11 Tithe us your Alms of 0day!

from the desk of Pastor Manul Laphroaig,
International Church of the Weird Machines

Dearest neighbor,

Do you remember what it was like when you first learned to program a computer? Not when you first realized that you could do it well, but when you first realized that you could do it at all? How did it feel?

And do you remember what it was like when you first learned how to use calculus? Not when you first learned how complicated differential equations could become, but when you first realized that with a handful of rules, you could bounce back and forth between position, velocity, acceleration, and jerk as if they were all the same thing? How did that feel?

And do you remember what it was like when you first learned how to use a screwdriver? Not when you first learned what to do after removing the screw, but when you first realized that with a screwdriver—with the *right* screwdriver—you could take apart anything? How did that feel?

When I was sixteen, I was a bit of an asshole, and I asked my automechanics teacher a question about a distributor's angular momentum. I don't recall my exact question, but I do recall that it was the sort of thing no one could be expected to know, and that, being a jerk, I asked it in the vocabulary of calculus.

Coach Crigger could've called me out for being rude, or he could've dodged the question. He could've done any number of things that you might expect. Instead, he walked out of the classroom while two and half dozen hooligans started a racket audible from the other side of the campus.

Ten minutes later, he returned to the classroom. He walked right up to my desk and slammed a '72 Ford's distributor onto my desk along with the screwdriver to open it. It felt good!

"Don't get excited, Fred! I probably wired the transmitter wrong. It's the garage door that's supposed to go up."

Do this: write an email telling our editors how to reproduce *ONE* clever, technical trick from your research. If you are uncertain of your English, we'll happily translate from French, Russian, Southern Appalachian, and German. If you don't speak those languages, we'll draft a translator from those poor sods who owe us favors.

Like an email, keep it short. Like an email, you should assume that we already know more than a bit about hacking, and that we'll be insulted or—WORSE!—that we'll be bored if you include a long tutorial where a quick reminder would do.

Just use 7-bit ASCII if your language doesn't require funny letters, as whenever we receive something typeset in OpenOffice, we briefly mistake it for a ransom note. Don't try to make it thorough or broad. Don't use bullet-points, as this isn't a damned Powerpoint deck. Keep your code samples short and sweet; we can leave the long-form code as an attachment. Do not send us LaTeX; it's our job to do the typesetting!

Don't tell us that it's possible; rather, teach us how to do it ourselves with the absolute minimum of formality and bullshit.

Like an email, we expect informal (or faux-biblical) language and hand-sketched diagrams. Write it in a single sitting, and leave any editing for your poor preacherman to do over a bottle of fine scotch. Send this to pastor@phrack.org and hope that the neighborly Phrack folks—praise be to them!—aren't man-in-the-middling our submission process.

Yours in PoC and Pwnage,
Pastor Manul Laphroaig, D.D.