Frustration   Computer Programmers   Computer Programming   Survey Question

What are some things non-programmers say that frustrate programmers?

This question previously had details. They are now in a comment.

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100+ Answers

Ken Mazaika, CTO, Co-founder & Mentor @ thefirehoseproject.com

Answered Aug 5, 2016 · Upvoted by Ian Hoffman, Computer Science major at Cornell University - I do a lot of personal projects and Terry Lambert, Apple Core OS Kernel Team; technical lead on several projects over 8 years

Non-programmers say **19 things** that frustrate programmers the most.

#16 is probably the worst of them all.

1. "Are we on track?" I never know how exactly to respond to this. Maybe we're "on track" right now to hit the deadline, but what if something happens? We could easily be off track any minute. I don't want to commit to something that I'm not completely confident in.

2. "Sorry, but we committed to this deadline." All programmers hate deadlines. The problems that we deal with can be very complex, so it's often not helpful to commit to an arbitrary date.

3. "You can cut corners if it's necessary." Thanks for giving me permission to move faster. But as you know, I wouldn't be in this position if you hadn't made us agree to such an unrealistic and arbitrary deadline.

4. "There are bugs in the code." There are bugs   because you asked me to cut corners.

5. "I know I'm not supposed to do this, but could you quickly help out with X?" People who aren't product managers sometimes try to go around the system to get one thing done. I'm a nice guy and like to help out, but this just adds more work to my plate and makes everyone else less happy.

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6. "Sorry to interrupt you, just had a quick question." It takes programmers about 30 minutes to get in the groove, so breaking for 1 minute to help someone else get what they need can actually set me back a half hour.

7. *Taps me on the shoulder* If you sneak up behind a programmer who is in the zone and tap them on the shoulder, you could initiate a flight or fight response. It's physically jarring and dangerous for all parties involved.

8. "Not sure if I fully understand the problem, but how about we do this…" It's impossible to propose a credible solution to a problem that you don't understand. Programmers are problem-solvers, so they appreciate it if you take the time to dive into the problem before offering a potential solve.

9. "My heart tells me that we should…" It's a programmer's job to make rational, fact-based decisions. So it's upsetting when emotion becomes part of the decision-making process.

10. "This should be easy." Fixing problems with code is never as easy as it seems.

11. "I need a status update" If the client's site is down, and it's my job to pull it up, I'm clearly in a high-stress situation and doing everything I can to fix the problem. I understand the need to keep the client updated, but if a PM interrupts me to ask about the status, they're actively preventing the problem from being solved.

12. "Please A/B test the size of this button." I'm all about testing stuff so that we can learn. But is it really worth a day's work to test an 80 pixel button vs an 85 pixel button?

13. "But it's just a checkbox!" Oh man. One time, this PM decided that we needed to add a checkbox during the last stage of a project. He framed it up as an "easy add-on" and clearly didn't have much respect for the complexity involved. This was frustrating.

14. "What happened? I thought we were ready to launch." Often, you think you're ready to go, only to realize that there is a show-stopping bug (like having 1-2 characters off) that will set you back a few days. It happens, and when it does it shouldn't be treated as a huge surprise.

15. "I know it's late in the game, but we need to change X, Y and Z." There's nothing more demoralizing than requirements that constantly change.

16. "I have this great idea. If you build it, I'll give you X% in my company." Programmers are not "idea people." We're executors. We tend to see far more value in the execution than the idea, so the best way to gain our respect is to build the MVP of your idea yourself. If you do that, then I'm interested.

17. "This isn't what I wanted." General, negative feedback doesn't help solve the problem. As a programmer , I need specific points in order to make the necessary changes to give you what you want.

18. "C'mon man. It's Friday. Let's play some ping pong." Sometimes, programmers love this. But other times, I'd rather just finish shipping the feature that you're asking me ship.

19. "We need you to work the weekend." I only have to work the weekend because I spent hours playing ping pong with you instead of actually working.

Programmers aren't all that different from anyone else. We appreciate it when people do 3 key things:

- Respect the complexity of our work

- Provide us enough time to get it done

- Give us the space we need to do our best

Most non-programmers understand all of this, and I've enjoyed working with the majority of the non-technical people that I've come across during my career.

So, what's the best way to make sure that you don't frustrate a programmer? Just be a reasonable, respectful human being. It's usually that simple.

*I recently learned **one key piece** of programming advice from a **13-year-old hacker**, and I wrote about it here:* **8 Minutes of Programming Advice From a 13-year-old Hacker**

If you liked my answer, I'd really appreciate it if you upvoted it by pressing the light blue button below.

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DM Fraser
Just now

The non-tech guys seem to just love doing feature creep. Then wonder why either the project is late or we snarl at them. This happens in hardware design to. No dammit, I cannot add another switch AND make them bigger and nicer looking and ship on time.!

Reply

Randal Lanning, Computer Programmer for 30+ years.
Jan 8, 2017 · 6 upvotes

I worked for a contracting company where the salespeople would negotiate with the customer, come up with a fixed dollar amount and number of hours and then tell the programmer it had to be done in a certain amount of time. They got their commission regardless and we'd get penalized for going over...(more)

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László Márai, CTO, 'been Programming for 30 years, mentoring & teaching
Sep 25, 2016 · 1 upvote

Pretty cool list. I'd like to refute your response on no 16 ("**"I have this great idea. If you build it, I'll give you X% in my company. -** Programmers are not "idea people." We're executors..."**"), though.

Some programmers are idea people indeed. I know, because I'm one of them. And I have also launche...(more)

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Rafiq Maniar
Aug 5, 2016 · 119 upvotes

As a developer turned entrepreneur, the fact that these things frustrate programmers frustrate me :)

I think it's important to realise that there's a bigger picture than whatever it is you're coding. The solution you're developing isn't the goal; the goal is to complete a business objective.

To add...(more)

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> **Don Johnson**: Fully agree, I think almost all these points can be summarized by ...

Mark Flory, I'm an old software developer so clearly I have no idea what I am talking about

Answered May 31, 2016 · Upvoted by Ido Moshe, Full stack web development for over 18 years and Marcelo De Zen, 15+ years as a software developer.

"That should be easy."

I hear this a lot.

My immediate emotional response to this is "The fuck you say." I honestly don't care if it is easy, they should not be saying it. They are in no place to evaluate the easiness and the hardness of anything. They are almost always wrong.

What is often the case is that the things they think are easy are hard and the things they think are hard are easy. It kills me how often they look at me with serious, pleading eyes and ask "can you, is it at possible, please dear sir, would you be able to change that icon to cornflower blue?"

Just as I am smirking to myself they drop on:

"And calculate the number of atoms in the universe...while you are at it."

Insert obligatory xkcd(xkcd: Tasks   ):

Usually the thing they want. They thing they have already written off as completely trivial. That thing. That thing is the wrench that messes up the whole works.

