Overheard

• Remco: You measure the sexual excitement of men with a ruler and of women using conductivity.

A Viagra by any other name

In pharmacology, all drugs have a generic name: Tylenol is acetaminophen, Aleve is naproxen, Amoxil is amoxicillin, Advil is Ibuprofen, and so on.

The US Federal Drug Administration has been looking for a generic name for Viagra, and announced that it has settled on Mycoxafailin. Also considered were Mycoxafopin, Mydixadrupin, Mydixarizin, Mydixadud, and Alimpdixafixit. And of course, Ibepokin.

String theory

I can't believe people are so sceptical in this forum. Speaking of string, this really happened. I swear it's a true story:

A piece of string goes into a bar and orders a drink. The bartender says, "We don't serve string in here." The string walks out, dejected. Then he has an idea. First he ties himself into a bow and ruffles the top of his head, leaving stray bits of string waving about. He walks back into the bar and orders another drink. The bartender asks, "Hey ... aren't you that string I just kicked out of here." With a shake of his head the strong replies, "No, I'm a frayed knot."

CCP4 complaint (1)

Dear Dr. Rage,

I would like to strenuously complain about the dangerous programming practices used by the CCP4 team. CCP4 has long had a history of producing fatal errors, but in the past the victims have been adult crystallographers taking informed risks. It is quite another matter when our youth are mown down in their prime. Imagine my horror when I received this message:

#CCP4I TERMINATION STATUS 0
"Child killed: bus error"

Mrs. Ira Hark

Dombo e-Journal

E-ditorial board:
Harry Markis & Dr Rage (Ed)

E-Copy to: dombo@xray.bmc.uu.se
E-Phone: busy  E-Fax: out of paper
E-URL: http://xray.bmc.uu.se/dombo

Dombo Top 3

The Top 3 of Nothing In Particular:

(3) Worst spelling of a Dumbo editor's name: Gerhart Kleiwglt
(2) Text on T-shirt: "At the cellular level, I'm really very busy."
(1) Joke: the Washington sniper returns home after a loooong day at work. Asks his wife, 'How was your day, hon'? Replies the sniper, 'I missed you!'

Miss Understood

Misunderstood song lyrics, part MCMLXVIII: anonymous - Bananarama - 'I'm your penis, I'm your fire, your desire' turns out to be: 'I'm your Venus'.

I met Lassie (1)

GK was almost run off his socks by Harvey Keitel at JFK Airport. Or rather, by the electric cart that transported Mr Keitel. (In fact, GK was so taken aback by the familiarity of Mr Keitel's face that he almost greeted him.)

I met Lassie (2)

GK visited New Zealand in 1986 and spent some time in a little town called Pukerua Bay. Years later he saw a quasi-auto-documentary of Peter Jackson (Lord of the Rings), who turns out to have grown up and gone to school in ... Pukerua Bay. He may well have lived there even while the G-man was visiting!

CCP4 complaint (2)

Dear Dr. Rage,

Further to my complaints about reckless driving by those bloody commie programmers at CCCP4, I now find that there was another victim of the bus crash, who was apparently injured and thrown into a nearby lake, judging by the latest news flash from cccp4i:

Stop. Floating invalid.

Dr. Mrs. Ira Hark.
Jones TA [AU]

Of course, we all know T. Alwyn Jones as the author of many papers describing protein structures or methods to determine such structures more easily or better or faster. However, a PubMed search for “Jones TA [AU]” reveals that his accomplishments cover many more fields of science (some of which seem to be related to sheep ...). A selection:


Babelizer

Babelizer is a cute little Mac program that takes an English sentence, and then uses one of AltaVista's translation servers to convert it into a different language. It will subsequently translate it back to English, and then back into the other language, until the English sentence doesn't change anymore. The results demonstrate how poorly automatic translation software still performs.

We fed it the following sentence: "RAVE is a software package that can be used for averaging, solvent-flattening, and manipulation of masks, maps and reflection data sets."

Translating it into German gives: "RAVE ist ein Softwarepaket, das für die Mittelwertbildung verwendet werden kann und Lösungsmittel-flächdrücken, und Handhabung der Schablonen, der Diagramme und der Reflexion Modems." Translating this back into English gives: "RAVE is a software package, that for the averaging to be used can and solvent photolithographies, and handling of the templates, the diagrams and reflection modem."

Once the process has converged, the English sentence is: "RAVE is a software package, which, so that the averaging box and the release used the optical lithographies and the treatment of the templates, which are diagrams and reflection the modem."

- Doing the same, but via French, we find: "The PRAISE is a software package which can be employed to made the average, solvent-flattening, and handling of the masks, the diagrams and the modem of the reflexion."
- Via Italian: "The RAVE is a package of the programs that can be used for having means, the dissolved-spanionatura and the manipulation of the templates, the programs and the insieme of the reflection data."
- Via Japanese: "The range is influenced the ability namely the side of the repayment which it has in regard to confusion, the reflection which is processing of the data set of the mask namely the map it meaning that that does the thing of the software package because of possibility, that that is, evenly used."
- Via Korean: "To for one average the fact where criticizing it means one the criticism which is a production a thing which will go and a solution force RAVE and a possibility and a software packing, a map and a reflection data set will be used."
- Via Spanish we get the fastest converging (but still poor) result: "The DELIRIUM is a software package that can be used to do an average, reliable-flattening, and manipulation of masks, maps and modems of the reflection."
- Via Portuguese we get the most reasonable (almost comprehensible) result: "The RAVE is a software package that can external part be used calculating the average, solvent-being uniform, and the manipulation of the masks, the maps and the series of the data of the reflection."

Conclusion: don't use automatic translation software to read manuals!

By the way, if we take the first paragraph of this piece ("Babelizer is ... still performs") and go through Japanese, the result is: "In regard to the order to the next another language correction the English sentence of the small mac program is taken lovelily one as the Babelizer which is used for the translation server of the altavista. To already namely it does not change to other language to the English that of the English sentence, to that that it continues the next that, translates. Is thing show the result, imperfectly, how the automatic translation software quiet?" We could not have phrased it better ourselves!

Top 8 on Swedish TV

The top 8 (fairly) funny TV programs to watch when you have little time and only Swedish channels 1, 2 and 4:

(8) Michael Moores USA [=The awful truth] (FRI; SVT2)
(7) Bokcirceln som slutade läsa [=The book group] (TUE; SVT1)
(6) Vita tänder (SAT; SVT2)
(5) Värsta språket (TUE; SVT2; repeated SAT and SUN)
(4) Parlamentet (SUN; TV4; repeated THU)
(3) Six feet under (SUN; SVT2; repeated SAT)
(2) Hipp hiph! (THU; SVT2; repeated SAT and MON)
(1) Coupling (FRI; SVT2)