

"Do you think it will make a noise or just go quietly?" Asked her nibs.

"I don't know" I said. "I can't imagine it doing anything if its not turned on."

"Well I'm not going to have it sitting here where I can see it if its going to have a slow agonizing death" she said.

I agreed and dragged the unit from the family room into the less finished half of the basement. What in the world are you talking about you may ask.

Its a long story.. You recall several months ago me saying we were going to go modern, compete with grade 1 students and acquire a computer that could surf the internet.

We did. After much reading of very confusing ads, consulting various 'knowledgeable' people and trying to understand their confusing comments, reading a number of 'anyone can understand the computer articles which added more confusion and visiting a number of retailers with their equally confusing sales pitches, we decided to just do it.

As I packed the computer scanner and printer into the car, I asked the young technician about assembling the units. "Your lucky" he said "You bought IBM and they colour code most of their connections. Purple round pin in the purple round hole" and a smile suffused his face. I didn't detect any malice in his grin, but I couldn't be sure.

Home we went and the assembly began. First we disconnected Valerie's Compaq 286 portable and Raven printer she's been using as a word processor and began to place the new units on its stand. Suffice it to say, aside from the maze of wires and the realization that a new desk was required, when I turned on the power the whole thing worked.

Over the next few days, we bought a desk and rearranged the units, tried some successful scanning and printing, got generally familiar with what was included as software, bought a book - Windows 98 for busy people - which seems quite helpful although it assumes a background knowledge and skills we don't possess in many instances; proceeded to register various things and attempted to

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obtain an Internet Service Provider.

Oh there were lots of free offers with Windows, but again, on the advice of friends I contacted simpatico My sudden flush of being in the thrall of instant electronic answers crashed when they said - we'll put the package in

the mail today. You know what happened! It took two weeks to arrive that being the Thursday before Christmas. I was desperate because my son and his wife, both computer literate for years, were arriving with the two grandchildren on Friday and I wanted to be at least on the web with an E-MAIL address.

I made it. Over the Christmas season I learned some stuff by watching my son do various things. One doesn't discuss much with him since as a teacher he lacks considerable patience and questioning at any length usually results in a tremendous lowering of your already precarious self-esteem.

It was he who issued the warning however, that we were discussing at the beginning of this article Valerie's old machine, he assure is was going to die at midnight December 31, 1999. If she had anything on the machine that she wanted to keep then it should be taken off and transferred at least to the new machine.

To add anxiety to this impending death we were laid low

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