

A

Abbott's Admonitions

If you have to ask, you're not entitled to know.

If you don't like the answer, you shouldn't have asked the question.

Abrams's Advice

When eating an elephant, take one bite at a time.

Absolute Principal

Beauty is only skin deep, ugly goes to the bone.

Rule of Accuracy

When working toward the solution of a problem, it always helps if you know the answer.

Corollary - Provided, of course, that you know there is a problem.

Acheson's Rule of the Bureaucracy

A memorandum is written not to inform the reader but to protect the writer.

Acton's Law

Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Ade's Law

Anybody can win -- unless there happens to be a second entry.

Law of Adult Opportunity

Opportunity always knocks at the least appropriate moment.

Advanced Systems News Letter

The nail that sticks up gets hammered down.

Airplane Law

When the plane you are on is late, the plane you want to transfer to is on time.

Law of Airports

The distance to the gate is inversely proportional to the time available to catch the flight.

Alan's Law of Research

The theory is supported as long as the funds are.

Albrecht's Law

Social innovations tend to the level of minimum tolerable well being.

Alfred's Law of NIMBY'ism [Not in my back yard]

The guy holding the biggest sign demanding that the freeway be torn down moved in six years after it was constructed.

Law of Algebra

You never catch on until after the test.

Algren's Precepts

Never eat at a place called Mom's. Never play cards with a man named Doc. And never lie down with a woman who's got more troubles than you.

Law of Alienation

Nothing can so alienate a voter from the political system as backing a winning candidate.

Alinsky's Rule For Radicals

Those who are most moral are farthest from the problem.

Allen's Axiom

When all else fails, follow instructions.

Allen's Biblical Distinction (Allen's Distinction)

The lion and the lamb shall lie down together, but the lamb won't get much sleep.

Allen's Law

Almost anything is easier to get into than out of.

Allen's Law of Civilization

It is better for civilization to be going down the drain than to be coming up it.

Alley's Axiom

Justice always prevails... three times out of seven.

Alligator Allegory

The objective of all dedicated product support employees should be to thoroughly analyze all situations, anticipate all problems prior to their occurrence, have answers for these problems, and move swiftly to solve these problems when called upon. However, when you are up to your ass in alligators, it is difficult to remind yourself that your initial objective

was to drain the swamp.

Alligator Principle

When you are up to your ass in alligators, it is difficult to remind yourself that your initial objective was to drain the swamp.

Allison's Precept

The best simple-minded test of expertise in a particular area is the ability to win money in a series of bets on future occurrences in that area.

Law of Ambition

At any one time, thousands of borough councilmen, school board members, attorneys, and businessmen -- as well as congressmen, senators, and governors -- are dreaming of the White House, but few, if any of them, will make it.

Anderson's Law

Any system or problem, however complicated, if looked at in exactly the right way, will become even more complicated.

Andrew's Canoeing Postulate

No matter which direction you start, it's always against the wind coming back.

Law of Annoyance

When working on a project, if you put away a tool that you're certain you're finished with, you will need it instantly.

Anthony's Law of Force

Don't force it, get a larger hammer.

Anthony's Law of the Workshop

Any tool, when dropped, will roll into the least accessible corner of the workshop.

Corollary - On the way to the corner, any dropped tool will first and always strike your toes.

Approval Seeker's Law

Those whose approval you seek the most give you the least.

The Aquinas Axiom

What the gods get away with, the cows don't.

The Arithmetic of Cooperation

When you're adding up committees there's a useful rule of thumb: that talents make a difference, and follies make a sum.

Army Axiom

Any order that can be misunderstood has been misunderstood.

Army Law

If it moves, salute it; if it doesn't move, pick it up; if you can't pick it up, paint it.

Arnold's First Law of Documentation

If it should exist, it doesn't.

Arnold's Second Law of Documentation

If it does exist, it's out of date.

Arnold's Third Law of Documentation

Only useless documentation transcends the first two laws.

Ashleigh's First Law

If you can't learn to do it well, you should learn to enjoy doing it badly.

Ashley-Perry Statistical Axioms

Numbers are tools, not rules.

Numbers are symbols for things; the number and the thing are not the same.

Skill in manipulating numbers is a talent, not evidence of divine guidance.

Like other occult techniques of divination, the statistical method has a private jargon deliberately contrived to obscure its methods from nonpractitioners.

The product of an arithmetical computation is the answer to an equation; it is not the solution to a problem.

Arithmetical proofs of theorems that do not have arithmetical bases prove

nothing.

Law of Assembly

Interchangeable parts won't.

Astrology Law

It's always the wrong time of the month.

Atlas's Laws of Medical Research

Successful research attracts the bigger grant which makes further research impossible.

The progress of science varies inversely with the number of journals published.

Attila's Instruction

Always remember to pillage before you burn.

Attorneys Operating Principle

Any simple idea must be worded in the most complicated way.

Atwoods Corollary

No books are lost by lending except those you particularly wanted to keep.

Law of Attraction

Power attracts people but it cannot hold them.

Avery's Observation

It does not matter if you fall down as long as you pick up something from the floor while you get up.

Avery's Rule of Three

Trouble strikes in series of threes, but when working around the house the next job after a series of three is not the fourth job -- it's the start of a brand new series of three.

Avian Law

A bird in the hand is safer than one overhead.

Axiom of Promotions

What gets you promoted on one level will get you fired on another.

Axiom of the Pipe. (Trischmann's Paradox)

A pipe gives a wise man time to think and a fool something to stick in his mouth.

B

Babcock's Law

If it can be borrowed and it can be broken, you will borrow it and you will break it.

Baer's Quartet

What's good politics is bad economics; what's bad politics is good economics; what's good economics is bad politics; what's bad economics is good politics.

Bagdikian's Law of Editor's Speeches

The splendor of an editor's speech and the splendor of his newspaper are inversely related to the distance between the city in which he makes his speech and the city in which he publishes his paper.

Baker's Byroad

When you are over the hill, you pick up speed.

Baker's Law

Misery no longer loves company. Nowadays it insists on it.

Baldy's Law

Some of it plus the rest of it is all of it.

The Banana Principle

If you buy bananas or avocados before they are ripe, there won't be any left by the time they are ripe. If you buy them ripe, they rot before they are eaten.

Bankers Axiom

In order to get a loan you must first prove you don't need it.

Bankers Lament

Nothing in the known universe travels faster than a bad check

Law of Banks

The other line always moves faster. In order to get a loan, you must first

prove that you don't need it.

Barber's Laws of Backpacking

The integral of the gravitational potential taken around any loop trail you choose to hike always comes out positive.

Any stone in your boot always migrates against the pressure gradient to exactly the point of most pressure.

The weight of your pack increases in direct proportion to the amount of food you consume from it. If you run out of food, the pack weight goes on increasing anyway.

The number of stones in your boot is directly proportional to the number of hours you have been on the trail.

The difficulty of finding any given trail marker is directly proportional to the importance of the consequences of failing to find it.

The size of each of the stones in your boot is directly proportional to the number of hours you have been on the trail.

The remaining distance to your chosen campsite remains constant as twilight approaches.

The net weight of your boots is proportional to the cube of the number of hours you have been on the trail.

When you arrive at your chosen campsite, it is full.

If you take your boots off, you'll never get them back on again.

The local density of mosquitos is inversely proportional to your remaining repellent.

Barr's Comment on Domestic Tranquillity

On a beautiful day like this it's hard to believe anyone can be unhappy -- but we'll work on it.

Barrett's Laws of Driving

You can get ANYWHERE in ten minutes if you go fast enough.

Speed bumps are of negligible effect when the vehicle exceeds triple the desired restraining speed.

The vehicle in front of you is traveling slower than you are.

This lane ends in 500 feet.

Barth's Distinction (Benchley's Law of Distinction)

There are two classes of people: those who divide people into two classes, and those who don't.

Bartz's Law of Hokey Horsepuckery

The more ridiculous a belief system, the higher the probability of its success.

Baruch's Observation

If all you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.

Baruch's Rule for Determining Old Age

Old age is always fifteen years older than I am.

Barzun's Laws of Learning

The simple but difficult arts of paying attention, copying accurately, following an argument, detecting an ambiguity or a false inference, testing guesses by summoning up contrary instances, organizing one's time and one's thought for study - all these arts - cannot be taught in the air but only through the difficulties of a defined subject. They cannot be taught in one course or one year, but must be acquired gradually in dozens of connections.

The analogy to athletics must be pressed until all recognize that in the exercise of Intellect those who lack the muscles, coordination, and will power can claim no place at the training table, let alone on the playing field.

Forthoffer's Cynical Summary of Barzun's Laws

That which has not yet been taught directly can never be taught directly.

If at first you don't succeed, you will never succeed.

Basic Baggage Principle

Whichever carousel you stand near, your baggage will arrive on another one.

Law of Basic Money Dynamics

A surprise monetary windfall will be accompanied by an unexpected expense of the same amount.

Baxter's First Law (Baxter's Free Market Laws)

Government intervention in the free market always leads to a lower national standard of living.

Baxter's Second Law

The adoption of fractional gold reserves in a currency system always leads to depreciation, devaluation, demonetization and, ultimately, to complete destruction of that currency.

Baxter's Third Law

In a free market good money always drives bad money out of circulation.

Beard's addendum to interstate travel

The palatability index of any food is inversely proportional to the distance and number of times the restaurant advertises prior to the designated stop.

Beardsley's Warning to Lawyers

Beware of and eschew pompous prolixity.

Beauregard's First Law

When you're up to your nose in it, keep your mouth shut.

Beauregard's Second Law

All people are cremated equal.

Becker's Law

It is much harder to find a job than to keep one.

Beckhap's Law

Beauty times brains equals a constant.

Beifeld's Principle

The probability of a young man meeting a desirable and receptive young female increases by pyramidal progression when he is already in the company of (1) a date, (2) his wife, and (3) a better looking and richer male friend.

Belle's Constant

The ratio of time involved in work to time available for work is usually about 0.6.

Benchley's Distinction

There are two types of people: those who divide people into two types, and those who don't.

Benchley's Law

Anyone can do any amount of work, provided it isn't the work he is supposed to be doing at that moment.

Berkeley's Laws

The world is more complicated than most of our theories make it out to be.

Ignorance is no excuse.

Never decide to buy something while listening to the salesman.

Information which is true meets a great many different tests very well.

Most problems have either many answers or no answer. Only a few problems have a single answer.

An answer may be wrong, right, both, or neither. Most answers are partly right and partly wrong.

A chain of reasoning is no stronger than its weakest link.

A statement may be true independently of illogical reasoning.

Most general statements are false, including this one.

An exception TESTS a rule; it NEVER PROVES it.

The moment you have worked out an answer, start checking it -- it probably isn't right.

If there is an opportunity to make a mistake, sooner or later the mistake will be made.

Being sure mistakes will occur is a good frame of mind for catching them.

Check the answer you have worked out once more -- before you tell it to anybody.

Estimating a figure may be enough to catch an error.