Now, if you are talking with non-developers just in general, then it is:

"Hey, I have this great idea where you do all the work and I sit over here and supply the idea and we will both make millions of dollars."

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Shubham Singh Tomar
More like: "Hey, I have this great idea where you do all the work and I sit over here an…

3 more comments from Max Loh, Jordan Joseph Lewis, Vikas Arora

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Anonymous
Answered Jun 25, 2016

I just could not pass on this question without dropping some cringe worthy war stories of my own, which when remembered, still have me shaking my head. I have been programming for a while now(about 6+ years professionally) and I have heard most of the popular ones already listed below, such as:

- This should be easy

- Just do this real quick

- This shouldn't take long at all

- e.t.c

But I come bearing gifts of some esoteric expressions I have heard non-programmers direct at me. Some were just comedic, others set my blood to a slow boil and others still, had me emitting steam from the ears. All these experiences are with a certain internet based recruitment and employment service company for which I am Lead Developer.

- I had made the uncharacteristic(and looking back now, ineffectual) decision to arrive at work some time before the official opening hours(all in a bid to get some work done). And I was chatting up a

certain comely lady in the sales department, when some other sales lady said this:

- **"There is no internet, why don't you go do your work and fix the internet"**

- **You are in tech right? What exactly do you do for the company? At least Mr. A(another developer) fixes the internet(basically switches off the router and puts it back on when our Network Engineer is not around) sometimes.**

- This was said to me by our Vice Presidents of Products after I had been working on integrating a particularly fragile payment technology for 2 weeks:

  - **What's taking this long? Even Mrs X(our product manager who couldn't write a Hello World application if her life depended on it) can do this.**

- **"How do you understand all these gibberish on your screen?"**

- **"My phone is not working, can you help me look at it?"**

- **"I don't see what the big deal is in what you guys(the developers) do. Isn't it just a bunch of insert statements into the db? Now if you were doing AI......"**. The above is credited to the same Vice Presidents of Products who made the number 3 statement

- This was said to me by the Vice President of Sales & Operations. He apparently had overheard me earlier commenting to a colleague about setting up our ElasticSearch server cluster and the indexing program to index records from our db:

  - **"Miss A.(a sales representative) has made XY amount today, how much have you made? You spent the whole day configuring a server".** This said in a "jovial tone" of course.

- **"Nothing is working"**

And my personal favourite; a variant of the "Nothing is working". Between a customer service personnel and me(the developer), a sample conversation of how things usually play out.

Customer Service Personnel(CSP): A customer just called, she can't xxxxxx(take a particular action) with the web application

Me: Really? So what exactly happened when she tried?

CSP: I don't know

Me: Did she get an error message?

CSP: I didn't ask

Me: What part of the application was she when this happened?

CSP: Really didn't ask

Me: Did you log in to the customer account from the Admin backend to confirm?

CSP: Yes I did, and it was working

Me: So what did the client say was wrong with it exactly?

CSP: Client said it wasn't working

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DM Fraser
I have to always come back with "Did you ask them what is was or was not doing to get...

B.F. Caffrey, 20+ years programming. Profanity is the language I know best.
Answered Aug 13, 2016 · Upvoted by Marcelo De Zen, 15+ years as a software developer.

Can I get back to you on that? It's highly frustrating to work on a project or request and find you need the user to answer a critical question and they blow you off every time you call or visit their office. Then they get mad their software will be late.

We just sold this feature to two customers, can we do this in [x] days? Nothing builds stress like having your marketing group (or the VP of marketing) sell some fancy feature, service or report to the customer then calling you *after* the contract was signed to tell you *We need this feature and it has to be ready at the first of next month!* It's worse when they didn't even know if it could be done *at all* before committing the company (and programmers) to delivering it. At one company the director of VP did this to us *twice.* After the second time I told my boss that the staff wanted to give this director had a new title — *the deceased.*

Do you have a moment? I just have a quick question. Yes, the questions are usually quick, it's the answers that are long and complex. If this only happened once a day it wouldn't be a big deal. But when it happens five times in 90 minutes it's maddening. We not only have to program but also sometimes help troubleshoot a helpdesk call or be available for the departments we cover if there is a problem.

Can you give me a rough-estimate timeline for this project? Asked by your boss about a mere project *idea*. The "specifications" are 4 bullet points in an e-mail he received or he's referring to a 3rd party software package we'll have to install, configure, test and release. He may refer to the estimate as a "SWAG" (Scientific Wild-Ass Guess), claiming he wants "to get a feel" for the size of the project. This kind of request never ends well. The first problem here, of course, is he's asking you to build a boat to get a lawn mower across a stream 20 yards wide but the end project demands a boat that will ferry a 70 ton M1 Abrams tank across a 15 mile wide frozen lake. If you give him an estimate unsupported by a

project plan or other documentation ("6 weeks") when approval is given he holds you to that rough estimate timeline. On the other hand, if you do some research, create a project plan and Gantt charts that indicate 15 weeks the boss will discard those to tell you it has to be done in 8 weeks or by a certain date. Sometimes I suspect these bosses are one reason for workplace violence.

Can we have the system "automagically" ... No. Anyone using the term "automagically" hasn't thought through the ramifications of their request. It may sound fairly trivial but the actual work is monumental. At one company, a national retailer, the request was for the labor scheduling software to reduce staff whenever it snowed or there was "heavy rain" because fewer people go out to shop in bad weather. You can imagine how fun this would be for over 600 stores scattered around the country. At the time there were no nicely formatted data feeds from any weather service so it would depend on 600 store managers entering forecast data every week. What could possibly go wrong?

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👤 **John Geare**, studied at Dickinson College
Answered Jun 26, 2016

Let me qualify my programming experience before I answer. Although I learned BASIC back in the day, and was later handy with JCL, PROC, Pick and some high level database tools, I was never versed in the serious, fundamental languages such as C and variants, source code, or the others of that ilk.

But I knew enough to be the "go-to" guy for many people in the company where I worked, and 90% of what people wanted was something I could handle. This was good, because most users could get "take-out" service, from me, and the real programmers could focus on what they were doing. It also helped me translate what users wanted into appropriate terminology if a real scratch program was required.

Here is the frustration "hall of fame:"

Asking for what ain't: Department manager wants a list of all client auto licenses (tags) sorted by state. Problem is, the database does not includes that data, so I can't produce it. But still, MIS get the blame.

Moving target: The initial request is satisfied; the green bar output provides exactly what was requested, presented in the requested format. But then the manager realizes that this does not tell them what they really want to know. So they revise the request with some new requirements. But, alas, when fulfilled, the new report doesn't tell them what they want to know, either, so we wash, rinse and repeat until the end user decides that MIS is incompetent.

I know better than you do: Believing that they are possessed of magical abilities to extract useful information from mere data, end users refuse to be guided by warnings about the possible flaws in the conclusions they may draw from the reports we produce. When their presumed capacity to draw meaningful conclusions is shown to be wrong, guess who gets the blame?

