

Perkins Computer Center



hSoft Consulting

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Urban Legends and Hoaxes on the Internet –Part One

We've all heard the stories: tales of people on business trips, waking up after a night on the town in a bathtub of ice and with vital organs missing; or teenagers, who while parked in car, heard scratches on their car roof and upon driving away, discovered a hook hanging on their automobile from a supposed escaped convict. Or you may have heard about how some Halloween candy was tampered with by a lunatic with an abundance of malice and razor blades, or how if you eat Pop Rocks and drink Coca-cola, you're just asking for your stomach to explode. These urban legends have found themselves perpetuated throughout time, through generations and almost always with the certainty that, "...Of course it's true—it happened to a friend of a friend of mine!"

Urban legends are not a new phenomenon. Actually, it's just the newest incarnation of a time-honored ritual that has been passed down for centuries—traditional folklore. The telling of tales, whether religious (Greek or Roman mythology), archetypal (see any fairy tale with "Prince Charming" or an "Evil Stepmother"), or cultural (country, blues, and bluegrass all originate from American folklore), all convey a particular culture's morals, values, or fears.

The ways in which urban legends are passed on has evolved throughout the ages. However, with the advent of the computer and lightning fast communication, the past decade has seen a huge surge of urban legends on the internet. According to Tom Harris from HowStuffWorks.com, "As with word of mouth legends, there are all sorts of e-mail hoaxes...Cautionary legends are very common in e-mail forwards, often focusing on made-up computer viruses or Internet scams. A similar sort of e-mail legend is the charity or petition appeal, which outlines a good cause and instructs you to add your name to a petition and forward it to everyone you know. One indicator that it's a hoax is that the e-mail includes no address to send the list to when it's completed."

A famous e-mail legend, "the Neiman Marcus cookie recipe," combines a great story with an appeal to fight injustice. The email is from a mother who, while dining at Neiman Marcus with her daughter, asks the cashier for the recipe of the fantastic cookies that they just ate. The cashier tells her that while she cannot get the recipe for free, she can purchase a copy for "Two fifty." When she receives her Neiman Marcus charge card bill, she sees a purchase for "\$250.00." After a customer service rep refused to refund her money, as the recipe was very valuable, the mother swore revenge and distributed the recipe to all who care to see it. Now, while the attached recipe makes great cookies, there is no Neiman Marcus cookie recipe, nor did they even have cookies when this story first circulated. In fact, Mrs. Fields and the Waldorf Astoria have both been the villains in earlier incarnations.

(Continued)

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Senior Week/Grandparent's Day Event

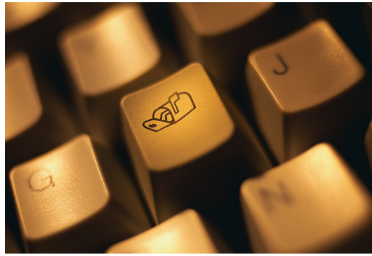
Halloween Event sneak peak



Gossip, or storytelling, has been around since humans first started communicating.

Common E-mail or Internet Urban Legends

- Anything free (free Apple Ipad, free trip to Disney World)
- A federal tax on the internet or e-mail
- "If you forward this e-mail..."
 - A charity will benefit (Red Cross, Hunger Relief) or Bill Gates will help sick children
- Kurt Vonnegut's graduation speech



Urban Legends and Hoaxes on the Internet—Part One (cont.)

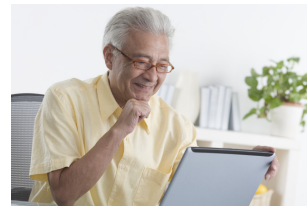
In short, one can make the argument that the Internet and how we communicate with each other illuminates important things about our culture, our values, and possibly, the basic human condition. We yearn to connect through shared interests, common conditions, and yes, through stories. The savvy internet user can use what they know to differentiate between the good, the bad, and the urban legends. Just remember, there is **no** Nigerian prince that needs your help distributing money, a big company **will not** donate to a charity if you forward an email, and you **will not** have bad luck if you don't forward that chain letter. Most importantly, if you receive an e-mail that starts off as, "This is not a hoax..."—it probably is.

For more information, check out www.snopes.com for the latest in debunking E-mail or Internet Urban Legends.

Senior Week/Grandparent's Day Event

*"Just remember, there is **no** Nigerian prince that needs your help distributing money, a big company **will not** donate to a charity if you forward an email, and you **will not** have bad luck if you don't forward that chain letter."*

Join us at Perkins Computer Center during September 6th-10th as we celebrate Senior Week/Grandparent's Day with a special discount for our seniors. If you're ages 60+ or a grandparent, simply show us your ID or show off a picture of your grandkids and enjoy 10% off your next service* with us! Then on Friday, Sept 10th, enjoy light refreshments all day and enter a raffle for fun prizes! We'll see you there!



*Offer only valid on non-taxable labor costs. Offer not applicable towards hardware/software purchases. All applicable taxes shall be applied. Limit 1 per customer. Cannot be combined with any other discounts, coupons, or offers

Upcoming Events: Halloween Sneak Preview...

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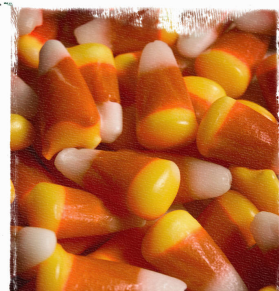


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We're scaring up something delightfully delicious this Halloween at Perkins Computer Center!

Get your best Halloween costumes and your sweet tooth ready as we prepare for a fun, family neighborhood event.



There'll be free children's games, Trick or Treating, and many more surprises in store!

More info coming soon!