STUDENT LIFE

Ask ASCII: How do I get rid of errors?

By Logan Stack
staff writer

Dear ASCII,
When I start up my computer, I get a weird error message. How can I fix this?
- Exasperated

Dear Exasperated,
The easiest way to diagnose any error is to copy the entire message into Google (or your search engine of choice) and see what you can find. If it is a long error, include the first line and the names of any files listed in the message.

Start-up errors are commonly caused by programs which are no longer working because they are uninstalled or the latest windows patch caused them to fail. If that's the case, they may be easy to fix.

If it lists a file as missing or causing an error, locate the file and see what folder it's under (for example, Adobe/Photoshop/problem_file.exe) and tell that program not to start up when Windows starts up. Asking a program not to start can be harder than you'd think.

If you know what the program is, first check "start>programs>start up" to see if your problem program is there, if so you can just delete it. If it's not there, check the program to see if you can alter some setting to tell it not to start. If neither of these options work, you can try using a program called MSCONFIG.

MSCONFIG is a utility which comes with Windows to alter system settings. It is included in every version of windows except Windows 2000, because, apparently, even Microsoft is forgetful sometimes. If you're running Windows 2000, get a copy from someone running a different version of Windows, their program will still run on your computer. Be care-

ful when you're using MSCONFIG, as you can make things worse; only remove stuff if you know what it is and are sure you don't need it.
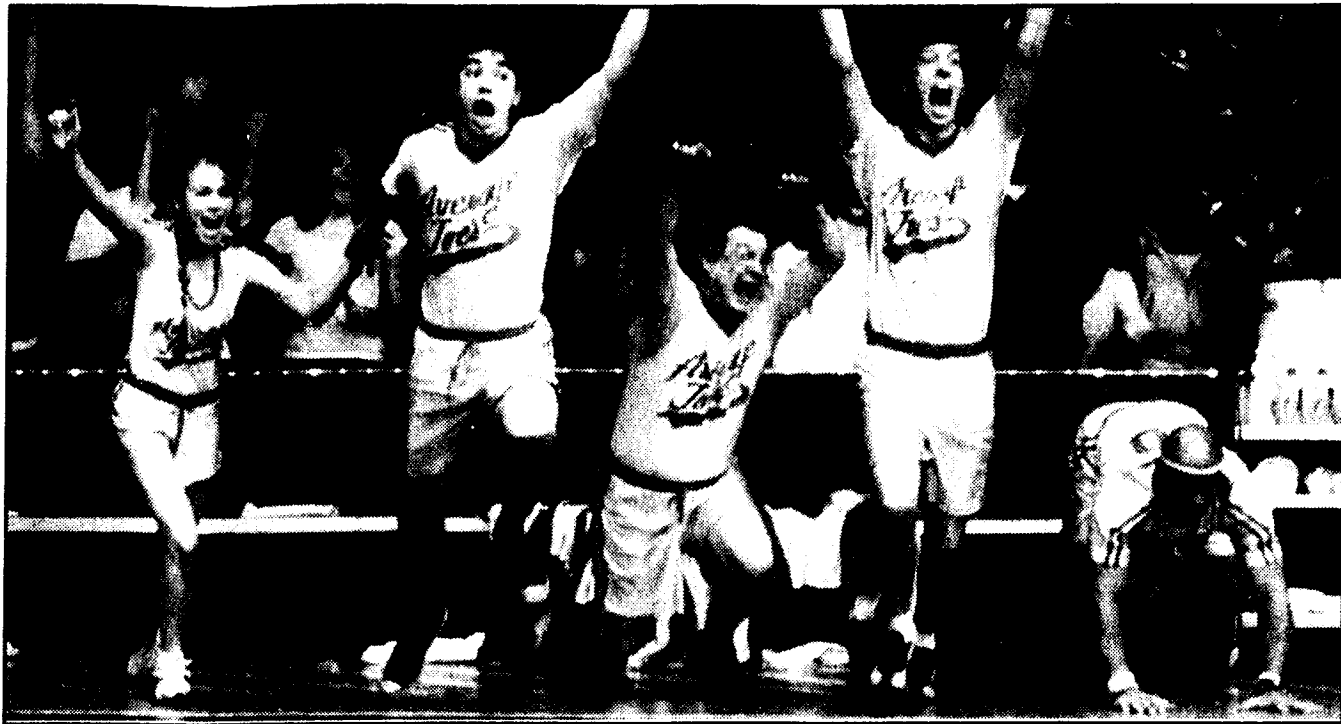
If the error is being caused by a program which you still want to use, there are a few things you can try to do to make the program work. If you installed from CD, go to the company's web site and check it for an update you can download (if that doesn't work, reinstall from the CD and then install the patch). If you installed the program from a download, check for a newer version of the program online. If you've had this problem, a lot of other people probably have too, and it very well may already be fixed in the latest version.

If updating the program doesn't work, try updating Windows; from Internet Explorer go to "Tools>Windows Updates" and download the patches (it will determine which ones you need, you don't need to do anything but click "OK.") In fact, go update right now regardless of whether or not you've got an error, you may be leaving your computer vulnerable to attack. Even if you don't care about getting hacked, do it for everyone else. Many computers are cracked by spamming programs, causing the cracked computer to act as spam-servers, sending out millions of e-mails a day without the owner knowing about it.