Figures calculated in a rush are very hot; they should be allowed to cool off a little before being used; thus we will have a reasonable time to think about the figures and catch mistakes.

A great many problems do not have accurate answers, but do have approximate answers, from which sensible decisions can be made.

Bernstein's First Law

Buttered bread tends to fall with the buttered side down.

Bernstein's Second Law

A falling body always rolls to the most inaccessible spot.

Berra's Law

You can observe a lot just by watching.

Berson's Corollary of Inverse Distances

The farther away from the entrance that you have to park, the closer the space vacated by the car that pulls away as you walk up to the door.

Bicycle Law

All bicycles weigh 50 pounds:

A 30-pound bicycle needs a 20-pound lock and chain.

A 40-pound bicycle needs a 10-pound lock and chain.

A 50-pound bicycle needs no lock or chain.

First Law of Bicycling

No matter which way you ride, it's uphill and against the wind.

The Billings Phenomenon

The conclusions of most good operations research studies are obvious.

Billings's Law

Live within your income, even if you have to borrow to do so.

Blanchard's Newspaper Obituary Law

If you want your name spelled wrong, die.

Blauw's Law

Established technology tends to persist in spite of new technology.

Law of Blissful Ignorance

What you don't know will always hurt you.

Bok's Law

If you think education is expensive -- try ignorance.

Boling's Postulate

If you're feeling good, don't worry. You'll get over it.

Bolton's Law of Ascending Budgets

Under current practices, both expenditures and revenues rise to meet each other, no matter which one may be in excess.

Bombeck's Rule of Medicine

Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died.

Bonafede's Revelation

The conventional wisdom is that power is an aphrodisiac. In truth, it's exhausting.

Boob's Law

You always find something in the last place you look.

Booker's Law

An ounce of application is worth a ton of abstraction.

Boozer's Revision

A bird in the hand is dead.

Boren's Laws of the Bureaucracy

When in doubt, mumble.

When in trouble, delegate.

When in charge, ponder.

Borkowski's Law

You can't guard against the arbitrary.

Borstelmann's Rule

If everything seems to be coming your way, you're probably in the wrong lane.

Boston's Irreversible Law of Clutter

In any household, junk accumulates to fill the space available for its

storage.

Boulton's Criterion

If the converse of a statement is absurd, the original statement is an insult to the intelligence and should never have been said.

Bove's Theorem

The remaining work to finish in order to reach your goal increases as the deadline approaches.

Boyle's Laws

The success of any venture will be helped by prayer, even in the wrong denomination.

When things are going well, someone will inevitably experiment detrimentally.

The deficiency will never show itself during the dry runs.

Information travels more surely to those with a lesser need to know.

An original idea can never emerge from committee in the original.

When the product is destined to fail, the delivery system will perform perfectly.

The crucial memorandum will be snared in the out-basket by the paper clip of the overlying correspondence and go to file.

Success can be insured only by devising a defense against failure of the contingency plan.

Performance is directly affected by the perversity of inanimate objects.

If not controlled, work will flow to the competent man until he submerges.

The lagging activity in a project will invariably be found in the area where the highest overtime rates lie waiting.

Talent in staff work or sales will recurrently be interpreted as managerial ability.

The "think positive" leader tends to listen to his subordinates' premonitions only during the postmortems.

Clearly stated instructions will consistently produce multiple interpretations.

On successive charts of the same organization the number of boxes will never decrease.

Boyle's Observation

A welfare state is one that assumes responsibility for the health, happiness, and general well being of all its citizens except the taxpayers.

Boyle's Other Law

The first pull on the cord ALWAYS sends the drapes in the wrong direction.

Branch's First Law of Crisis

The spirit of public service will rise, and the bureaucracy will multiply itself much faster, in time of grave national concern.

First Law of Bridge

It's always the partner's fault.

Brien's First Law

At some time in the life cycle of virtually every organization, its ability to succeed in spite of itself runs out.

Brigg's Law of Traffic

At any level of traffic, any delay is intolerable.

Brinks's Observation

No armored car loaded with bags of money ever turned over and spilled its load in the street, in a good neighborhood.

Broder's Law

Anybody that wants the presidency so much that he'll spend two years organizing and campaigning for it is not to be trusted with the office.

Brontosaurus Principle

Organizations can grow faster than their brains can manage them in relation to their environment and to their own physiology; when this occurs, they are an endangered species.

Brook's Laws

If at first you don't succeed, transform your data set.

Adding manpower to late software makes it later.

Brooks' First Law

Adding manpower to a late software project makes it later.

Brooks' Second Law

Whenever a system becomes completely defined, someone discovers something which either abolishes the system or expands it beyond recognition.

(Jerry) Brown's Law

Too often I find that the volume of paper expands to fill the available briefcases.

(Sam) Brown's Law

Never offend people with style when you can offend them with substance.

(Tony) Brown's Law of Business Success

Our customer's paperwork is profit. Our own paperwork is loss.

Brownian Motion Rule of Bureaucracies

It is impossible to distinguish, from a distance, whether the bureaucrats associated with your project are simply sitting on their hands, or frantically trying to cover their asses.

Heisenberg's Addendum to Brownian Bureaucracy: If you observe a bureaucrat closely enough to make the distinction above, he will react to your observation by covering his ass.

Bruce-Briggs's Law of Traffic

At any level of traffic, any delay is intolerable.

Bryson's Law of Repairs

Anything you try to fix will take longer and cost more than you thought.

If you fool around with a thing for very long you will screw it up.

Buchwald's Law

As the economy gets better, everything else gets worse.

Bucy's Law

Nothing is ever accomplished by a reasonable man.

The Bumper To Bumper Theorem

Traffic congestion increases in proportion to the length of time the street is supervised by a traffic control officer.

Bunuel's Law

Overdoing things is harmful in all cases, even when it comes to efficiency.

Law of Bureaucracy

When a problem goes away, the people working to solve it do not.

Bureaucratic Cop-Out #1

You should have seen it when *I* got it.

Burns's Balance

If the assumptions are wrong, the conclusions aren't likely to be very good.

Bus Transportation Laws

The bus that left the stop just before you got there is your bus.

The amount of time you have to wait for a bus is directly proportional to the inclemency of the weather.

All buses heading in the opposite direction drive off the face of the earth and never return.

The last rush-hour express bus to your neighborhood leaves five minutes before you get off work.

Bus schedules are arranged so your bus will arrive at the transfer point precisely one minute after the connecting bus has left.

Any bus that can be the wrong bus will be the wrong bus. All others are out of service or full.

Business Maxims

No matter how low you bid the job there is always an idiot out there willing to do it for less.

The more you cut your price to get business, the more likely you are to go out of business.

The more you try to compete on a price basis the lower your prices will go. Corollary: Your income will follow.

The bigger your yellow pages ad , the more low priced calls from non-repeat customers you will get.

Increasing your ad size increases the percentage of low profit calls you get.

The prize for beating out all of your competitors for the biggest most expensive ad in all of the different yellow pages books is bankruptcy.

The more you advertise that you have 24 hour service, the more security guards and insomniacs will call you in the middle of the night with requests for price quotations.

Advertise as a 24 hour service and you will get angry calls from people who stopped by your shop at four in the morning and you weren't there. Your best apprentice will quit and open a shop across the street and cut your prices.

The one who is un-trainable will stay with you forever.

Bustlin' Billy's Bogus Beliefs

The organization of any program reflects the organization of the people who develop it.

There is no such thing as a "dirty capitalist", only a capitalist.

Anything is possible, but nothing is easy.

Capitalism can exist in one of only two states -- welfare or warfare.

I'd rather go whoring than warring.

History proves nothing.

There is nothing so unbecoming on the beach as a wet kilt.

A little humility is arrogance.

A lot of what appears to be progress is just so much technological rococo.

Butler's Law of Progress

All progress is based on a universal innate desire on the part of every

organism to live beyond its income.

Bye's First Law of Model Railroading

Anytime you wish to demonstrate something, the number of faults is proportional to the number of viewers.

Bye's Second Law of Model Railroading

The desire for modeling a prototype is inversely proportional to the decline of the prototype.

C

Cafeteria Law

The item you had your eye on the minute you walked in will be taken by the person in front of you.

Cahn's Axiom (Allen's Axiom)

When all else fails, read the instructions.

Calkin's Law of Menu Language

The number of adjectives and verbs that are added to the description of a menu item is in inverse proportion to the quality of the resulting dish.

Camp's Law

A coup that is known in advance is a coup that does not take place.

Campbell's Law

Nature abhors a vacuous experimenter.

Canada Bill Jones's Motto

It's morally wrong to allow suckers to keep their money.

Canada Bill Jones's Supplement

A Smith and Wesson beats four aces.

Cannon's Cogent Comment

The leak in the roof is never in the same location as the drip.

Cannon's Comment

If you tell the boss you were late for work because you had a flat tire, the next morning you will have a flat tire.

Captain Penny's Law

You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool MOM.

The Cardinal Conundrum

An optimist believes that we live in the best of all possible worlds. A pessimist fears that this is true.

Carpenters Law

If you have only one nail, it will bend.

Carson's Law

It's better to be rich and healthy than poor and sick.

Cartoon Laws

Any body suspended in space will remain in space until made aware of its situation. Daffy Duck steps off a cliff, expecting further pastureland. He loiters in midair, soliloquizing flippantly, until he chances to look down. At this point, the familiar principle of 32 feet per second per second takes over.

Any body in motion will tend to remain in motion until solid matter intervenes suddenly. Whether shot from a cannon or in hot pursuit on foot, cartoon characters are so absolute in their momentum that only a telephone pole or an outsize boulder retards their forward motion absolutely. Sir Isaac Newton called this sudden termination of motion the stooge's surcease.

Any body passing through solid matter will leave a perforation conforming to its perimeter. Also called the silhouette of passage, this phenomenon is the speciality of victims of directed-pressure explosions and of reckless cowards who are so eager to escape that they exit directly through the wall of a house, leaving a cookie-cutout- perfect hole. The threat of skunks or matrimony often catalyzes this reaction.

The time required for an object to fall twenty stories is greater than or equal to the time it takes for whoever knocked it off the ledge to spiral down twenty flights to attempt to capture it unbroken. Such an object is

inevitably priceless, the attempt to capture it inevitably unsuccessful. All principles of gravity are negated by fear. Psychic forces are sufficient in most bodies for a shock to propel them directly away from the earth's surface. A spooky noise or an adversary's signature sound will induce motion upward, usually to the cradle of a chandelier, a treetop, or the crest of a flagpole. The feet of a character who is running or the wheels of a speeding auto need never touch the ground, especially when in flight.

As speed increases, objects can be in several places at once. This is particularly true of tooth-and-claw fights, in which a character's head may be glimpsed emerging from the cloud of altercation at several places simultaneously. This effect is common as well among bodies that are spinning or being throttled. A 'wacky' character has the option of self-replication only at manic high speeds and may ricochet off walls to achieve the velocity required.

