

# PUTER RROR ORIES

## Murphy's Laws rule technological realm

BY KRISTI DAUGHRIDGE  
STAFF WRITER

Life in the age of computers is supposed to be so much simpler. All we have to do to write a paper now is type it into a computer and save it onto a disc, and we can recall it anytime we want. No problem, right?

Wrong. Once in a while, at the most inopportune time, something has to go wrong. Blame it on Murphy's Law or call it rotten luck, but if someone uses a computer long enough, more often than not they are bound to have a terrible experience with it.

Many UNC students will attest to this fact, and some of them have agreed to share their computer horror stories ...

### Mysterious math symbols

Katie Haynie, a freshman elementary education major from Apex, North Carolina, got quite aggravated with her dorm computer one night.

"I had already typed half of it and went to go back and save it. When I pulled up the file there were just a bunch of division signs where my text used to be. It did it twice, then I typed it on my friend's computer."

Needless to say, Haynie was less than pleased.

"Since I can't type I was pretty pissed off," she said.

### Hungry computers

Sophomore Amy Glenn of Scotts Hill, became very frustrated one night as she worked on a paper in the Ehringhaus computer lab.

Glenn, a Spanish/Latin American studies major, said, "I was

typing an anthropology paper. Our computer lab has been on the blitz several times lately. It had been freezing up off and on, but then it would just keep going.

"Then all of a sudden it blinked and my paper was gone. Every-

So I went to Carroll's lab and tried it again. Finally the second time it came up, so I printed it and saved it on another disc. It's still a mystery to me what happened."

**Save early, save often**  
Freshman Tammy Chapman

Asheboro, lost his paper when the power blinked. He, like Tammy, had not yet saved it.

Korey said, "The computer beeped and a little screen came up and showed a picture of a little bomb, and it said 'bus error'."

"I had to shut it off and turn it back on, and I didn't get my paper back. I had to retype it with not notes—it was basically out of my head."

He added with a sigh, "That was the '6' paper I'll never have. That paper was perfect. I ended up with a '4' instead."

### Computer lab confessions

Alicia Steadman, a senior industrial relations major from Yanceyville, and Junnie Chung, a senior biology major from Jacksonville, work in the computer lab in Venable.

They remember in particular a time when all of the Macintosh computers went down.

"People who hadn't saved their stuff lost everything," Chung said. "People need to realize that computers aren't 100 percent reliable. They need to save often as they go along."

### Technology avoidance

Or they could always do what Eric Riggs, a freshman radiological science major from Mt. Airy, does.

"I try to avoid computers as much as possible."

"Then all of a sudden it blinked and my paper was gone."

—Amy Glenn, sophomore

body was just looking around going, 'What happened? Did it eat your paper too?' Most of us went over to Hinton James to do our papers."

### Unrecoverable disc error

Charlotte native Chad Zavodny was working on a group project when his computer horror occurred. Zavodny, a junior business major, had typed a 16 page paper for a group presentation into a Venable lab computer, but he could not print it out.

"The computer told me it had an error and couldn't read the file on the disc, so it wouldn't retrieve it. Somebody at the information desk told me I'd have to go to User Services.

"Before I did, though, I decided to check it out at some other labs.

said she didn't get too mad when she had a computer problem. Chapman, an RTVMP major from Angier, said that it was partly her own fault.

"I typed my entire paper and was ready to print it out when the computers locked up, and I hadn't saved it yet. They had to turn off the whole system, so I lost my paper. I should have saved it but I didn't. I ended up staying until 3:30 redoing it," Chapman said.

### Bombs and buses

Tony Korey, a freshman business administration major from



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## ts might rescue lost papers from ivision, but miracles not guaranteed

Madden said the center provides the following computer services:

- software conversion, such as converting a file on an IBM word processor to a Macintosh word processor;
- recoveries of lost files;
- consultations about both applicable software and operating systems;
- computer purchase consultations;
- CDROM searches, which allow access to 15 months of back issues of 45 different computer magazines;
- use of two scanning machines, which turn printed documents into computer files;
- and, free distribution of shareware, such as screen savers and virus checkers.

Madden said User Services does not offer site-visits and does no kind of hardware repair.

He added that the most common services provided by the center are software conversions and file recovery.

Those clients who call by phone should not expect immediate service.

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Madden said all phone consultations are on a call-back basis, where the name and number are put into a problem-tracking system.

"Callers are called back in the order received," Madden added. "We usually call back within three hours."

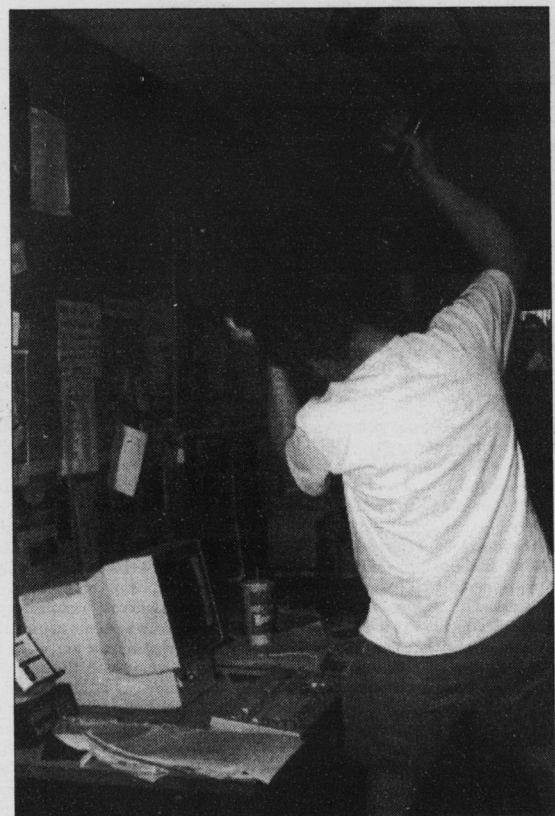
Madden said the center was founded in 1982 by the UNC Office of Information Technology.

Madden stressed the importance of

saving any file on several different disks at different location. He also encouraged users to read the manual before calling user services.

"We consider it a valid answer to direct a caller to a page in the manual," he said.

User services is open 9-4 Mon. through Fri. The phone number is 962-3601, and the E-Mail address is Micro\_Help@UNC.EDU.



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