This also applies to selection of hardware, in which the user, who has read something in a magazine, somewhere, assumes that he or she is an expert and therefore controls the selection of hardware which is totally unsuited to the task at hand.

Failure to indicate desired use or purpose of a report: Hard to describe this, so I will use an analogy to make the point. Let's say that you want to put on a dinner party for 50 guests. But you write the grocery list to indicate the number of cans, jars, packages or units of the items you want. Problem is that there are various sizes of all these units, and various types. "Turkey" can mean the whole bird, or a frozen breast, or deli slices of turkey. It would have been more productive to have indicated the desired end result, and let the programmer then ask questions which lead to specifications. But the end user will blame MIS for the result the end-user doesn't like.

What? You can't read minds? Very close to the above item, this refers to the end-user's belief that what they did NOT specify explicitly should have been discerned by the programmer, anyway. "I didn't know that is what you really wanted" is not a defense; the programmer _SHOULD_ have known.

I could go on, but I believe the above 5 frustrations are painfully familiar to many.

But I will issue a caution, here, as well. The spread of computer related technology has had the inevitable result that a few people who are skilled in coding or programming are also well possessed of business, sales, management and people skills; a few of them have become famously successful. But that's just a FEW of them. Unfortunately, many people who are very talented in technology seem to think that the success of the well publicized few means that all who are handy with the technology are also skilled business people, when they are NOT. The evidence of this is right here on Quora, in such questions as, "I want to be a successful entrepreneur - should I go to a coding boot camp?"

The mere asking of such a comically flawed question suggests the answer.

My 2 cents.

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Steve Pye, 25 years of software development and business programming
Updated Jun 26 · Upvoted by Daniele Paolo Scarpazza, PhD in Computer Engineering.

My worst experiences with non-programmers usually has two repeat elements:

1. **_Can you just_**…

2. **_Why don't you just_**…

The first issue starts off with someone asking for something that is seemingly simple to them ("can you just…") but in reality, is tremendously complex. I can't give them a technical answer, because they have zero technical knowledge. But when the person I'm talking to is a paying client, stakeholder, supervisor,

company executive, or someone with a controlling budget, I'm forced to give an explanation because they need to weigh it against ROI, valuation, or opportunity costs.

This often results in trying to explain complex technical issues using analogy or metaphor. In so doing, I get the point across, but then they try to solve the problem—as though I'm incapable of it—thereby compounding the abstraction by trying to solve the metaphorical concept. This results in them responding with "why don't you just..." as though I'm completely daft and never thought of that. But this often destroys the metaphor, because I didn't use an analogy for the purpose of solving the problem, I used it to explain the situation. They think they're being helpful by solving at an abstract level, but all they're doing is compounding their ignorance and forcing me to come up with an even worse analogy.

Some examples of this pattern:

- ***Can you just***... show their account information in the checkout?

  - Answer: "Yes, but not easily... the account information is in a proprietary database behind a firewall, and the website is hosted in the cloud. We'd have to create an API into the back end system. Kind of like building a bridge between the website and our database, but it needs security, so more like a controlled-access bridge, which would require more effort. It might take a month or more."

  - Response: "Well bridges are for crossing rivers, and computers don't have rivers between them. So ***why don't you just*** skip the bridge by just putting the database on the website?"

- ***Can you just***... move our customer data from that system to the new one? We'd like the new system in place next month so we can train everyone.

  - Answer: "Our customer data is our custom-built system, and the new system is an off-the-shelf product. They're not compatible. We'd have to completely restructure the database or build conversion scripts. It will take months. It's kind of like trying to stick a gasoline car engine into a diesel car and expecting it to just work. They're not compatible. We can do it, but it's a ton of work, and it won't be done in a month."

  - Response: "Well even engines follow basic patterns, and use standardized parts, so it can't be that difficult. Didn't you design the custom database correctly in the first place? ***Why don't you just*** use Access to get the data out, and push it into the other one? My nephew can do that. It's just data."

- ***Can you just***... change the forms to go straight into our database instead of emailing us?

  - Answer: "Yes, I can, but the site was developed by a third party and they used a custom form tool that they have the only license to, I don't have access to their code, and we're using email as the receiver because we don't have an API to connect to our database. It would be

like trying to make your iPhone control your microwave by just making a wire that plugs into the phone and the thermostat jack inside the microwave. We'd have to know how the systems on both ends work, and both devices would have to understand each other. We'd have to spend research time on that and see if it's possible. I don't know how long it will take."

- Response: "Well, I need it for next week, and you're making this too complicated. If the third party developed the site, then they must know how to do it. **Why don't you just…** outsource it?"

That last one is the worst. It assumes that because you're asking for something that you don't understand and you're too impatient to wait (or you failed to plan ahead), you think a third party can do it faster because we're too dumb to just make the magic happen.

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Karina Człapińska, Project Manager at Neoteric Software Development (2017-present)

Answered May 2 · Upvoted by Sandy Perlmutter, computer consultant for more than 30 years, from COBOL and IBM assembler on.

I am working with over 30 programmers for over a year and during this time I collected some things that frustrate programmers. And I really try to avoid them.

1. The biggest nightmare of every programmer is that someone interrupts him when he is in a process of solving the problem (worst case scenario: he just found a solution and the **interruption** made the thought disappear like a popped soap bubble). A huge amount of what a programmer is doing is in his head. When he is writing code, he needs to think how parts of the application that have already been written interact with the part that he is writing at that moment.

2. Programmers hate **boring tasks**, so tasks that don't let them use their full potential, and things that are repeatable – writing components or features that are very similar to what they've been doing for another project.

3. Programmers from my company are really frustrated when they have to use **time trackers**. It is related to their own sense of freedom and privacy. Tracking how long they work on each task seems to give them a feeling of being kept under surveillance.

More information can be found here: What do programmers hate? 10 things to avoid when working with developers

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Sandy Perlmutter, computer consultant for more than 30 years, from COBOL and IBM assembler on.
That captures it really well.

Chris Johnson, Developing software for 10+ yrs. in C, C++, Java, Python, PHP, JS, and more...
Updated Oct 14, 2016

After reading most of the answers here and considering my very own experiences through the years, I'd break it down to the really most annoying and irrational words I personally heared way too much in my career:

"But this should be really easy. This shouldn't take much time to develop."

Every time I heared this, I just asked myself:

Why can people without any knowledge in software development, espacially completely non technically oriented people, claim that they are definitely able to estimate the complexity and amount of time of a development task?

Immediately after this, I often smile and laugh to my inner self because I have to imagine how it would be if everyone of us would show this behavior in everydays life on any situations. Imagine those situations like me, as a software developer, I would ...