Certain bodies can pass through solid walls painted to resemble tunnel entrances; others cannot. This trompe l'oeil inconsistency has baffled generation, but at least it is known that whoever paints an entrance on a wall's surface to trick an opponent will be unable to pursue him into this theoretical space. The painter is flattened against the wall when he attempts to follow into the painting. This is ultimately a problem of art, not of science.

Any violent rearrangement of feline matter is impermanent. Cartoon cats possess even more deaths than the traditional nine lives might comfortably afford. They can be decimated, spliced, splayed, accordion-pleated, spindled, or disassembled, but they cannot be destroyed. After a few moments of blinking self pity, they reinflate, elongate, snap back, or solidify.

Corollary - A cat will assume the shape of its container.

For every vengeance there is an equal and opposite revenge.

the one law of animated cartoon motion that also applies to the physical world at large. For that reason, we need the relief of watching it happen to a duck instead.

Everything falls faster than an anvil. Examples too numerous to mention from the Roadrunner cartoons.

Cavanaugh's Postulate

All kookies are not in a jar.

Cayo's Law

The only things that start on time are those that you're late for.

Chappaquidick Theorem

The sooner and in more detail you announce the bad news, the better.

Law of Character and Appearance

People don't change; they only become more so.

Chase's Contentions

The explanation requiring the fewest assumptions is the most likely to be correct.

Whenever two hypotheses cover the facts, use the simpler of the two.

Cut the crap. A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow.

Chase's Observations of Human Belief

The most preposterous notion that Homo Sapiens has ever dreamed up is that there is a Lord God of Creation.

That this God is the shaper and ruler of all the universe.

That this God lives up in the sky.

That this God wants the saccharine adoration of his creatures and can be swayed by their prayers.

That this God becomes petulant if He does not receive this flattery;

Conclusion - This absurd fantasy, without a shred of evidence to bolster it, pays all the expenses of the oldest, largest, and least productive industry in all history.

Chase's Rule For Success

Trust only those who stand to lose as much as you when things go wrong.

Chases Laws of Car Repairs

Leakproof seals- will.

Self starters -won't.

Interchangeable parts-won't.

Any tool dropped while repairing a car will roll underneath to the exact center.

After you have repaired it yourself you will have one small part left over that doesn't go anywhere.

Every automobile comes with a build in abyss which things that you have dropped fall into, never to be seen again.

Checkbook Balancer's Law

In matters of dispute, the bank's balance is always smaller than yours.

Cheops's Law

Nothing ever gets built on schedule or within budget.

Chesterton's Observation

I have seen the truth and it makes no sense.

Chili Cook's Secret

If your next pot of chili tastes better, it probably is because of something left out, rather than added.

Chisholm's First Law and Corollary

see Murphy's Third and Fifth Laws.

Chisholm's Second Law

When things are going well, something will go wrong.

Corollaries:

When things just can't get any worse, they will.

Anytime things appear to be going better, you have overlooked something.

Chisholm's Third Law

Proposals, as understood by the proposer, will be judged otherwise by others.

Corollaries:

If you explain so clearly that nobody can misunderstand, somebody will.

If you do something which you are sure will meet with everyone's approval, somebody won't like it.

Procedures devised to implement the purpose won't quite work.

No matter how long or how many times you explain, no one is listening.

Churchill's Commentary on Man

Man will occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of the time he will pick himself up and continue on as though nothing has happened.

Ciardi's Poetry Law

Whenever in time, and wherever in the universe, any man speaks or writes in any detail about the technical management of a poem, the resulting irascibility of the reader's response is a constant.

Cirino's Law of Burnt Fingers

Hot glass looks the same as cold glass.

Clark's First Law of Relativity

No matter how often you trade dinner or other invitations with in-laws, you will lose a small fortune in the exchange.

Corollary - Don't try it: you cannot drink enough of your in-laws' booze to get even before your liver fails.

Clark's Law

It's always darkest just before the lights go out.

Clarke's First Law

When a distinguished but elderly scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states that something is impossible, he is very probably wrong.

Corollary (Asimov) - When the lay public rallies round an idea that is denounced by distinguished but elderly scientists, and supports that idea with great fervor and emotion -- the distinguished but elderly scientists are then, after all, right.

Clarke's Second Law

The limits of the possible can only be defined by going beyond them into the impossible.

Clarke's Third Law

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

Clarke's Law of Revolutionary Ideas

Every revolutionary idea -- in Science, Politics, Art or Whatever -- evokes three stages of reaction. They may be summed up by the three phrases:

"It is completely impossible -- don't waste my time."

"It is possible, but it is not worth doing."

"I said it was a good idea all along."

Cleveland's Highway Law

Highways in the worst need of repair naturally have low traffic counts, which results in low priority for repair work.

Clopton's Law

For every credibility gap there is a gullibility fill.

Clyde's Law

If you have something to do, and put it off long enough, chances are that someone else will do it for you.

Cohen's Law

What really matters is the name you succeed in imposing on the facts -- not the facts themselves.

Cohen's Laws of Politics

Law of Alienation

Nothing can so alienate a voter from the political system as backing a winning candidate.

Law of Ambition

At any one time, thousands of borough councilmen, school board members, attorneys, and businessmen -- as well as congressmen, senators, and

governors -- are dreaming of the White House, but few, if any of them, will make it.

Law of Attraction

Power attracts people but it cannot hold them.

Law of Competition

The more qualified candidates who are available, the more likely the compromise will be on the candidate whose main qualification is a nonthreatening incompetence.

Law of Inside Dope

There are many inside dopes in politics and government.

Law of Lawmaking

Those who express random thoughts to legislative committees are often surprised and appalled to find themselves the instigators of law.

Law of Permanence

Political power is as permanent as today's newspaper. Ten years from now, few will know or care who the most powerful man in any state was today.

Law of Secrecy

The best way to publicize a governmental or political action is to attempt to hide it.

Law of Wealth

Victory goes to the candidate with the most accumulated or contributed wealth who has the financial resources to convince the middle class and poor that he will be on their side.

Law of Wisdom

Wisdom is considered a sign of weakness by the powerful because a wise man can lead without power but only a powerful man can lead without wisdom.

Cohn's Law

The more time you spend in reporting on what you are doing, the less time you have to do anything. Stability is achieved when you spend all your time doing nothing but reporting on the nothing you are doing.

Cole's Axiom

The sum of the intelligence on the planet is a constant; the population is growing.

Cole's Law

Thinly sliced cabbage.

Colson's Law

When you've got them by the balls, their hearts and minds will follow.

Comin's Law

People will accept your idea much more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first.

Committee Law

A committee is the only life form with 12 stomachs and no brain.

A camel is a horse which was designed by a committee

If more than one person is responsible for a miscalculation, no one will be at fault.

A committee is twelve people doing the work of one.

Committee Rules

Never arrive on time, or you will be stamped a beginner.

Don't say anything until the meeting is half over; this stamps you as being wise.

Be as vague as possible; this prevents irritating the others.

When in doubt, suggest that a subcommittee be appointed

Be the first to move for adjournment; this will make you popular -- it's what everyone is waiting for.

Commoner's Three Laws of Ecology

No action is without side-effects.

Nothing ever goes away.

There is no free lunch.

Compensation Corollary

The experiment may be considered a success if no more than 50% of the observed measurements must be discarded to obtain a correspondence with theory.

Law of Competition

The more qualified candidates who are available, the more likely the compromise will be on the candidate whose main qualification is a nonthreatening incompetence.

Law of Computability

Any system or program, however complicated, if looked at in exactly the right way, will become even more complicated.

Law of Computability Applied to Social Science (Brook's Law)

If at first you don't succeed, transform your data set.

Conference Principle

The speaker with the most monotonous voice speaks after the big meal.

Connolly's Law of Cost Control

The price of any product produced for a government agency will be not less than the square of the initial Firm Fixed-Price Contract.

Connolly's Rule for Political Incumbents

Short-term success with voters on any side of a given issue can be guaranteed by creating a long-term special study commission made up of at least three divergent interest groups.

Conrad's Conundrum (Stentson's Law)

Technologies don't transfer.

Considine's Law

Whenever one word or letter can change the entire meaning of a sentence, the probability of an error being made will be in direct proportion to the embarrassment it will cause.

Consultation Law

The job that pays the most will be offered when there is no time to deliver the services.

Law of Consumer Economics

If the shoe fits, it's ugly. If it's good, they discontinue it.

Conway's Law

In every organization there will always be one person who knows what is going on. This person must be fired.

Conway's Law #1

If you assign N persons to write a compiler you'll get a $N-1$ pass compiler.

Conway's Law #2

In every organization there will always be one person who knows what is going on. This person must be fired.

Cook's Law

Much work, much food; little work, little food; no work, burial at sea.

Cook's Laws of Travel

When packing for a vacation, take half as much clothing and twice as much money.

Nothing can be done in one trip.

If you have the time, you won't have the money. If you have the money you won't have the time.

Cooke's Law

In any decisive situation, the amount of relevant information available is inversely proportional to the importance of the decision.

Coolidge's Immutable Observation

When more and more people are thrown out of work, unemployment results.

Cooper's Law

All machines are amplifiers.

Cooper's Metalaw

A proliferation of new laws creates a proliferation of new loopholes.

Corcoroni's Laws of Bus Transportation

The bus that left the stop just before you got there is your bus.

The amount of time you have to wait for a bus is directly proportional to the inclemency of the weather.

All buses heading in the opposite direction drive off the face of the earth and never return.

The last rush-hour express bus to your neighborhood leaves five minutes before you get off work.

Bus schedules are arranged so your bus will arrive at the transfer point precisely one minute after the connecting bus has left.

Any bus that can be the wrong bus will be the wrong bus. All others are out of service or full.

Cornuelle's Law

Authority tends to assign jobs to those least able to do them.

Law of Correctibility

No matter how well you perform your job, a superior will seek to modify the results.

Corry's Law

Paper is always strongest at the perforations.

Cosmetologist's Principle

Whenever you need to stop at a light to put on makeup, every light will be green.

Courtois's Rule

If people listened to themselves more often, they'd talk less.

Crane's Law (Friedman's Reiteration)

There ain't no such thing as a free lunch. ("tanstaaf")

Crane's Rule

There are three ways to get something done: do it yourself, hire someone, or forbid your kids to do it.

Cripp's Law

When traveling with children on one's holidays, at least one child of any number of children will request a rest room stop exactly halfway between any two given rest areas.

Cropp's Law

The amount of work done varies inversely with the amount of time spent in the office.

Culshaw's First Principle of Recorded Sound

Anything, no matter how bad, will sound good if played back at a very high level for a short time.

Cutler Webster's Law

There are two sides to every argument unless a man is personally involved, in which case there is only one.

Law of Cybernetic Entomology

There's always one more bug.

Czecinski's Conclusion

There is only one thing worse than dreaming you are at a conference and waking to find that you are at a conference, and that is the conference where you can't fall asleep.

D

Danforth's Rules of Random Selection

Never be first

Never be last.

Never volunteer for anything.

Darrow's Observation

History repeats itself. That's one of the things wrong with history.

Darwin's Observation

Nature will tell you a direct lie if she can.