If you don't recognize the program causing the error, try running "Ad-Aware" and "Spy Bot Search and Destroy," as the program may be a malfunctioning bit of spy-ware or ad-ware which you'd like to remove anyhow.

Do you have a computer question? Ask ASCII! Send an e-mail to lws118@psu.edu with "Ask ASCII:" in the subject line to get your question answered.

If you can dodge traffic, you can dodge a ball

Vince Vaughn's Peter Lefluer is the owner of Average Joe's Gym in the comedy "Dodgeball." Average Joe's Gym plays against enemy Globo Gym in a dodgeball tournament in hopes of winning $50,000.

Commentary by Nick Hammond
staff writer

"If you can dodge a wrench, you can dodge a ball," says dodgeball legend Patches O'Houlihan (Rip Torn) to a rag-tag group of misfits who are attempting to form a championship dodgeball team. Those words and that moment are far from the funniest part of the film. That is to say this is not a movie that gives every funny moment away in the preview. That would be impossible, because then the preview would have to be nearly as long as the feature itself.

In "Dodgeball," Vince Vaughn plays Peter Lefleur, your typical washed up loser: living in a sloppy apartment, months behind on his bills and close to losing his gym, Average Joe's. Lefleur has apparently coasted by on his looks and charm up to this point in his life.

Vaughn's Average Joe's gym is the direct antithesis to posh gyms like Spectrum, 24 Hour Fitness, Bally's and, in the case of this film, Globo Gym. Vaughn runs his gym for the regular guys. His gang of misfits includes Steve the Pirate (Alan Tudyk), who really thinks he's a pirate; Gordon (Stephen Root), a connoisseur of obscure sports and spiffy workout gear; and Justin (Justin Long), a high school loser who is determined to become a cheerleader to impress the head cheerleader.

Lefleur learns that his gym is in danger of being overtaken by Globo Gym's proprietor and chief motivator, White Goodman (Ben Stiller). The foreclosing bank has sent a pretty blonde named Kate Veatch (Christine Taylor) to look over Lefleur's scattered records and finalize Globo Gym's takeover. When Lefleur learns that he owes $50,000 in back taxes, he is about ready to give up until Gordon notices an ad in his latest copy of Obscure Sports Quarterly for a Dodgeball Tournament where the top prize is, you guessed it, $50,000.

The premise is nothing new. A gang of misfits rises up to strike back against the ultimate opposing and seemingly unbeatable force.

"Dodgeball's" strength is that it is simply not content with resting simply on this old premise. Instead, the set-up serves only as a jump-off point for some of the best and most original humor since directors Wes Anderson and Todd Phillips first came on to the scene.

The cast is pitch perfect, from Vince Vaughn as the reluctant leader to Ben Stiller's ridiculous pumped-up fitness guru. Vaughn and Stiller play off each other so well, with such a relaxed flow to their humor that the laughs they garner seem effortless.

Vaughn has always excelled in this kind of work, perfecting the funny charming guy who really doesn't try

to be funny. He's good looking, cool and he knows it. He pulls off these roles in a way that makes him also work as the hip guy that everyone gets along with.

Stiller has always been genius at creating great characters. White Goodman is one of his best creations. Goodman is funny because he doesn't know he is. He's full of himself and egocentric, but he's also completely self-aware and lacking in self-esteem. He's a loser who tries to hide behind his ripped abs and feathered mullet wig. He's such a ridiculous character that many of the film's laughs derive from his oddity.

Comedies never get the acclaim they deserve. While "Dodgeball" may be a hit, it will never be even a distant thought when it comes to awards. Great comedies are so rare and so hard to make, much more so than they are given credit for. It's time that comedies like this get respect beyond the laughs and the success.

The film is funny and the characters are great. You will walk away from this movie and always remember "The Five Ds of Dodgeball:" Dodge, Duck, Dip, Dive, and Dodge. Overall, I give this movie a rating of 5 out of 5. Make sure you stick through the credits for an extra bit that I think is fair to call "The Greatest After Credits Bit...Ever."

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Trivia

DallasNews.com
(KRT)

How much do you know about Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, the season's most celebrated flying creature?

1. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was created in 1939 as a promotional tool for which department store?
A. Montgomery Ward
B. Sears, Roebuck and Co.
C. Neiman Marcus
D. Gimbel Brothers, Inc.

2. How did Rudolph make his first appearance?
A. As a stuffed animal
B. In a cartoon
C. In a children's book
D. In a song

3. Gene Autry's version of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" went on to become one of the best-selling songs of all time, second only to what other seasonal standard?

A. "I'll Be Home for Christmas"
B. "Frosty the Snow Man"
C. "Jingle Bell Rock"
D. "White Christmas"

4. Which reindeer is mentioned first in the song "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"?
A. Rudolph
B. Dancer
C. Dasher
D. Comet

5. The classic TV special "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," narrated by Burl Ives, first debuted on Dec. 6 of what year?
A. 1952
B. 1964
C. 1969
D. 1973

CORRECT ANSWERS:
1. A. Montgomery Ward
2. C. In a children's book
3. D. "White Christmas"
4. C. Dasher
5. B. 1964