says, 'You have committed the ultimate sin. You must pay penance. Contact the system administrator.'"

IT: "Okay, what I need you to do is go to the DOS prompt, pull up the sysfile, and then go to the network line, and then—"

Me: "What? I can't type. Why do you think I use voice transcription? What's a DOS prompt? What's a sysfile?"

IT (under breath): "*How DO these radiologists put their shoes on in the morning? PICNIC.*"

IT (audibly): "Okay, we will be there this millennium."

Next month, computerspeak for the non-IT crowd.

Keep doing that good work. Mahalo.

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