Dave's Law of Advice

Those with the best advice offer no advice.

Dave's Rule of Street Survival

Speak softly and own a big, mean Doberman.

Davidson's Maxim

Democracy is that form of government where everybody gets what the majority deserves.

Davis's Basic Law of Medicine

Pills to be taken in twos always come out of the bottle in threes.

Dawson's Rules of Superior Inferiority

Don't let your superiors know that you are better than they are.

You never know who's right but you always know who's in charge.

Deadline-Dan's Demo Demonstration

The higher the "higher-ups" are who've come to see your demo, the lower your chances are of giving a successful one.

Deadlock's Law

If the law-makers make a compromise, the place where it will be felt most is the taxpayer's pocket.

Corollary - The compromise will always be more expensive than either of the suggestions it is compromising.

Dean Martin's Definition of Drunkenness

You're not drunk if you can lie on the floor without holding on.

Dean's Law of the District of Columbia

Washington is a much better place if you are asking questions rather than answering them.

First Law of Debate

Never argue with a fool. People might not know the difference.

Decaprio's Rule

Everything takes more time and money.

Deitz's Law of Ego

The fury engendered by the misspelling of a name in a column is in direct ratio to the obscurity of the mentionee.

Demian's Observation

There is always one item on the screen menu that is mislabeled and should read "Abandon all hope Ye who enter here".

Dennis's Principles of Management by Crisis

To get action out of management, it is necessary to create the illusion of a crisis in the hope it will be acted upon.

Management will select actions or events and convert them to crises. It will then over-react.

Management is incapable of recognizing a true crisis.

The squeaky hinge gets the oil.

Denniston's Law

Virtue is its own punishment.

Fifth Law of Design

Design flaws travel in groups.

Dhawan's Laws for the Non-Smoker

The cigarette smoke always drifts in the direction of the non-smoker regardless of the direction of the breeze.

The amount of pleasure derived from a cigarette is directly proportional to the number of non-smokers in the vicinity.

A smoker is always attracted to the non-smoking section.

The life of a cigarette is directly proportional to the intensity of the protests from non-smokers.

Dictum

One should always prefer the probable impossible to the improbable possible.

Dieter's Law

Food that tastes the best has the highest number of calories.

Dijkstra's Prescription for Programming Inertia

If you don't know what your program is supposed to do, you'd better not start writing it.

Diners Dilemmas

A clean tie attracts the soup of the day.

The hardness of butter is in direct proportion to the softness of the roll.

Dingle's Law

When someone drops something, everybody will kick it around instead of picking it up.

Diogenes's First Dictum

The more heavily a man is supposed to be taxed, the more power he has to escape being taxed.

Diogenes's Second Dictum

If a taxpayer thinks he can cheat safely, he probably will.

Dirksen's Three Laws of Politics

Get elected.

Get re-elected.

Don't get mad -- get even.

The First Discovery of Christmas Morning

Batteries not included.

The First Discovery of Christmas Afternoon

Give a kid a new toy- Dad will play with the toy, the kid will play with the box it came in.

Doc's Laws of Automotive Repair

If you can reach the faulty part, you don't have the tool to get it off.

Quality is inversely proportional to the time left to complete the job.

If it jams-force it. If it breaks, it needed replacing anyhow.

Law of Doctoring

It never heals correctly.

Dolly Parton's Principle

The bigger they are, the harder it is to see your shoes.

Donohue's Law

Anything worth doing is worth doing for money.

Donsen's Law

The specialist learns more and more about less and less until, finally, he knows everything about nothing; whereas the generalist learns less and less about more and more until, finally, he knows nothing about everything.

Dooley's Law

Trust everybody, but cut the cards.

Douglas's Law of Practical Aeronautical design

When the weight of the paperwork equals the weight of the plane, the plane will fly.

Douglas's Law of Practical Aeronautics

When the weight of the paperwork equals the weight of the plane, the plane will fly.

Dow's Law

In a hierarchical organization, the higher the level, the greater the confusion.

First Law of Driving

There is no traffic until you start to back out of your driveway.

Law of Driving Dynamics

The speed of an oncoming vehicle is directly proportional to the length of the passing zone.

Dror's First Law

While the difficulties and dangers of problems tend to increase at a geometric rate, the knowledge and manpower qualified to deal with these problems tend to increase linearly.

Dror's Second Law

While human capacities to shape the environment, society₃₄ and human beings

are rapidly increasing, policymaking capabilities to use those capacities remain the same.

Dryer's Law of Timing

If you're early, it'll be canceled. If you knock yourself out to be on time you will have to wait. If you're late, you will be too late.

Ducharme's Precept

Opportunity always knocks at the least opportune moment.

Dude's Law of Duality

Of two possible events, only the undesired one will occur.

Dunn's Discovery

The shortest measurable interval of time is the time between the moment one puts a little extra aside for a sudden emergency and the arrival of that emergency.

Dunne's Law

The territory behind rhetoric is too often mined with equivocation.

Durant's Discovery

One of the lessons of history is that nothing is often a good thing to do and always a clever thing to say.

Durrell's Parameter

The faster the plane, the narrower the seats.

Dyer's Law

A continuing flow of paper is sufficient to continue the flow of paper.

Dykstra's Law

Everybody is somebody else's weirdo.

E

Law of economic dispersion

The one you want is never the one on sale. If you like it, they don't have it in your size. You never want the one you can afford.

Economists' Laws

What men learn from history is that men do not learn from history.

If on an actuarial basis there is a 50-50 chance that something will go wrong, it will actually go wrong nine times out of ten.

Ed Yourdonradar's Fundamental Truth

The grass is brown on both sides of the fence.

Ed's Fifth Rule of Procrastination

Spend sufficient time confirming the need and the need will disappear.

Edds Law of Radiology

The colder the x-ray table, the more of your body you are required to place on it.

Edington's Theory

The number of different hypotheses erected to explain a given biological phenomenon is inversely proportional to the available knowledge.

Law of Editorial Correction

Anyone nit-picking enough to write a letter of correction to an editor doubtless deserves the error that provoked it.

Ehre's Double-Door Law

In approaching a double door, you will always go to the one door that is locked, pull when you should have pushed, and push when the sign says pull.

Ehrlich's Rule

The first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the parts.

Ehrman's Commentary

Things will get worse before they will get better. Who said things would get better?

Ehrman's Commentary on Ginberg's Theorem

Things will get worse before they get better.

Who said things would get better?

Electronic theorem of television sets

A \$300 picture tube will protect a 10½ fuse by blowing first

Elena's Laws of Animal Behavior

The probability of a cat eating it's dinner has absolutely nothing to do

with the price of the food placed before it.

Eliot's Observation

Nothing is so good as it seems beforehand.

Ellenberg's Theory

One good turn gets most of the blanket.

Emerson's Insight

That which we call sin in others is experiment for us.

Eng's Principles

The easier it is to do, the harder it is to change.

The "Enough Already" Law

The more you run over a dead cat, the flatter it gets.

Law of Entropy

If you put a spoonful of wine in a barrel full of sewage you get sewage. If you put a spoonful of sewage into a barrel full of wine you still get sewage.

Epstein's Law

If you think the problem is bad now, just wait until we've solved it.

Erhard's Contention

Nothing matters very much, and few things matter at all.

Erskines Observation on Government Procurement

An elephant is a mouse built to government specifications.

Etorre's Observation

The other line moves faster.

Corollary - Don't try to change lines. The other line -- the one you were in originally -- will then move faster.

Ettorre's Observation

The other line moves faster.

Evans's Law

Nothing worth a damn is ever done as a matter of principle. (If it is worth doing, it is done because it is worth doing. If it is not, it's done as a

matter of principle.)

Evans's Law of Politics

When team members are finally in a position to help the team, it turns out they have quit the team.

Eve's Discovery

At a bargain sale, the only suit or dress that you like best and that fits is the one not on sale.

Adam's Corollary - It's easy to tell when you've got a bargain -- it doesn't fit.

Evelyn's Rules for Bureaucratic Survival

A bureaucrat's castle is his desk... and parking place. Proceed cautiously when changing either.

On the theory that one should never take anything for granted, follow up on everything, but especially those items varying from the norm. The greater the divergence from normal routine and/or the greater the number of offices potentially involved, the better the chance a never-to-be-discovered person will file the problem away in a drawer specifically designed for items requiring a decision.

Never say without qualification that your activity has sufficient space, money, staff, etc.

Always distrust offices not under your jurisdiction which say that they are there to serve you. "Support" offices in a bureaucracy tend to grow in size and make demands on you out of proportion to their service, and in the end require more effort on your part than their service is worth.

Corollary - Support organizations can always prove success by showing service to someone... not necessarily you.

Incompetents often hire able assistants.

Everitt's Form of the Second Law of Thermodynamics

Confusion (entropy) is always increasing in society. Only if someone or something works extremely hard can this confusion be reduced to order in a

limited region. Nevertheless, this effort will still result in an increase in the total confusion of society at large.

Evvie Nef's Law

There is a solution to every problem; the only difficulty is finding it.

Experiential Law

Good judgment comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgment.

First Law of Expert Advice

Don't ask the barber whether you need a haircut.

Extended Epstein-Heisenberg Principle

In an R & D orbit, only 2 of the existing 3 parameters can be defined simultaneously. The parameters are: task, time, and resources (\$).

If one knows what the task is, and there is a time limit allowed for the completion of the task, then one cannot guess how much it will cost.

If the time and resources (\$) are clearly defined, then it is impossible to know what part of the R & D task will be performed.

If you are given a clearly defined R & D goal and a definite amount of money which has been calculated to be necessary for the completion of the task, one cannot predict if and when the goal will be reached.

If one is lucky enough to be able to accurately define all three parameters, then what one is dealing with is not in the realm of R & D.

Extended Murphy's Law

If a series of events can go wrong, it will do so in the worst possible sequence.

F

Faber's Laws

If there isn't a law, there will be.

The number of errors in any piece of writing rises in proportion to the writer's reliance on secondary sources.

Rule of Failure

If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you have tried.

Fairfax's Law

Any facts which, when included in the argument, give the desired result, are fair facts for the argument.

Falkland's Rule

When it is not necessary to make a decision, it is necessary not to make a decision.

Law of Fallibility

Everything put together falls apart sooner or later. Sooner or later, the worst possible set of circumstances is bound to occur.

Farber's Laws

Give him an inch and he'll screw you.

A hand in the bush is worth two anywhere else.

We're all going down the same road in different directions.

Necessity is the mother of strange bedfellows.

Farmer's Comment

If you mess with something long enough, it'll break.

Farnsdick's corollary

After things have gone from bad to worse, the cycle will repeat itself.

Farrow's Finding

If God had intended for us to go to concerts, He would have given us tickets.

Law of Fashion

Any given dress is: indecent 10 years before its time, daring 1 year before its time, chic in its time, dowdy 3 years after its time, hideous 20 years after its time, amusing 30 years after its time, romantic 100 years after its time, and beautiful 150 years after its time.