- tell the doctor performing a surgery on me, that it is easy fixing my heart with a by-pass and it won't take long

- tell the mechanic that disassembling and reassembling the engine of my car is so easy and it shouldn't take long

- tell the grocery store employee, that placing the 4 tons of delivered wares in the shelvings is that easy and it shouldn't take long

- tell the architects and construction supervisors, that building my new house is damn easy and it shouldn't take any time

- tell any random mother around me, that raising a baby and providing it food and safety and a warm home is just damn easy and it shouldn't take long for it to grow up

...and so indefinitely many more.

Twisted reality.

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Ashish Samal, A beginner at Programming, but loves it nevertheless
Answered Jun 11, 2016 · Upvoted by Daniele Paolo Scarpazza, PhD in Computer Engineering.

This happened while I was in my 3rd year, Computer Science. As part of our curriculum, we have to take an Open Elective subject, that's one which is not from our branch. I ended up with Cryogenics from Mechanical department.

So one day in class, the projector did not start. Our professor gives the lecture as powerpoint presentations, so of course he was unable to proceed with his lecture.

After trying for about 15 minutes, he asks, **"Can anyone please fix this? Any computer science students?"**

Me being one of the 4 CS students there, he looked right at me. Further, the person sitting right next to me, a 3rd year chemical engineering student, pointed his finger right at me. I looked at my fellow CS friends, they all had an expression like -_- -_- -_- .

The professor asks me, **"Can you please fix this?"**

I replied as politely as I could, "Sir, I don't know how". Instead of "Dude... CS students don't fix projectors."

I hate it when people associate CS engineers with everything that's related to computers.

Also, this has happened so many times that I cannot count: people associating something I did with being a computer science student.

Like, this one time, some guy had a problem with his windows laptop. As you know, windows has lots of bugs that can be fixed simply by restarting. I don't remember what the problem was, but I do remember that I fixed it by a simple restart. So this guy looks at me and says, "CS guy after all..."

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Nick M, 15 y/o app developer
Answered Jun 6, 2016

As a programmer going into high school, people come to me all the time with horrible ideas that (a) are impossible or (b) would require a crapload of work. In return, they offer me between 10% and 30% of the (nonexistent) profit. What gets me here is that, once they tell me the idea, they are worthless. They can't share the coding workload, they have no connections, and no money. Somehow, they think the idea for a business is worth 90% and the product is only worth 10%. Then when I decline their offers, I'm labeled a jerk. I usually tell them to go learn to code themselves and send them some links to tutorials and docs. They then decide that they hate it, and assert that they are "idea people." *Insert disgusted scoff/glottal stop here*

P.S. My favorite idea that was pitched to me was "an app that lets people share battery power over Bluetooth." Yes. Battery. Over. Bluetooth. While I'm at it I might just launch a quest to find the holy grail and swim to Atlantis.

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Shaunak Bhattacharjee, former Intern at Tata Consultancy Services (2017)
Answered Jun 28

1. ***Why don't you code something and build an app like Ola or Uber?***

   Even if I wanted, even if I had the idea, I couldn't. You cannot make such an app single handedly. You require a team of experienced individuals. And a great app is developed through stages. You cannot expect an excellent app to get developed overnight!

2. **Can you develop a game like GTA V or Counter Strike?**

   Man! I am a normal guy with two hands and 10 little fingers. Developing such a game requires huge amount of time and a good number of experienced and dedicated individuals working tirelessly for months on it. I did develop a few games in college but they are not of your GTA V type, Sorry! In that case if you think I am dumb, go ahead!

3. You shouldn't ask a programmer to ***repair your computer or laptop***. We are programmers. We develop softwares. If you need to get it repaired, call a mechanic. At most we can help you figure out where the problem is, but sorry, don't ask a programmer for repair works.

4. ***Oh! You code? You must be rich!***

   No, not everybody. It takes years and experience to be financially stable. Not a piece of cake.

5. ***You work at this XYZ Company? Can you help my niece get a job at your company?***

   I am not a job-giver. I am a programmer. And my company is not an NGO. One should get the job based on his/her potential. At max, I can help your cousin or relative to get an internship if the company has an internship program through referral method.

| | Add a comment... | Recommended All |

Akhilesh Balachandder, works at Amazon
Updated Aug 8, 2016

Top Lines you would hear as a programmer from non programmers :

1) "Its not working. Please fix it."

2) "It stopped working. Please fix it."

....

and various similar terms related to something not working. This is one of the most irritating aspect of being a programmer when one says something is not working without any additional details.

One day one of my clients said, "The Website is not working", I asked them what happened and was panicking as I had just completed the project and all the testing process and it was working fine. They said the page didnt open up. I hit the URL myself and well it did open up for me. After an hour of debugging into CNAMES, DNS stuff and also calling their domain name and hosting provider, we came to the conclusion that the client had typed in the url wrong. Needless to say I never took projects from them again.

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Randy Zeitman
"Needless to say I never took projects from them again."...

1 more comment from Jason Fletcher

Frank Taylor, Certificate Computer Programming & Front-End Web Development, University Of Phoenix Online Campus (2015)
Answered Jun 2, 2016

There's so many...

"That's wrong", "it's broken", "I don't like it" :

I can't stand this. These are all subjective terms; they don't communicate actionable issues.

- I don't know what, "wrong" means,

- nor do I know what "it" is if it's broken,

- and if you don't "like it" then... what do you want me to do about it?

Programmers need specifics, because we fix specifics. Try saying, "that's the wrong font size", "the form doesn't submit when I click submit", or "I don't like the colors."

"This should be easy"

relevant XKCDs have already been shared, I'll just elaborate:

- The easier it is for you to do, the harder it is for a computer: speaking, listening, understanding humans, comparing images, recognizing voices. Were you able to do it at birth? Then grab a snickers, this algorithm's going to take a while.

- "easy" compared to what? Throwing a tennis ball? Learning Mandarin? You don't code, you don't get to decide what's easy in my profession.

- Do you always insult someone's intelligence/profession? Do you go to the doctor and say, "this should be an *easy* triple bypass?"

One time I was asked to take color data pulled from a camera, put a circle on a web page, and make that circle's color the dominant color that the person was wearing... but it had to be one of the company's 6 branded colors. That's right; I

get any one color of 16,777,216, and I have to match it to one of 6. The company told me this was "easy". I quoted 60 hours for the color matching, 10 hours for putting circles on a page.

"Can't you just [obviously simple thing] "

Nope. I can't *just* [].

- It's not *me* who does it; it's the computer

- My job is *telling the computer what to do*

- Computers speak terrible English

But, this is because people foolishly think...

"Computers are so smart"

No.

No they aren't. They're incredibly dumb. Computers think in 1 and 0; they have a vocabulary of exactly two words. No one thinks this way. **No one**.

By comparison, the average 4 year old who still doesn't have the good sense to pick his nose *before* he picks his butt knows 5,000 words. And 5,000 words is between 40 and 50 times the size of *any programming language*.

Mind you, *we have programming languages for our programming languages*. And when the language for the language is too hard, we make a language for *that*.

