



Computer & Network Support  
Accounting & Manufacturing Software  
Medical Billing Services & Software

## **Windows Error Messages: Why 50% are incorrect**

Often clients call after they have gotten one of the many error messages generated by Windows 95, 98, NT, XP, network, printers or servers. Some, like the infamous BSOD ("blue screen of death") do little more than confirm that your program (and possibly the Windows program itself) has experienced a "fatal error" and the program or system must be restarted.

It's very important to take notes on what these messages say, but it's also important to know that they only indicate the true cause of a problem about half the time. The other half of the time they serve as a starting point for finding the real problem.

*EXAMPLE:* When you get an "out of memory" error on a current system, adding more memory (RAM) will probably NOT solve the problem. In Windows, when physical memory becomes full, the system automatically sends chunks of program code out to the hard drive, a process called disk caching. This process swaps these chunks of code in and out of RAM as needed using the whole hard drive if necessary. With most new hard drives sized at 60 GB or more, you would have to fill up RAM and your hard drive at the same time to get a real out of memory error.

Error Trapping:

Actually, error messages are the original programmer's estimation of what will go wrong with a certain section of code that they are writing. He or she is thinking: "If something goes wrong in the next 10 lines, then that's probably an error #4582." This is called "error trapping."

But often, the error trap only reports the last error in a string of events. So if you have a failure, the error message, while a valuable starting point, may have little to do with the real cause.

809 Highland Avenue, Greensburg, PA 15601-4315  
Voice: 724-837-9433 Fax: 724-832-2576  
Email: [bmeyer@bm-a.biz](mailto:bmeyer@bm-a.biz) Website: [www.bm-a.biz](http://www.bm-a.biz)



Computer & Network Support  
Accounting & Manufacturing Software  
Medical Billing Services & Software

“So I got an error message: what do I do?”

Keep track of the message(s) you receive, and what you were doing when they occurred. Call an experienced computer professional (read Bruce Meyer & Associates.) Remember, experience is still the best attribute of a hardware or network technician – you can’t learn everything in school. And now you also know that you can’t believe everything your computer tells you...

Thanks,

Bruce Meyer

809 Highland Avenue, Greensburg, PA 15601-4315  
Voice: 724-837-9433 Fax: 724-832-2576  
Email: [bmeyer@bm-a.biz](mailto:bmeyer@bm-a.biz) Website: [www.bm-a.biz](http://www.bm-a.biz)