Faust's First Law of Synergism

The one day you'd sell your soul for something, souls are a glut on the market.

Featherkile's Rule

Whatever you did, that's what you planned to do.

Rule of Feline Frustration

When your cat has fallen asleep on your lap and looks utterly content and adorable, you will suddenly have to go to the bathroom.

Feline Law

A cat walking into a room containing twelve seated people will jump into the lap of the person who hates cats the most.

Femo's Law Of Automotive Engine Repairing

If you drop something, it will never reach the ground.

Ferguson's Precept

A crisis is when you can't say "let's forget the whole thing."

Fetridge's Law

Important things that are supposed to happen do not happen, especially when people are looking.

Fett's Law of the Lab

Never replicate a successful experiment.

Fett's Law of the Lab (Fett's Law)

Never replicate a successful experiment.

Finagle's Creed

Science is Truth. Don't be misled by fact.

Finagle's First Law

If an experiment works, something has gone wrong.

Finagle's Second Law

No matter what the experiment's result, there will always be someone eager to:

- (a) misinterpret it.
- (b) fake it. or
- (c) believe it supports his own pet theory.

Finagle's Third Law

In any collection of data, the figure most obviously correct, beyond all

need of checking, is the mistake.

Corollaries

No one whom you ask for help will see it.

Everyone who stops by with unsought advice will see it immediately.

Finagle's Fourth Law

Once a job is fouled up, anything done to improve it only makes it worse.

Finagle's Law According to Niven

The perversity of the universe tends to a maximum.

Finagle's Laws of Information

The information you have is not what you want.

The information you want is not what you need.

The information you need is not what you can obtain.

The information you can obtain costs more than you want to pay.

Finagle's Rules

Ever since the first scientific experiment, man has been plagued by the increasing antagonism of nature. It seems only right that nature should be logical and neat, but experience has shown that this is not the case. A further series of rules has been formulated, designed to help man accept the pigheadedness of nature.

To study a subject best, understand it thoroughly before you start.

Always keep a record of data. It indicates you've been working.

Always draw your curves, then plot the reading.

In case of doubt, make it sound convincing.

Law of Continuity

Experiments should be reproducible. They should all fail in the same way.

Correspondence Corollary

An experiment may be considered a success if no more than half of your data must be discarded to obtain

When you don't know what you are doing, do it NEATLY.

Teamwork is essential; it allows you to blame someone else.

Always verify your witchcraft.

Be sure to obtain meteorological data before leaving on vacation.

Do not believe in miracles. Rely on them.

Finnigan's Law

In any collection of data, the figure most obviously correct, beyond all need of checking is the mistake.

Finster's Law

A closed mouth gathers no feet.

Firestone's Law of Forcasting

Chicken Little only has to be right once.

Firth's Law of Tailoring

No matter how many alterations, cheap pants never fit.

Fishbein's Conclusion

The tire is only flat on the bottom.

Fitz-Gibbon's Law

Creativity varies inversely with the number of cooks involved with the broth.

Flagle's Law of the Perversity of Inanimate Objects (Flap's Law)

Any inanimate object, regardless of its composition or configuration, may be expected to perform at any time in a totally unexpected manner, for reasons that are either entirely obscure or else completely mysterious.

Flaw of Long-Range Planning

The longer ahead you plan a special event, and the more special it is, the more likely it is to go wrong.

Flip Wilson's Law

You can't expect to hit the jackpot if you don't put a few nickles in the machine.

Law For Free-Lance Artists

A high paying rush job will come in only after you've committed to a low paying rush job.

All rush jobs are due the same day.

The rush job you spent all night on won't be picked up by the customer for two days. Anything is easier to take apart than to put together

Ford Pinto Rule

Never buy a car that has a wick.

Formula for Public Office Survival

Exploit the inevitable (which means, take credit for anything good which happens whether you had anything to do with it or not).

Don't disturb the perimeter (meaning don't stir up a mess unless you can be sure of the result).

Stay in with the Outs (the Ins will make so many mistakes, you can't afford to alienate the Outs).

Go where the money is.

Forsyth's Second Corollary to Murphy's Laws

Just when you see the light at the end of the tunnel, the roof caves in.

Forthoffer's Cynical Summary of Barzun's Laws

That which has not yet been taught directly can never be taught directly.

If at first you don't succeed, you will never succeed.

Fortis's Three Great Lies of Life

Money isn't everything.

It's great to be a Negro.

I'm only going to put it in a little way.

Foster's Law

If you cover a congressional committee on a regular basis, they will report the bill on your day off.

Fourteenth Corollary of Atwood's General Law of Dynamic Negatives

No books are lost by loaning except those you particularly wanted to keep.

Fowler's Law

In a bureaucracy, accomplishment is inversely proportional to the volume of paper used.

Fowler's Note

The only imperfect thing in nature is the human race.

Frankel's Law

Whatever happens in government could have happened differently, and it usually would have been better if it had.

Corollary - Once things have happened, no matter how accidentally, they will be regarded as manifestations of an unchangeable Higher Reason.

Franklin's Observation

He that lives upon Hope dies farting.

Franklin's Rule

Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall not be disappointed.

Fred Allen's Motto

I'd rather have a free bottle in front of me than a prefrontal lobotomy.

Freddie's Laws of Biomechanics

The severity of the itch is directly proportional to:

The number of persons in the group you are with.

The distance you must reach to scratch it.

The more embarrassing the place that must be scratched.

Freeman's Commentary on Ginsberg's Theorem

Every major philosophy that attempts to make life seem meaningful is based on the negation of one part of Ginsberg's Theorem. To wit:

Capitalism is based on the assumption that you can win.

Socialism is based on the assumption that you can break even.

Mysticism is based on the assumption that you can quit the game.

Freeman's Rule

Nothing is so simple that it cannot be misunderstood.

Freemon's Rule

Circumstances can force a generalized incompetent to become competent, at least in a specialized field.

Fried's Law

Ideas endure and prosper in inverse proportion to their soundness and validity.

Law of Friendship

Anyone who is popular is bound to be disliked.

Frisch's Law

You cannot have a baby in one month by getting nine women pregnant.

Frothingham's Fallacy

Time is money.

Fudd's First Law of Opposition

If you push something hard enough, it will fall over.

Fulton's Law

When you need to knock on wood is when you discover that the world is made of aluminum, vinyl and fiberglass.

Fundamental Tenet of Reform

Reforms come from below. No man with four aces howls for a new deal.

Funkhouser's Law of the Power of the Press

The quality of legislation passed to deal with a problem is inversely proportional to the volume of media clamor that brought it on.

The Futility Factor (Carson's Consolation)

No experiment is ever a complete failure -- it can always serve as a bad example, or the exception that proves the rule (but only if it is the first experiment in the series).

Law of Future Results

Nothing ever comes out as planned.

Fyffe's Axiom

The problem-solving process will always break down at the point at which it is possible to determine who caused the problem.

G

Gadarene Swine Law

Merely because the group is in formation does not mean that the group is on

the right course.

Galbraith's Law of Political Wisdom

Anyone who says he isn't going to resign, four times, definitely will.

Galbraith's Law of Prominence

Getting on the cover of "Time" guarantees the existence of opposition in the future.

Gallois's Revelation

If you put tomfoolery into a computer, nothing comes back out but tomfoolery. But this tomfoolery, having passed through a very expensive machine, is somehow ennobled, and no one dares to criticize it.

Corollary - An expert is a person who avoids the small errors while sweeping on to the Grand Fallacy.

Gardner's Rule of Society

The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water.

Garfinkle's Law of Quality

of two possible events, only the undesired one will occur.

Gell-Mann's Dictum

Whatever isn't forbidden is required.

Corollary - If there's no reason why something shouldn't exist, then it must exist.

Law of General Assistance

In dealing with their own problems, helping professionals are the most extreme conservatives.. In dealing with the problems of others, they are the most extreme liberals.

Law of Generalizations

All generalizations are false.

Gerrold's Fundamental Truth

It's a good thing money can't buy happiness. We couldn't stand the commercials.

Gerrold's Law

A little ignorance can go a long way.

Lyall's Addendum ...in the direction of maximum harm.

Gerrold's Laws of Infernal Dynamics

An object in motion will always be headed in the wrong direction.

An object at rest will always be in the wrong place.

The energy required to change either one of the states will always be more than you wish to expend, but never so much as to make the task totally impossible.

Gerrold's Pronouncement

The difference between a politician and a snail is that a snail leaves its slime behind.

Gershwin's Law

It ain't necessarily so.

Getty's Reminder

The meek shall inherit the earth, but NOT its mineral rights.

Gibb's Law

Infinity is one lawyer waiting for another.

Gilb's Laws of Unreliability (see also Troutman's Laws of Computer Programming)

Computers are unreliable, but humans are even more unreliable.

Corollary - At the source of every error which is blamed on the computer you will find at least two human errors, including the error of blaming it on the computer.

Any system which depends on human reliability is unreliable.

The only difference between the fool and the criminal who attacks a system is that the fool attacks unpredictably and on a broader front.

A system tends to grow in terms of complexity rather than of

simplification, until the resulting unreliability becomes intolerable.

Self-checking systems tend to have a complexity in proportion to the inherent unreliability of the system in which they are used.

The error-detection and correction capabilities of any system will serve as the key to understanding the type of errors which they cannot handle.

Undetectable errors are infinite in variety, in contrast to detectable errors, which by definition are limited.

All real programs contain errors until proved otherwise -- which is impossible.

Investment in reliability will increase until it exceeds the probable cost of errors, or somebody insists on getting some useful work done.

Gilmer's Motto for Political Leadership

Look over your shoulder now and then to be sure someone's following you.

Ginsberg's Theorems (Generalized Laws of Thermodynamics or Ginsberg's Restatement of the Three Laws of Thermodynamics)

You can't win.

You can't break even.

You can't even quit the game.

Glatum's Law of Materialistic Acquisitiveness

The perceived usefulness of an article is inversely proportional to its actual usefulness once bought and paid for.

Glyme's Formula for Success

The secret of success is sincerity. Once you can fake that, you've got it made.

Godin's Law

Generalizedness of incompetence is directly proportional to highestness in hierarchy.

(Vic) Gold's Law

The candidate who is expected to do well because of experience and reputation (Douglas, Nixon) must do BETTER than well₄₆ while the candidate

expected to fare poorly (Lincoln, Kennedy) can put points on the media board simply by surviving.

(Bill) Gold's Law

A column about errors will contain errors.

Gold's Law

If the shoe fits, it's ugly.

Golden Principle

Nothing will be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome.

The Golden Rule

He who has the gold, makes the rules.

The Golden Rule of Arts and Sciences

Whoever has the gold makes the rules.

Goldstein's Law

In America, it's not how much an item costs, it's how much you save.

Goldwyn's Law of Contracts

A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on.

Golub's Laws of Computerdom

Fuzzy project objectives are used to avoid the embarrassment of estimating the corresponding costs.

A carelessly planned project takes three times longer to complete than expected; if carefully planned, it will take only twice as long.

The effort required to correct course increases geometrically with time.