Computer scientists bend over backwards to make it easier for us to talk to a machine that won't give a metamucil-assisted shit whether it were a paper weight or a flight control system.

Everything that a computer does *right* is because of a whole slew of brilliant scientists and programmers figured out the right way to communicate their instructions.

And everything that a computer does *wrong* is because it did *exactly* what those idiotic scientists and dumbass programmers told it to do.

Over 99% of the time, a "bug" is a bug because a programmer, somewhere, made a mistake. But...

"Computers can't do that [*weird thing*]"

I once saw a Commodore 64 where $7 + 3$ was 11. It was the only machine amongst 20 that had the inclination to cockblock a 7 and a 3 summing their values the way the good Lord Jesus intended.

You can tell me all day long, "it *[can't, isn't supposed to]* do that."

It did.

Don't tell *me* what it can and can't do. Tell *it*.

The life of a programmer isn't as much *arguing* with a computer about what it can do, but accepting what it will do.

"Can you fix my..."

No. Take it to the geek squad.

"Would you take a look at..."

Nope.

"My printer is..."

Going to be set on fire if you ask me again.

28.2k Views · View Upvoters

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👤 [Add a comment...]　　　　　Recommended **All**

👤 Dave Davies, Designed & wrote software - and hired programmers - for over 25 years
Answered Jun 10, 2016

There are many, but the ones that stand out are:
-- When I could solve a problem over the phone and had to do an onsite visit to discover that the client had been sticking the data floppy disc to a filing cabinet..., with a magnet.

-- When we wrote a very complex program for analyzing silviculture and the client wanted a discount because "it's so easy use - why do you charge so much?"

-- When we were commissioned to write a package that would inform city EMT/ambulances which hospitals had beds available..., after they were inbound after picking up the patient. It had to connect to all Emergency Rooms in the district in real time, using satellite uploads and downloads because wireless data transfer hadn't been invented yet.

We spent two years on it before it was cancelled - the client (a Healthcare branch of the government), bot only didn't want to pay for the most recent update.., they wanted us to return the entire amount paid to us, "because we're not going to use the system."

-- When, after many occurrences of corrupted data and long-distance tech support of the remote client's site, I asked her to send me the data. she agreed and mailed me a Xerox'd copy of the "data".

She had thought it through, though - she noticed that the disc's label said it was a double-sided data disc, she sent us paper copies of BOTH sides of the floppy.

(OK, that one was more funny than it was frustrating.)
Dave

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👤 Aleksander Wisniewski, Senior Software Developer
Updated May 31, 2016 · Upvoted by Marcelo De Zen, 15+ years as a software developer.

Most frustrating is someone saying that something is easy, because it looks easy or sounds easy. Minor changes in application look, like item spacing, layout. "Minor" changes in application behavior, like "You have to add one button, that is not hard!", but doesn't account for logic behind that button. "Minor" logic changes, that undermine basic principals used by your engine. Everything that sound easy, but requires lots of work.

To sum it up in a bit abstract way:

- Just change this car's engine. It's just one part, that is not hard!
- That is great! Now, can you add a button, that will make this car fly?

- Well, this (finished) apartment looks great, can you make door 10cm wider?
- Wow, the wider door look great, but now make them rotary.
- Ok, now make them automatic.
- Well, rotary door was bad idea, get back to normal door, but still automatic. You have to install new automatic door engine? I have paid for old one, I will not pay for it again!

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Robert Walker, Writer of articles on Mars and Space issues - Software Developer of Tune Smithy, Bounce Metronome etc.
Updated Aug 11, 2016

Well I'll share a few opening sentences that tend to make my heart sink a bit as a programmer. I'm an independent software author so I don't have any problems with others telling me what to do, but often get requests from users. I've found ways to work with this over the years, so it's much easier now than it was. But I used to get many frustrating questions, and still do sometimes.

1. **It's not working** - and then when you ask for details they don't answer and expect you to solve it without knowing what the problem is. Still get this sometimes. Usually I manage to get details eventually but it can take quite a few messages back and forth. It's understandable but frustrating at times.

2. **It's working now** - sometimes good news, but not if you haven't fixed the bug yet. Users have a different perspective from the developer. As a developer, if you can't reproduce the bug yourself, you are dependent on them to reproduce it. So - especially if you've spent maybe several hours or days trying to fix a bug, and have nearly got there - narrowed it down to a few lines of code perhaps - then suddenly the user says "it's working now" and no longer is interested in reporting back and helping you go through the last few steps to find out what really caused it and fix it - it can be quite frustrating. You just have to wait for someone else to report it to continue the debugging. That happens much less often now because I've got much better automatic reporting from the program, so long as they send me the necessary data on request.

3. I **know how you can fix this bug** - when users say that they almost invariably are wrong. They haven't written the code, and I wouldn't be able to say that to another programmer even, if I didn't have the code. Sometimes you can see how to fix a bug right away. But if not, it's often a bit like trying to solve a mystery in a detective story - it's almost never the culprit you thought it was. If you can't see it as programmer right away it is very rare for the user to see it somehow.

   Unless of course it is something unusual about their machine e.g. "I'm using a third party shell for all the windows" - that was the answer to one rather strange user interface bug - the menus were buggy, they couldn't see some items - because they had a non standard third party shell that was displaying the menus in a slightly different way, (I forget the details now). It took several messages back and forth before we figured out that it might be due to their UI shell - it's the sort of thing people tend to install and forget.

   That sort of thing is very useful to know as of course you can't know that without being told. I found a work around for them in that example. I installed their preferred UI shell on my computer, duplicated the bug, and then played around until I found a solution - I added some extra spaces into the menu item names which had no impact on other uses but fixed their issue - it was a workaround for a bug in their UI shell basically.

4. **I've got this great idea for your program** - sometimes it is a good idea but often it's something like e.g. - a text editor that plays a different note for each letter typed (okay made that one up) - Now that I have a wish list, this is no longer a "sinking feeling" type email or message. Instead it is quite fun now, I just add it to the wish list and they are satisfied by that also, and from time to time I implement some of the ideas. Bounce Metronome Pro Wish List   And the user never has a clue about whether there idea will be easy to implement - sometimes astonish them by doing it in a few hours - or next to impossible - something that seems dead easy to do for a user may be a one or three year project for a team of a dozen developers, as in this xkcd cartoon.
   xkcd: Tasks

WHEN A USER TAKES A PHOTO, THE APP SHOULD CHECK WHETHER THEY'RE IN A NATIONAL PARK...

SURE, EASY GIS LOOKUP. GIMME A FEW HOURS.

...AND CHECK WHETHER THE PHOTO IS OF A BIRD.

I'LL NEED A RESEARCH TEAM AND FIVE YEARS.

IN CS, IT CAN BE HARD TO EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EASY AND THE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE.

1. **This idea is so great it's going to earn both of us a fortune:** I get this from time to time, maybe once every few years, not t...

