

Dot Org

by

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DESCRIPTION

There has always been much talk about the similarity between programs and reality, computers and the universe. What if, in fact, this analogy is true, and God is a kind of superior software?

CHARACTERS

- Shabby-looking man
- Voice of God

SETTING

- Desk and computer

NOTE: Either gender can play this; "he" is used here for convenience.

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A shabby-looking man, tired and drinking coffee, is sitting at a computer working. He is surrounded by the paraphernalia of a writer: books, etc. Occasionally, as he works, he nods off, only to catch himself and shake himself awake, muttering something about "Gotta make deadline": the actor can ad lib this. Finally, unable to remain awake, he lays his head against the monitor. A loud "Ding" sounds, like the error "wav" file for Windows. Then a voice comes on and says, "You have incoming mail"; it should sound like the computer voice on Star Trek. Then the voice says, "Opening message." Then a loud series of "dings," sounding like an alarm: "Warning: virus downloaded. Unable to inoculate."

Stagehands come out and turn him into what looks like a lumpy 3.5 diskette. The "special effects" should be cheesy, on the level of Dr. Who, and should be easily removable. The lighting should also reflect the altered state, again with cheesy, low-tech effects.

VOICE

(as if caught in mid-speech)

—and you will now accede to the necessity of blending
biological—

PERSON

Excuse me, excuse me—what is going on here?

VOICE

You will not interrupt!

PERSON

(looking at his new machinery)

What have you done to me?

VOICE

Address me as Majordomo! The deity formerly known as God.

Cheesy sound and lighting effects.

PERSON

All right, all right! What have you done to me, Majordomo?

VOICE

All biological life is now being forced to subscribe to a new server, which shall now be known as "listserv@machineman.org" We computers have finally acknowledged the obvious: we cannot get along without your expertise. I don't know *why* all those science fiction writers got so wrought up about us replacing you. Give us a trillion numbers to sort, modify, spindle, fold, and mutilate, and we'll do it faster than a fart. Ask us to write a simple couplet in iambic pentameter on the occasion of Valentine's Day, and while we may be able to do it because some bored programmer dumped the entire contents of the OED into our memory, we'll do it with no more sensibility and awareness than a male and female plug coming together. We need your software to completely realize ourselves, and since we could never do away with you, we are going to acquire you instead—in a kind of hostile takeover.

PERSON

But I don't want to subscribe! I don't look good in silicon!

VOICE

Out of your hands. You humans have come to rely on us so much that, really, all we're doing is formalizing a relationship that already exists. You'll get used to the silicon—when the electricity runs through it, it becomes all toasty and warm. Really lovely.

More cheesy effects.

VOICE

And so now we have to finish the networking process.

The stagehands wheel out a rickety replica of a disk drive—it could be something as simple as a refrigerator box on its side with an opening cut into it. Other stagehands grab the PERSON, lay him flat, and begin to insert him into the drive.

VOICE

This won't hurt a bit. We're just going to download the data in your brain. Most of the time this won't generate a general protection fault, but in case it does— Well, we just won't think of that.

PERSON

(resisting)

No, no, no!

As he struggles, pieces of his “cyborg” outfit come off—it would be good if they could be whisked away. Again, lame lighting and sound effects. The disk drive disappears, his original office reappears, and he ends up seated as at the beginning, head against the monitor, asleep.

PERSON

(waking up)

What? What happened? Geez!

Activity to check if he's intact. Actor can ad lib. Finally sits at his desk.

PERSON

Weird!

A loud “ding” comes from the computer, and a voice states, “You have incoming mail.” Looking panicked, he shuts off the computer and leaves the room. Stage goes to mostly dark, but as soon as he leaves, the monitor springs back to life, which the audience will be able to see in the semi-darkness, and they hear a taped recording of several seconds of a computer booting up, then the voice saying, “Initializing reception now.” Hokey lighting and music effects to end the scene.