Project teams detest weekly progress reporting because it so vividly manifests their lack of progress.

The 19 Rules for Good Riting

Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.

Just between you and I, case is important.

Verbs has to agree with their subject.

Watch out for irregular verbs which has cropped up into our language.

Don't use no double negatives.

A writer mustn't shift your point of view.

When dangling, don't use participles.

Join clauses good like a conjunction should.

And don't use conjunctions to start sentences.

Don't use a run-on sentence you got to punctuate it.

About sentence fragments.

In letters themes reports articles and stuff like that we use commas to keep strings apart.

Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.

Its important to use apostrophe's right.

Don't abbrev.

Check to see if you any words out.

In my opinion I think that the author when he is writing should not get into the habit of making use of too many unnecessary words which he does not really need.

Then, of course, there's that old one: Never use a preposition to end a sentence with.

Last but not least, avoid cliches like the plague.

Goodfader's Law

Under any system, a few sharpies will beat the rest of us.

Goodin's Law of Conversions

The new hardware will break down as soon as the old is disconnected and out.

Goodman's Law of Value

The more an item costs, the farther you have to send it for repairs.

Gordon's Dictum of Direction Giving

The possibility of getting lost is directly proportional to the number of times the direction-giver says "you can't miss it".

Gordon's First Law

If a research project is not worth doing at all, it is not worth doing well.

Goulden's Axiom of the Bouncing Can

If you drop a full can of beer, and remember to rap the top sharply with your knuckle prior to opening, the ensuing gush of foam will be between 89 and 94 percent of the volume that would splatter you if you didn't do a damned thing and went ahead and pulled the top immediately.

Goulden's Law of Jury Watching

If a jury in a criminal trial stays out for more than 24 hours, it is certain to vote acquittal, save in those instances when it votes guilty.

Government's Law

There is an exception to all laws.

Grabel's Law

2 is not equal to 3 - not even for very large values of 2.

Graditor's Laws

If it can break, it will, but only after the warranty expires.

A necessary item goes on sale only after you have purchased it at the regular price.

Grandma Soderquist's Conclusion

A chicken doesn't stop scratching just because the worms are scarce.

Gray's Law of Bilateral Asymmetry in Networks

Information flows efficiently through organizations, except that bad news encounters high impedance in flowing upward.

Gray's Law of Programming

$N+1$ trivial tasks are expected to be accomplished in the same time as N trivial tasks.

Loggs Rebuttal - $N+1$ trivial tasks take twice as long as N trivial tasks for N sufficiently large.

Rule of the Great

When someone you greatly admire and respect appears to be thinking deep

thoughts, they are probably thinking about lunch.

Law of The Great Idea

The only time you come up with a great solution is after somebody else has solved the problem.

Green's Law of Debate

Anything is possible if you don't know what you're talking about.

Greenberg's First Law of Influence

Usefulness is inversely proportional to reputation for being useful.

Greener's Law

Never argue with a man who buys ink by the barrel.

Greenhaus's Summation

I'd give my right arm to be ambidextrous.

Gresham's Law

Trivial matters are handled promptly; important matters are never resolved.

Gresham's Observations

On the theory that one should never take anything for granted, follow up on everything, but especially those items varying from the norm.

The greater the divergence from normal routine and/or the greater the number of offices potentially involved, the better the chance a never-to-be-discovered person will file the problem away in a drawer specifically designed for items requiring a decision.

Never say without qualification that your activity has sufficient space, money, staff, etc.

Always distrust offices not under your jurisdiction which say that they are there to serve you. "Support" offices in a bureaucracy tend to grow in size and make demands on you out of proportion to their service, and in the end require more effort on your part than their service is worth.

Corollary - Support organizations can always prove success by showing service to someone... not necessarily you.

Incompetents often hire able assistants.

Grierson's Law of Minimal Self- Delusion

Every man nourishes within himself a secret plan for getting rich that will not work.

Grocery Bag Law

The candy bar you planned to eat on the way home from the market is hidden at the bottom of the bag.

Grosch's Law

Computing power increases as the square of the cost. If you want to do it twice as cheaply, you have to do it four times slower.

Gross's Law

When two people meet to decide how to spend a third person's money, fraud will result.

Grossman's Law (Grossman's Misquote)

Complex problems have simple, easy to understand wrong answers.

Grossman's Misquote

Complex problems have simple, easy to understand wrong answers.

Gummidge's Law

The amount of expertise varies in inverse proportion to the number of statements understood by the general public.

Gumperson's Law

The probability of a given event occurring is inversely proportional to its desirability.

Corollaries:

After a salary raise, you will have less money at the end of the month than you had before.

The more a recruit knows about a given subject, the better chance he has of being assigned to something else.

You can throw a burnt match out the window of your car and start a forest fire, but you can use two boxes of matches and a whole edition of the Sunday paper without being able to start a fire under the dry logs in your

fireplace.

Children have more energy after a hard day of play than they do after a good night's sleep.

The person who buys the most raffle tickets has the least chance of winning.

Good parking places are always on the other side of the street.

Gumperson's Proof

The most undesirable things are the most certain (death and taxes).

Gunter's First Law of Air Travel

When you are served a meal aboard an aircraft, the aircraft will encounter turbulence.

Gunter's Second Law of Air Travel

The strength of the turbulence is directly proportional to the temperature of your coffee.

Guthman's Law of Media

Thirty seconds on the evening news is worth a front page headline in every newspaper in the world.

H

H. L. Mencken's Law

Those who can -- do.

Those who cannot -- teach.

Those who cannot teach -- administrate. (Martin's Extension)

Haberdasher's Instruction

Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.

Hacker's Law

The belief that enhanced understanding will necessarily stir a nation or an organization to action is one of mankind's oldest illusions.

Hacker's Law of Personnel

Anyone having supervisory responsibility for the completion of a task will invariably protest that more resources are needed.

Hagerty's Law

If you lose your temper at a newspaper columnist, he'll get rich or famous or both.

Haldane's Law

The Universe is not only queerer than we imagine, it is queerer than we CAN imagine.

Hale's Rule

The sumptuousness of a company's annual report is in inverse proportion to its profitability that year.

Hall's Law

There is a statistical correlation between the number of initials in an Englishman's name and his social class (the upper class having significantly more than three names, while members of the lower class average 2.6).

Halpern's Observation

The tendency to err that programmers have been noticed to share with other human beings has often been treated as if it were an awkwardness attendant upon programming's adolescence, which (like acne) would disappear with the craft's coming of age. It has proved otherwise.

Hanlon's Razor

Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity.

Hardin's Laws

Every time you come up with a terrific idea, you find that someone else thought of it first.

You can never do merely one thing.

Hare's Additional Lie

This will hurt me more than it hurts you.

Harper's Law

You never find anything until you replace it.

Harper's Magazine's Law

You never find an article until you replace it.

Harris's Lament

All the good ones are taken.

Harris's Law

Any philosophy that can be put "in a nutshell" belongs there.

Harris's Restaurant Paradox

One of the greatest unsolved riddles of restaurant eating is that the customer usually gets faster service when the restaurant is crowded than when it is half empty; it seems that the less the staff has to do, the slower they do it.

Harrison's Postulate

For every action, there is an equal and opposite criticism.

Hart's Law

In a country as big as the United States, you can find fifty examples of anything.

Hart's Law of The Conservation of Filth

In order for something to become clean, something else must become dirty.

Freedman's Extension

You can get everything dirty without getting anything clean.

Hartig's "How Is Good Old Bill?" Didn't you know we're divorced Law

If there is a wrong thing to say, one will.

Hartig's Sleeve in the Cup, Thumb in the Butter Law

When one is trying to be elegant and sophisticated, one won't.

Hartley's First Law

The probability of someone watching you is proportional to the stupidity of your action.

Hartley's Second Law

Never go to bed with anybody crazier than you are.

Hartley's Law

You can lead a horse to water, but if you can get him to float on his back you've got something.

Hartman's Automotive Laws

Nothing minor ever happens to a car on the weekend.

Nothing minor ever happens to a car on a trip.

Nothing minor ever happens to a car.

Harvard Law

Under the most rigorously controlled conditions of pressure, temperature, volume, humidity, and other variables, any experimental organism will do as it damn well pleases.

Harvard's Law, as applied to Computers

Under the most rigorously controlled conditions of pressure, temperature, volume, humidity and other variables, the computer will do as it damn well pleases.

Harver's Law

A drunken man's words are a sober man's thoughts.

Hawkin's Theory of Progress

Progress does not consist of replacing a theory that is wrong with one that is right. It consists of replacing a theory that is wrong with one that is more subtly wrong.

Hearst's Law

Never argue with a man who buys ink by the barrel.

Hein's Law

Problems worthy of attack prove their worth by hitting back.

Heisenberg's Addendum to Brownian Bureaucracy

If you observe a bureaucrat closely enough to make the distinction above, he will react to your observation by covering his ass.

Heller's Myths of Management

The first myth of management is that it exists. The second myth of management is that success equals skill.

Corollary (Johnson) - Nobody really knows what is going on anywhere within your organization.

Hellrung's Law

If you wait, it will go away.

Shevelson's Extension ... having done its damage.

Grelb's Addition ... if it was bad, it will be back.

Hendrickson's Law

If a problem causes many meetings, the meetings eventually become more important than the problem.

Herblock's Law

If it's good, they'll stop making it.

Herman's Observation

Vital papers will demonstrate their vitality by moving from where you left them to where you can't find them.

Herrnstein's Law

The total attention paid to an instructor is a constant regardless of the size of the class.

Hersh's Law

Biochemistry expands to fill the space and time available for its completion and publication.

Law of Hierarchical Communications

The inevitable result of improved communications between different levels in a hierarchy is a vastly increased area of misunderstanding.

Law of Highway Biology

The first bug to hit your clean windshield lands directly in front of your eyes.

Law of Highway Construction

The most heavily traveled streets spend the most time under construction.

Hildebrand's Law

The quality of a department is inversely proportional to the number of courses it lists in its catalogue.

Hill's Commentaries on Murphy's Laws

If we lose much by having things go wrong, take all possible care.

If we have nothing to lose by change, relax.

If we have everything to gain by change, relax.

If it doesn't matter, it does not matter.

Hind's Laws of Computer Programming

The value of a program is proportional to the weight of its output.

Any non-trivial program contains at least one bug.

Undetectable errors are infinite in variety, in contrast to detectable errors, which by definition are limited.

Adding manpower to a late software project makes it later.

Historian's Rule

Any event, once it has occurred, can be made to appear inevitable by a competent historian.

First Rule of History

History doesn't repeat itself -- historians merely repeat each other.

Hoare's Law of Large Programs

Inside every large program is a small program struggling to get out.

Rhode's Corollary to Hoare's Law

Inside every complex and unworkable program is a useful routine struggling to be free.

Hoare's Law of Larger Problems

Inside every large problem is a small problem struggling to get out.