(more)

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👤 | Add a comment... | Recommended All

👤 John Panos, Programming since 2012.
Answered Jun 3, 2016

As a programmer in High School, there's a plethora of dumb questions that kids ask me everyday. I can't remember all of them, but I'll try to remember the ones I've heard.

Hey can you hack my grades because [dumb reason here]

No, just don't be a dumbass and study.

OMGGGG I hate this one girl can you hack her Instagram and say something dumb????

No, that's illegal.

I have this best idea ever. It's a game set in World War II, but John Cena is there and [dumb story line that would never sell]. If you make it I'll give you 20% of the profit.

Are you dumb? I wouldn't even do it for 100% of the profit.

Can you make this website for me? It's like Instagram and Snapchat combined!!

Just use Instagram and Snapchat separately...?

Can you make an app for me? I only have $5.

Come back with more money and a better idea, then we will talk.

Can you hack PayPal for me? I spent all my money on CS:GO.

Dumbass, don't spend money on virtual things.

My iPhone isn't working. Fix it.

Go to the Apple Store. I do software not hardware.

How do I get better FPS in Minecraft?? I have a Dell computer. Is that good??

I thought we were in High School...

Can you unlock this phone I found? I'll give you $10.

No, give me the phone and I'll find the owner.

●●●●● AT&T 4G   1:24 PM   ◄ 45% ▬

‹   izzyasm   ⓘ

November 29, 2015 at 6:06 PM

izzyasm

Hey can you do me a favor? You are good with electronics right?

yeah why

izzyasm

What's your Kik I will tell you there

I don't have one

but i'll make one

izzyasm

No it's fine, what I need is for you to unlock a phone can you do that

I will give you like 10$ 😂

⊙ Write a message...   ♡

....and many more I can't think of right now.

40k Views · View Upvoters

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Nick M
I know the struggle XD. People come to me all the time with horrible ideas that (a) are ...

3 more comments from Peter Kirby, Jordan Joseph Lewis, Jason Monnis

Okoko Michaels, I program, I code
Answered Jun 25, 2016

fyn

abeg dis una developer na which type

Software developer

9:02 AM

can you do that for forex trading

No

ok

tanx

just yahoo yahoo ba

All the apps you use on your phone, na yahoo yahoo be that Abi?

Type a message...

Aa   [O]   [image]   ☺   GIF   ⬇   ○○○   👍

Came across the above picture on Twitter and it pretty much sums up the attitude of non-programmers towards "people who spends too much time with computers" - especially in Nigeria. Mind you, yahoo yahoo is the generic Nigerian term for what the world calls Nigerian prince scam. And the conversation is pretty much like:

Non-Programmer: So what really is this developer thing?

Programmer: It's about software.

Non-Programmer: So you can code Forex predictions and stuff?

Programmer: No

Non-Programmer: Oh, I get it. It's just scamming then.

Programmer: So all the apps on your phone is same thing as scamming eh...?

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Robert Brown, Engineer/Team Lead/Project Manager
Answered Jun 1, 2016 · Upvoted by Daniele Paolo Scarpazza, PhD in Computer Engineering.

Almost anything to do with dates.

Everyone assumes that things like today and tomorrow are easy to define. But in reality when someone says I'd like the report to show everything for today, many times they don't really mean 00:00:00 to 23:59:59, they mean some fuzzy idea of what today is, and computers don't do fuzzy easily. It may mean from 8am to day +1 at 8am or, as I had one client finally tell me, "It's from midnight till midnight unless it goes over midnight, then if the run started within an hour of midnight and ended after an hour after midnight then it's on the next day."

"Can you make it bigger but not so cramped". Fixed screen size, they need all the information on the screen but need the font bigger without losing any of the already cramped display. UI is fun...

"That will never happen". When asking if a corner case needs to be considered. As soon as I hear that statement, I know it will become an issue. Especially since it's usually followed up a month later with "Well except maybe in this one case"... Example. Everyone gets paid for a full day of work no matter what. So we code the system to only care about days worked and have no facility to track hours. Then shortly after they start using the system. They complain that they can't schedule their custodians because they sometimes only work half a day and they can leave early etc etc.

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Aaron Mefford, Software developer, systems architect.
Updated Aug 29, 2017 · Upvoted by Ian Hoffman, Computer Science major at Cornell University - I do a lot of personal projects

I was just going to do a simple list, but then I got going.

"The Internet is down!" - Your wifi might be down, your connection to your upstream provider may be down, their connection to their upstream provider may be down, a large segment of the Internet could possibly be down (doubtful), but the Internet is never down, it cannot be as it was designed to never be down.

"It crashed!" - Is it really so challenging to be precise? Ok leave precise alone, why do I have to pry the information out of you in order to help you. Shouldn't you be doing everything possible to give me the information I need to help you? What crashed? When you say crashed what do you mean? The program closed, the computer blue screened or the computer was driving down the highway the wrong direction and hit an oncoming motorist head on. Crashed means a lot of things to different people it is a bit more specific to a developer, but the non-programmer seldom understands well enough to use it correctly. Just tell me what happened with as much detail as possible.

"Is it possible to . . ." - Pretty good chance, unless you are asking me to break the laws of physics, so what is your real question? Could you perhaps ask that instead (unless it is how long would it take see "How soon will it be done")? Maybe try, "How hard would it be . . ." or "Would it be reasonable to . . .".

"It's broken now and I didn't change anything" - If you didn't change anything then how do you know it's broken? The mere act of using a program changes something, though that doesn't typically break the code, but you did change something. What really matters is that totally innocent game you installed because you were bored while I was working that you think I don't need to know about, that you don't want to tell me about, that is really a very malicious piece of malware now eating your computer alive because you installed it with administrative privileges because it is too inconvenient to have to type a password occasionally to modify your computer's configuration. Or that directory you didn't know what it was, so therefore was unimportant, that you deleted when you were trying to clear up space for your torrented movies. That might constitute a change.

It seems people have a fundamental misunderstanding with computers, that they can somehow execute the same code with the same data and do different things a different times. The computer is a fancy calculator, code is a series of button presses on that calculator. If you calculator told you that 2*2 is 4, would you expect a different answer after entering those same button presses one hundred thousand times? Not me. However the computer is a complex calculator capable of much more complicated math that 2*2, and because we do not understand all the math we assume that the computer is doing it differently sometimes than others. It is not, something has changed if the results are different. It isn't fair to leave the developer guessing at what you changed. The number of times I have lost an entire day or more to finally figure out what the user changed, then to hear them say "Oh yeah, I did that, did that matter?" Yes it matters.

