

I write a lot of different things. Books, songs, articles, letters - wherever the creative juices lead me. One form of writing I enjoy is plays. The nice thing about plays is that it challenges you to be more visual and attentive to setting and dialog . When you write a book or song, you permit the reader and listener to create their own visuals as they wish - it ain't your problem. But in a play, you have to create the visual as well as a strong dialog to keep people from squirming in their seats and running for the exits.

The problem with writing a play is in the formatting. You can spend an entire afternoon just setting up the tabs on your typewriter before you actually set out to create the story. It can be a pain, especially when someone borrows your typewriter and screws up all the tab settings in five minutes that you took a whole afternoon setting up.

So you'd think that in this new world of modern technology, the chore of writing a play would become a very simple task. Certainly, they do have software you can buy for \$200.00 that has everything neatly formatted for you, and as soon as I make two hundred bucks in my life, I'm all over that purchase, you can be sure.

For now, I fumble in a cyber world that has trouble 'recognizing' what I'm trying to do. Oh I can figure it out in time and my plays come out looking half way the way they want them to. But the problem is that I wrote plays BEFORE God gave us the computer and the good people who created these wonderful machines had no idea that this world would have any appeal to playwrights. Who knew?

Let me explain.

When I bought my brand spanking new computer - with the WORKS, I instinctively knew that I would likely want to put my plays that I wrote in the typewriter stone age on this new wonderful machine so I could access them whenever I wanted. So being the sharp customer that I am, I went all out and bought a scanner on the very same day! This would enable me to simply scan my plays into my new computer as I wished.

Simple, right?

When I get my new toys all set up, I scan page one into my \$50.00 scanner and this long

skinny light slowly crawls over my page and pops up what it sees - page one of my play! It asks me A) is this what you're scanning, Pops? And B) where do you want us to throw this puppy?

I tell the scanner, looks good, go ahead and slap that bad boy into my computer in the folder I have already designated.

When my \$50.00 scanner is done, I go to my \$2,000.00 computer and pull up page one of my play. What I'm looking at seems to be some form of cyber-lava lamp technology, because the words are all there, but they seem to float all over the page in no particular order. No tabs, no structure, no order. Just a page full of words - albeit the right words, I'll give it that.

When I bring this to the attention of a Tech person, they scoff at me that my computer program just didn't recognize it.

"So you're saying my \$2,000.00 computer didn't recognize a sheet of paper that my \$50.00 scanner clearly understood?"

Tech people are sensitive and usually end every conversation with rolling eyes and a you-just-don't-understand exit.

I think I do understand - computers are - technically speaking - stupid!

The lesson here, I suppose, is that computers are very much like our government. We are well endowed with departments that clearly meets the needs of all people. The problem is that one department has no idea what the other department is trying to do.

I'm thinking that computers really don't like scanners. A \$50.00 scanner can do something a \$2,000.00 computer can't do - recognize my old play. Why should a computer cooperate with a scanner, really? "Yea here's the crap your cheap scanner just threw at me - hey pal, why don't you dump that and use my new programs to write a new play, huh big fella? Common!?!"

It baffles me why everyone keeps referring to these machines as 'smart computers'. There is no such thing as long as we have \$50.00 scanners that can recognize what's on a page a LOT better than the \$2000.00 computer can.

For now I think that until I hit the mother load and grab me a \$200.00 payday, I'm going to stick to writing books, songs and articles with simple settings my "smart" \$2000.00 computer can understand.

Just a Thought