Hofstatler's Law

Things always take twice as long as you anticipate, even if you take into account Hofstatler's Law. (This corollary is often elevated to the rank of a law. Since it is only a special case of Murphy's Law, though, it provides further justification for elevating Murphy's Law to a demi-law.)

Hogg's Law of Station Wagons

The amount of junk is in direct proportion to the amount of space available.

Baggage Corollary - If you go on a trip taking two bags with you, one containing everything you need for the trip and the other containing absolutely nothing, the second bag will be completely filled with junk acquired on the trip when you ret

Holsworth's Laws

If you can only do one thing well there is no market for it.

You can never do just one thing.

Holten's Homilies

The only time to be positive is when you are positive you are wrong.

The chief cause of problems is solutions.

The one who does the least work, will get the most credit.

Horner's Five Thumb Postulate

Experience varies directly with equipment ruined.

Horngren's Observation (generalized)

The real world is a special case.

Horowitz's Rule

A computer makes as many mistakes in two seconds as 20 men working 20 years.

Horticulturists Two Laws

Grass growing from sidewalk cracks never turns brown.

The life expectancy of a house plant varies inversely with its price and directly with its ugliness.

Howard's First Law of Theater

Use it.

Howe's Law

Every man has a scheme that will not work.

Hubbard's Law

Don't take life too seriously; you won't get out of it alive.

Hull's Theorem

The combined pull of several patrons is the sum of their separate pulls

multiplied by the number of patrons.

Hull's Warning

Never insult an alligator until after you have crossed the river.

Hunter's Theory of Personnel Recruitment

Far-away talent always seems better than home-developed talent.

I

IBM Pollyanna Principle (IBM'S Incorrect Principle)

Machines should work. People should think.

Idea Formula

One man's brain plus one other will produce about one half as many ideas as one man would have produced alone. These two plus two more will produce half again as many ideas. These four plus four more begin to represent a creative meeting, and the ratio changes to one quarter as many.

The Ike Tautology

Things are more like they are now than they have ever been before.

Corollary - Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

Iles's Law

There is an easier way to do it.

Corollaries:

When looking directly at the easier way, especially for long periods, you will not see it.

Neither will Iles.

Imhoff's Law

The organization of any bureaucracy is very much like a septic tank -- the REALLY big chunks always rise to the top.

Law of Inanimate Mobility

All inanimate objects can move just enough to get in your way

The Inapplicable Law

Washing your car to make it rain doesn't work.

Index of Development

The degree of a country's development is measured by the ratio of the price of an automobile to the cost of a haircut. The lower the ratio, the higher the degree of development.

Law of the Individual

Nobody really cares or understands what anyone else is doing.

Law of Inertia

Where there's a will, there's a won't.

Law of Inside Dope

There are many inside dopes in politics and government.

Law of Institutions

The opulence of the front office decor varies inversely with the fundamental solvency of the firm.

Law of Insurance Rates And Taxes

Whatever goes up, stays up.

Iron Law of Distribution

Them what has -- gets. Wakefield's Refutation of the Iron Law of Distribution:

Them what gets -- has.

Issawi's Law of Aggression

At any given moment, a society contains a certain amount of accumulated and accruing aggressiveness. If more than 21 years elapse without this aggressiveness being directed outward, in a popular war against other countries, it turns inward, in social unrest, civil disturbances, and political disruption.

Issawi's Law of Consumption Patterns

Other people's patterns of expenditure and consumption are highly irrational and slightly immoral.

Issawi's Law of Cynics

Cynics are right nine times out of ten; what undoes them is their belief that they are right ten times out of ten.

Issawi's Law of Dogmatism

When we call others dogmatic, what we really object to is their holding dogmas that are different from our own.

Issawi's Law of Estimation of Error

Experts in advanced countries underestimate by a factor of 2 to 4 the ability of people in underdeveloped countries to do anything technical.

Issawi's Law of Frustration

One cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs -- but it is amazing how many eggs one can break without making a decent omelette.

Issawi's Law of the Conservation of Evil

The total amount of evil in any system remains constant. Hence, any diminution in one direction -- for instance, a reduction in poverty or unemployment -- is accompanied by an increase in another, e.g., crime or air pollution.

Issawi's Law of the Social Sciences

By the time a social science theory is formulated in such a way that it can be tested, changing circumstances have already made it obsolete.

Issawi's Laws of Committo-Dynamics

Comitas comitatum, omnia comitas.

The less you enjoy serving on committees, the more likely you are to be pressed to do so.

Issawi's Laws of Progress

The Course of Progress: Most things get steadily worse.

The Path of Progress: A shortcut is the longest distance between two points.

The Dialectics of Progress: Direct action produces direct reaction.

The Pace of Progress: Society is a mule, not a car... If pressed too hard, it will kick and throw off its rider.

Issawi's Observation on the Consumption of Paper

Each system has its own way of consuming vast amounts of paper: in socialist

societies by filling large forms in quadruplicate, in capitalist societies by putting up huge posters and wrapping every article in four layers of cardboard.

Italian Proverb

She who is silent consents.

J

Jacob' Law

To err is human -- to blame it on someone else is even more human.

Jacquin's Postulate on Democratic Government

No man's life, liberty, or property are safe while the legislature is in session.

Jake's Law

Anything hit with a big enough hammer will fall apart.

Jaroslovsky's Law

The distance you have to park from your apartment increases in proportion to the weight of packages you are carrying.

Jay's Laws of Leadership

Changing things is central to leadership, and changing them before anyone else is creativity.

To build something that endures, it is of the greatest important to have a long tenure in office -- to rule for many years. You can achieve a quick success in a year or two, but nearly all of the great tycoons have continued their building much longer.

Jenkinson's Law

It won't work.

Jinny's Law

There is no such thing as a short beer. (As in, "I'm going to stop off at Joe's for a short beer before on the way home.")

John Cameron's Law

No matter how many times you've had it, if it's offered, take it, because

it'll never be quite the same again.

John's Axiom

When your opponent is down, kick him.

John's Collateral Corollary

In order to get a loan you must first prove you don't need it.

Johns Laws of Problems

Inside every large problem is a small problem struggling to get out.

Almost anything is easier to get into than to get out of.

Urgency varies inversely with importance.

Johnson's First Law

When any mechanical contrivance fails, it will do so at the most inconvenient possible time.

Johnson's First Law of Auto Repair

Any tool dropped while repairing an automobile will roll under the car to the vehicle's exact geographic center.

Johnson's Law

The number of minor illnesses among the employees is inversely proportional to the health of the organization.

Johnson's Laws

When any mechanical contrivance fails, it will do so at the most inconvenient time.

If, in the course of several months, only three worthwhile social events take place, they will all fall on the same evening.

If you miss one issue of any magazine, it will be the issue containing the article, story, or installment you were most anxious to read.

Corollary - All of your friends either missed it, lost it, or threw it out.

Johnson's Second Law

If, in the course of several months, only three worthwhile social events take place, they will all fall on the same evening.

Johnson's Third Law

If you miss one issue of any magazine, it will be the issue that contains the article, story or installment you were most anxious to read.

Johnson-Laird's Law

Toothache tends to start on Saturday night.

Jones' Law (Nixon's Law)

The man who can smile when things go wrong -- has thought of someone he can blame it on.

Jones' Motto

Friends may come and go, but enemies accumulate.

McClaghry's Codicil on Jones's Motto: To make an enemy, do someone a favor.

Jones's Principle

Needs are a function of what other people have.

Joslyn's Law of Conferences

The most interesting paper will be presented at the same time as the second most interesting paper.

Journalistic Principle

If a headline ends in a question mark, the answer is no.

Juhani's Law

The compromise will always be more expensive than either of the suggestions it's compromising.

Julia's Law of Kitchen of Confusion

Once a dish is fouled up, anything added to save it will only make it worse.

Julian's Law

If it says "one size fits all," it doesn't fit anyone.

K

Kafka's Law

In the fight between you and the world, back the world. 67

Kamin's Laws (Banin's Laws)

All currencies will decrease in value and purchasing power over the long term, unless they are freely and fully convertible into gold and that gold is traded freely without restrictions of any kind.

Threat of capital controls accelerates marginal capital outflows.

Combined total taxation from all levels of government will always increase (until the government is replaced by war or revolution).

Government inflation is always worse than statistics indicate: central bankers are biased toward inflation when the money unit is non-convertible, and without gold or silver backing.

Purchasing power of currency is always lost far more rapidly than ever regained. (Those who expect even fluctuations in both directions play a losing game.)

When attempting to predict and forecast macro-economic moves or economic legislation by a politician, never be misled by what he says; instead watch what he does.

Politicians will always inflate when given the opportunity.

Kamin's Laws of economics

All currencies will decrease in value and purchasing power over the long term, unless they are freely and fully convertible into gold and that gold is traded freely without restrictions of any kind.

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Kaplan's Law of the Instrument

Give a small boy a hammer and he will find that everything he encounters needs pounding.

Katz's Law

Men, women and nations will act rationally when all other possibilities have been exhausted.

Katz's Maxims

Where are the calculations that go with the calculated risk?

Inventing is easy for staff outfits. Stating a problem is much harder.

Instead of stating problems, people like to pass out half- accurate statements together with half-available solutions which they can't finish and which they want you to finish.

Every organization is self-perpetuating. Don't ever ask an outfit to justify itself, or you'll be covered with facts, figures, and fancy. The criterion should rather be, "What will happen if the outfit stops doing what it's doing?" The value of an organization is more easily determined this way.

Try to find out who's doing the work, not who's writing about it, controlling it, or summarizing it.

Watch out for formal briefings; they often produce an avalanche (a high-level snow job of massive and overwhelming proportions).

The difficulty of the coordination task often blinds one to the fact that a fully coordinated piece of paper is not supposed to be either the major or the final product of the organization, but it often turns out that way.

Most organizations can't hold more than one idea at a time. Thus complementary ideas are always regarded as competitive. Further, like a quantized pendulum, an organization can jump from one extreme to the other, without ever going through the middle.

Try to find the real tense of the report you are reading: Was it done, is

it being done, or is it something to be done? Reports are now written in four tenses: past tense, present tense, future tense, and pretense. Watch for novel uses of "contractor grammar", defined by the imperfect past, the insufficient present, and the absolutely perfect future.

Keiko's Law of Golf

The only way to avoid hitting a tree is to aim at it.

Kelley's Law

Last guys don't finish nice.

Kelly's Law

An executive will always return to work from lunch early if no one takes him.

Kennedy's Law

Excessive official restraints on information are inevitably self-defeating and productive of headaches for the officials concerned.

Kensington's Law of Shoemaking

No matter how long it takes for you to get back to pick up the shoes the shoemaker will tell you that they won't be ready until tomorrow.

Kensington's Observation

The two most common elements in the universe are hydrogen and stupidity.

Kent's Law

The only way a reporter should look at a politician is down.

Kerr-Martin Law

In dealing with their OWN problems, faculty members are the most extreme conservatives.

In dealing with OTHER people's problems, they are the world's most extreme liberals.

Kettering's Laws

If you want to kill any idea in the world today, get a committee working on it.