"I have an idea for ..." - So do I. I have dozens of ideas right now, everyone of them is a potential million dollar idea. Yeah I should have executed on them, and I should be rich right now, but I had some bills to pay. There is never a lack of ideas, execution is the problem. Frankly, why haven't you learned to code so that you can implement your idea? It is not rocket science. Here is the real kicker, if I did implement your idea, if I did all the work, made your idea a reality, you would expect at least a 50/50 split. I have been offered splits of 99/1 or worse in the ideas favor, and had the other part offended when I politely declined. Really, who contributes more, the contractor or the architect? Finally, most "brilli...(more)

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     Max Loh
     "Digitally enhance that image so I can read the license plate"...

3 more comments from Ryan Burnette, Alexander Hartdegen Lee, Christopher Hattery

---

Roberto Previdi, Software Developer (1989-present)
Answered Apr 5

A frustrating thing is when they (usually your boss) think that a program is just a collection of features, one over the other, and that you can insert, delete and modify each feature independently with little effort.

If you write a demo with some features in two hours from scratch, it could very well take weeks to insert the same features in an old, big, complex application, and sometimes it could even be impossible without rewriting big chunks of it.

That's because while some features are actually independent, the most interesting ones often requires to use a library that can conflict with others, or different versions of the same one, or maybe you can stimulate parts of the applications which were poorly written and with the new code they create bugs, or multithreading issues, or many other complications.

170 Views · View Upvoters

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Saen Kazak, Fixes all the computers at school when they break
Updated May 22, 2017

"Programming is irrelevant"

No. No. No, it's not.
In twenty years time the world will need to know how to use computers and programming. In England, the government is trying to get kids inspired into programming. It's not irrelevant, it's really, really relevant. In fact, everyone should have some idea how to program.

Most programming is just logic anyway...are you seriously trying to tell me that learning logic is irrelevant and unhelpful?

"How do you know all this stuff?"

Through experience. And because I practice. Years and years of sitting at a desk typing lines of code into notepad and IDEs and getting frustrated when it doesn't work.

"Go outside and play some sport."

I hate it when people say this. I just *hate* it. This is the *worst* thing you can say to a hardcore geek. Look, I run like a duck on steroids and I can't kick a ball for shit. Just give me a break, OK? I'm doing what I enjoy, staring into a computer screen for six hours. Becoming myopic, if that's how you want to put it. Whatever.

And I play badminton. Happy now?

Sometimes I sit at my computer for hours. Sometimes whole days. I'm doing stuff, geeky stuff that other's don't understand. And if that's what makes me happy, so be it.

2.1k Views · View Upvoters

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Richard Leddy, Have been programming computers more than 35 years.
Answered Aug 4, 2016

Mistake programming for art. Yes I did signs for a coffee shop once. But then, I was hanging out there writing programs, so I deserved it.

Lady Gaga asked me if I did recreational programming. And I said I didn't. She said that was good for me. That was because she comes from a family with computer people in it. And, she knows of a certain dysfunctions programmers are apt to have.

I come from a family with a lot of theater and performing arts people in it. So, I have had to sit through long discussions at holidays about why people who study math are somehow dysfunctional personalities. My own mother does not know the difference between types of programming, so she and her supportive friends suggest different types of jobs in which I have know interest or can't begin to get into because only certain show offs can get int he lab door.

I once met that guy from Myth Busters who said he was a physicist. OK. More of a stunt man type. And, pretty good with basics. But, more of TV guy. So, the conversation got cheery about music. He said he referred to specialists in areas like signal processing, etc. And, he is all pimped out with that. So, no job possibilities there.

But, most of the stuff above was fun.

No, the worst thing is when you talk to head hunters who know nothing about programming. So, you need a job and you are talking to this friendly person who doesn't know the difference between a robot and an issue tracking system. They take your time, the lead goes nowhere. And, yes there are a lot of jobs I would just take, because I need to make some money. And, now I have had a year of this awful state of affairs. I hope I can still get a cup of coffee next week.

So, basically the last paragraph was about being "niced" into abject poverty.

Many of my employers have been beyond belief idiotic. And, I could have made some of them rich. But, shoot the programmer before your ego has to be challenged.

Once I had a nice mom and pop team of business starters. Right. Very nice folk. They had some difficulty paying certain fees that a shop charged them if we had to take time to fix bugs. Not, that any testing was done before introducing the software into the shop. So, they gave me a nice stock certificate as payment. Then they closed their business. Like they were really poor. The lady of the team had her living room remodeled once every week. TRUTH! New paint, carpet, furniture, everything. They were both plowing money into the house. The man did a lot of the work himself - kitchen, garden, bedrooms, and on and on. But, they couldn't really pay me for my time. And, they didn't have time to do all the work on their own business. !!!

And, that nice couple really was nicer than a collection of my employers because they did not try to use my body for sex. How many times has that happened? Four or five times. When I was young and attractive, athletic man, not tall, OK. So, people hit on me, including my employers. But, I thought that would go

away. So, San Francisco is a place where you have to watch out. So, in the last five years, now that I am older and overweight, I would say that sex interfered with work in two to three companies at varying degrees. Two companies that I was lead to by otherwise respectable head hunters had pornography or imprisoned sex offenders in the founder circles. And, many of the people those founders hired were had similar interests. And, the tech had problems. People who like these situations like the sweatshop bull pens for the mixing of people. People who like these situations see technology development as a way to pay bills, just a job. And, they don't value good programmers. So, you will get bad words from other programmers.

So, I am still a christian. Still mostly celibate, but would like to be married. And, I like the opposite sex. What is wrong with programming and computers that you get so many freaks? Or am I just unlucky?

So, programmers keep getting kicked around.

So certain things said:

"Just program something and I'll decide if I like it or not. I'll know when I see it. So, I don't have to write a specification."

"I have come up with a different way to pay you."

"Can't you just do this for equity?"

"Nobody is ever going to know that I took your idea." (Give away bad ideas unless you have a reason for someone else to do it for you.)

"How dare you suggest that I read something to do my job!" (A lady said this shortly before I was fired from this on-line programming community based out of Utah. These people were ripping off everyone. The lady was a pretend manager. Never studied a bit of management, but knew how to wreck people's lives.)

"We only hire the best here." (OK. This was most often said to me by people at O'Reilly and Associates. I lived in Sebastopol. And, there were times I needed a job. You won't get one from them. But, it's that off hand way of saying that "I don't really know you or understand you, but I am sure that you are not good enough to kiss the ground I walk on." But, really, I am one of the best. And, who are they to say? But, they are not alone in using this putdown.)

"You've already been walked out of a lot of places." (One of those Indian managers who went to one of those phony schools in New Delhi. So, if you want to challenge his BS ideas he threatens to fire you. And, yes I have been walked of place with sex problems, people who keep accounts all wrong, sweat shops. I still don't have to take sexual harassment, bad bookkeeping, false projects, sweat shops, etc. So, yes I have spoken up and gotten fired more than once. But, I have quit more than I have been fired. Simple fact of life. No one has to work for bank robbers and prostitutes. And, no one has to work for some jerk who wants to use bad relationships with such people to hard ass you into some sweat shop slave.)

I was fired for incompetence by a woman who walked the streets of San Francisco in the nude. She had a fix and release schedule that made no sense.

She had no idea about testing. But, she always had a tone of voice that sounded efficient. She was being paid a lot of money for seeming to be efficient. She even got to work early and left late, like she was into her job. But, I don't think she had any feelings. She was quite strange. Usually people on drugs seem to be without emotion. I was put into her organization by a man who professed to be a Christian (born again or some other type). You might guess that writing one of the fastest classification programs on the planet earth had little input into her decision about who and what was competent.

I am only glad that I have not been taken out and killed. There were organizations where that was a worry.

People want the programs. But, they don't know what that program is, how big it is, where it lives, they way it works, all that. They are supposed to get money out of it. But, it doesn't happen fast enough. So, blame the programmers. Say stupid things. Threaten them. Withhold pay. And, we can be happy to stay alive.

So, one of the most frustrating things someone said to me was: "If I don't think I'm gettin' any respect I'll take you out on a boat and throw you in with the sharks." That seemed like a joke at first. But, soon after I started to get a little worried. But, luckily the guy thought he wasn't getting enough respect, so he threw me out on a 100F day with pouring rain in Florida, and called the cops to have them move me off the property (not his property). I was glad the cops came, because they helped me retrieve my computer, with my intellectual property on it. And, a good Samaritan got me a plane ticket back to my home. And, to think that guy wanted me to create Xfinity for him for $20 a day with rotten food from Walmart for lunch. What's weird is that you think back and think about how close you were to getting such a creep his first workable product.

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Anonymous
Answered Oct 15, 2016

One day, in a meeting with a project manager from one of our clients:

"InfoSec department contacted me. They say that the HTTP requests contain sensitive information, so they shouldn't be sent in plain text. I want you to take care of this."

There is no sensitive information that is sent over plain HTTP, but fucking customers are always right, right?

"OK, it's doesn't seem very difficult, I think we can do this using…"

"Anyway, I know how to do this. You just hash the request body using md5, send it that way, and then de-hash the request body on the server side. This is so easy, you can do this in a day."

See? When you are a non-programmer, you can do everything, and that includes claiming that **implementing custom encryption is so easy** and **it can be done in a single day.** Better yet, it's even easier when you **use a hashing algorithm, md5 in this case, that is built to not have a way to de-hash.**

I wish I also had been a non-programmer (not really, but yeah). Then I could go around, spilling this shit everywhere I go, and yeah. So much fun overall.

Dear non-programmers who are reading this shit: I wrote this shit because you can read it. When you read it, you can go to the meetings and tell people to de-hash md5, claiming that it's so easy, so that you can frustrate more programmers. At the end of the day, you're getting paid to frustrate the programmers, right?

Better yet, if one programmer doesn't know the fact that md5 is un-dehashable and tells you that he/she will look into it and contact you back about whether or not it can be done and how long it can take, you can hold him accountable to the fact that he didn't say "no" on the spot, let alone insulting you, and make him invent the inverse function of md5 (or quit his job, which seems much more possible and probable).

Thank God, I knew md5 has no inverse function at the time of the meeting. We used an insecure way of encoding the request body and that was good enough for their infosec department.

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👤 Joe Gu, I still like to be called as programmer, this will make world much easier.
   Answered May 31, 2016

Sometime always be asked like following

1. You know how to program, you must be good at computer, something is wrong with my PC, help me to check it.

2. You know how to program, you must be a hacker, just help my to get this one's social app password like QQ etc.

3. You know how to program, you must have a lot of free online resource, like movie, music and book.

4. You know how to program, you must know many tricks, here is a online draw lots URL, I want to get the reward, help me to go around the quiz.

5. You know how to program, you must be an engineer, help me to plug in the bulbs at my home.

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Claudia Slowik, Marketing geek at Neoteric.eu (2015-present)
Answered Mar 13

"Since you are an IT guy…"

Programmers are NOT the IT guys. Extra hint: Java developer won't help you
with JS on your website.
Even though they all work with computers, it does not make them an
omniscient computer specialists. It's like asking a dentist to do a surgery on your
heart only because they are doctors.

**"Since you are a programmer, can you fix my
laptop/printer/phone/TV/washing machine?"**

That's not what a programmer does. Programmers may work with computers
but it doesn't give them the ability to fix all possible electronic devices.
Especially if it's a hardware problem.

"Can you make this one small change really quickly?"

Except that it's not a small change. It's a freaking huge change that requires to
rewrite half of the application.

"The internet is not working"

With 99.9%, the internet is absolutely fine. It's your router. Or your wifi card. Or
your internet provider. If for some reason the internet was down, it would be
probably caused by some large global cataclysm, and I'm pretty sure that no
access to your email or Facebook would not your biggest problem then.

"Let's have a meeting to discuss it!"

And another one. And another one. And one more. And… why haven't you fix
that last bug yet?

"We're out of coffee."

This does not require any comment. Instead of saying that, simply sneak out
and buy some before they realize it themselves.

**"Oh, so you are a programmer. Can you make a new website for my
company? It's easy for you."**

Yeah, because that's what programmers do… Especially when they can do it
voluntary, without being paid.

"Why is it taking so long?"

Because it has to. But feel free to do it faster. I'm sure that every programmer will
appreciate the chance to learn how to do their work better.

"I have a killer idea for an app!"

Well, good for you. Come back when you will have market research done, when
you validate your idea and find an investor (or another source of funding).

"Hey, do you have a minute?"

There is nothing wrong with this question - as long as it's followed by something important. Otherwise, it can turn out to be a cruel murder of a flow.

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👤 Baraka Andrew, I just code
    Answered Jun 3, 2016

So many, some people told me "**if Facebook is making billions, why dont you make a clone and be a billionaire"** aaagh! I always tell them Facebook has thousands of engineers working on the same thing. They all think only Mark builds Facebook.

Another one "**that video chat feature, you are copying skype, come up with your own ideas"** its just one feature out of many, so we shouldnt have video calls on other apps just because skype has video calls, aaaagh?

Another guy told me when i made a music app "**that black and red color, stop copying Youtube**" then I told him but youtube app is white and red, he was like, they still look the same. He didnt even bother to see what features I had in the app that makes it unique, changed my colors later into blue then he came back "**now it looks like Facebook**" wtf?? We now need to come up with magical colors no one has ever seen just to look unique!

Nowadays I mostly ask for opinions from developers first before anyone else, they simply dont know how hard it is to do something.

And the ones i dislike the most are those who tell me to **make an AI** like the one they see on hollywood films. They cant even sit down and ask themselves why no one has done it until today despite there being massive companies like Google, Microsoft and Facebook working on the same thing.

"**I have an idea for making a search engine thats better than google, do it for me and you get 20%"** is it just ignorance or does someone needs to be admitted to mental institution?

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Lynn Sherwood, lives in Ottawa, ON

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David Moe, former Business Analyst (1970-2007)

Answered Fri

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