If you have always done it that way, it is probably wrong

Key to Status

$S = D/K$. S is the status of a person in an organization, D is the number of doors he must open to perform his job, and K is the number of keys he carries. A higher number denotes higher status. Thus the janitor needs to open 20 doors and has 20 keys ($S = 1$), a secretary has to open two doors with one key ($S = 2$), but the president never has to carry any keys since there is always someone around to open doors for him (with $K = 0$ and a high D , his S reaches infinity).

Keyes Rules of Misquotation

Axiom 1. Any quotation that can be altered will be.

Corollary 1A: Vivid words hook misquotes in the mind.

Corollary 1B: Numbers are hard to keep straight.

Corollary 1C: Small changes can have a big impact (or: what a difference an a makes).

Corollary 1D: If noted figures don't say what needs to be said, we'll say it for them.

Corollary 1E: Journalists are a less than dependable source of accurate quotes.

Corollary 1F: Famous dead people make excellent commentators on current events.

Axiom 2. Famous quotes need famous mouths.

Corollary 2A: Well-known messengers get credit for clever comments they report from less celebrated mouths.

Corollary 2B: Particularly quotable figures receive more than their share of quotable quotes.

Corollary 2C: Comments made about someone might as well have been said by that person.

Corollary 2D: Who you think said something may depend on where you live.

Corollary 2E: Vintage quotes are considered to be in the public domain.

Corollary 2F: In a pinch, any orphan quote can be called a Chinese

proverb.

Kharasch's Institutional Imperative

Every action or decision of an institution must be intended to keep the institution machinery working.

Corollary - The expert judgment of an institution, when the matter involved concerns continuation of the institution's operations, is totally predictable, and hence the finding is totally worthless.

Kibitzer's Constant

When you can't discover the cause of a breakdown, all of the free advice you get will be for things you've already checked.

Kirkland's Law

The usefulness of any meeting is in inverse proportion to the attendance.

Kitman's Law

On the TV screen, pure drivel tends to drive off ordinary drivel.

Klipstein's Lament

All warranty and guarantee clauses are voided by payment of the invoice.

Klipstein's Law

Tolerances will accumulate unidirectionally toward maximum difficulty of assembly.

Klipstein's Law of Specifications

In specifications, Murphy's Law supersedes Ohm's.

Klipstein's Laws

Applied to General Engineering:

A patent application will be preceded by one week by a similar application made by an independent worker.

Firmness of delivery dates is inversely proportional to the tightness of the schedule.

Dimensions will always be expressed in the least usable term. Velocity, for example, will be expressed in furlongs per fortnight.

Any wire cut to length will be too short.

Applied to Prototyping and Production:

Tolerances will accumulate unidirectionally toward maximum difficulty to assemble.

If a project requires n components, there will be $n-1$ units in stock.

A motor will rotate in the wrong direction.

A failsafe circuit will destroy others.

A transistor protected by a fast-acting fuse will protect the fuse by blowing first.

A failure will not appear until a unit has passed final inspection.

A purchased component or instrument will meet its specs long enough, and only long enough, to pass incoming inspection.

After the last of 16 mounting screws has been removed from an access cover, it will be discovered that the wrong access cover has been removed.

After an access cover has been secured by 16 hold-down screws, it will be discovered that the gasket has been omitted.

After an instrument has been assembled, extra components will be found on the bench.

Klipstein's Observation

Any product cut to length will be too short.

Knight's Law

Life is what happens to you while you are making other plans.

Knoll's Law of Media Accuracy

Everything you read in the newspapers is absolutely true except for that rare story of which you happen to have firsthand knowledge.

Knowles's Law of Legislative Deliberation

The length of debate varies inversely with the complexity of the issue.

Corollary: When the issue is trivial, and everyone understands it, debate is almost interminable.

Kohn's Second Law

Any experiment is reproducible until another laboratory tries to repeat it.

Konrads Observations on Capitalism

There is no such thing as a "dirty capitalist", only a capitalist.

Capitalism can exist in one of only two states -- welfare or warfare.

Anything is possible, but nothing is easy.

Koppett's Law

Whatever creates the greatest inconvenience for the largest number must happen.

Korman's conclusion

The trouble with resisting temptation is it may never come your way again.

Kovac's Conundrum

When you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal.

Kristol's Law

Being frustrated is disagreeable, but the real disasters in life begin when you get what you want.

Krueger's Observation

A taxpayer is someone who does not have to take a civil service exam in order to work for the government.

L

La Rochefoucauld's Law

It is more shameful to distrust one's friends than to be deceived by them.

Labor Law

A disagreeable law is its own reward.

First Law of Laboratory Work

Hot glass looks exactly the same as cold glass.

LaCombe's Rule of Percentages

The incidence of anything worthwhile is either 15-25 percent or 80-90 percent.

Corollary (Dudenhoefer) - An answer of 50 percent will suffice for the 40-60 range.

Lafayette's Reprisal

The squeaky wheel gets replaced.

Laird's Law

Toothache tends to start on Saturday night.

Lamb's law of car purchasing

If you buy your first new car in fifteen years, next years they will introduce a new model with twenty seven new features never seen on a car before and the introductory price of the car will be eleven hundred dollars less than you paid for yours.

Landlord's Dilemmas

The hot water heater pump that fails will only do so after 5:00 P.M. on Friday evening when every tenant in the building is having a dinner party.

The next day , the only supplier in town that stocks parts for the pump tells you that the widget needed to fix it is in a warehouse in Cleveland and the warehousemen there have been on strike for seventeen weeks.

You are forced to buy a second rate heater and pump [sold only as a package] for six hundred and fifty dollars, and have it installed by a plumber at double time rates on Sunday morning.

On Monday at 9:00:A.M. the strike is settled.

On Monday at 9:15:A.M. the hardware store owner calls and says he has found a box containing thirty seven widgets on a shelf in his back room and he will sell one to you at the old price of ten cents.

Langin's Law

If things were left to chance, they'd be better

Langsam's Second Law

Everything depends.

Lani's Principles of Economics

Taxes are not levied for the benefit of the taxed.

\$100 placed at 7% interest compounded quarterly for 200~~7~~ years will

increase to more than \$100,000,000 by which time it will be worth nothing.

In God we trust; all others pay cash.

Larkinson's Law

All laws are basically false.

Larrimer's Constant

What this world needs is a damned good plague.

Larsen's Observations

Asking dumb questions. Is easier than correcting dumb mistakes.

He who hesitates is probably right.

When all else fails try the boss's suggestions.

Las Vegas's Axioms

It is morally wrong to allow suckers to keep their money

A Smith and Wesson beats a royal flush.

The Last Law

If several things that could have gone wrong did not go wrong, it would ultimately have been better if they had gone wrong.

de la Lastra's Law

After the last of 16 mounting screws has been removed from an access cover, it will be discovered that the wrong access cover has been removed.

de la Lastra's Corollary

After an access cover has been secured by 16 hold-down screws, it will be discovered that the gasket has been omitted.

Law of Late-Comer

Those who have the shortest distance to travel invariably arrive latest.

Law of Late-Comers

Those who have the shortest distance to travel invariably arrive latest.

Laura's Law

No child throws up in the bathroom.

Law of Lawmaking

Those who express random thoughts to legislative committees are often surprised and appalled to find themselves the instigators of law.

Laws of Applied Confusion

The one piece that the plant forgot to ship is the one that supports 75% of the balance of the shipment.

Corollary - Not only did the plant forget to ship it, 50% of the time they haven't even made it.

Truck deliveries that normally take one day will take five when you are waiting for the truck.

After adding two weeks to the schedule for unexpected delays, add two more for the unexpected, unexpected delays.

In any structure, pick out the one piece that should not be mismarked and expect the plant to cross you up.

Corollaries:

In any group of pieces with the same erection mark on it, one should not have that mark on it.

It will not be discovered until you try to put it where the mark says it's supposed to go.

Never argue with the fabricating plant about an error. The inspection prints are all checked off, even to the holes that aren't there.

Laws of Computability as Applied to Social Science

Any system or program, however complicated, if looked at in exactly the right way, will become even more complicated.

If at first you don't succeed, transform your data set.

Laws of Dormitory Life

The amount of trash accumulated within the space occupied is exponentially proportional to the number of living bodies that enter and leave within any given amount of time.

Since no matter can be created or destroyed (excluding nuclear and cafeteria substances), as one attempts to remove unwanted material (i.e.,

trash) from one's living space, the remaining material mutates so as to occupy 30 to 50 percent more than its original volume.

Corollary - Dust breeds.

The odds are 6:5 that if one has late classes, one's roommate will have the EARLIEST possible classes.

Corollary 1: One's roommate (who has early classes) has an alarm clock that is louder than God's own.

Corollary 2: When one has an early class, one's roommate will invariably enter the space late at night and suddenly become hyperactive, ill, violent, or all three.

Laws of Fashion and Fads

Indecent 10 years before its time,

Daring 1 year before its time,

Chic in its time,

Dowdy 3 years after its time,

Hideous 20 years after its time,

Amusing 30 years after its time,

Romantic 100 years after its time,

Beautiful 150 years after its time.

Laws of Gardening

Other people's tools work only in other people's yards.

Fancy gizmos don't work.

If nobody uses it, there's a reason.

You get the most of what you need the least.

Laws of Government

If anything can go wrong, it will do so, in triplicate.

Things go right so they can go wrong.

Men and nations will act responsibly when all other possibilities have been exhausted.

Life liberty or property are not safe while the legislature is in session.

Laws of Institutional Food

Everything is cold except what should be.

Everything, including the corn flakes, is greasy.

Laws of Procrastination

Procrastination shortens the job and places the responsibility for its termination on someone else (the authority who imposed the deadline).

It reduces anxiety by reducing the expected quality of the project from the best of all possible efforts to the best that can be expected given the limited time.

Status is gained in the eyes of others, and in one's own eyes, because it is assumed that the importance of the work justifies the stress.

Avoidance of interruptions including the assignment of other duties can be achieved, so that the obviously stressed worker can concentrate on the single effort.

Procrastination avoids boredom; one never has the feeling that there is nothing important to do.

It may eliminate the job if the need passes before the job can be done.

Laws of Revision

The more innocuous the modification appears to be, the further its influence will extend and the more plans will have to be redrawn.

If, when completion of a design is imminent, field dimensions are finally supplied as they actually are, instead of as they were meant to be, it will be easier to start all over.

After painstaking and careful analysis of a sample, you are always told that it is the wrong sample and doesn't apply to the problem.

Corollary - It is usually impractical to worry beforehand about interferences -- if you have none, someone will make one for you.

Laws of Serendipity

In order to discover anything you must be looking for something.

If you wish to make an improved product, you must already be engaged in making an inferior one.

Laws of Telephone Dynamics

The phone call you've been waiting for comes the minute you close and lock the door and start walking downstairs or when you have just comfortably immersed your entire body in a tub full of water.

Whomever you call will always have just left for the day, one minute ago.

You never get a busy signal when you dial a wrong number .

Laws of the Frisbee

The most powerful force in the world is that of a disc straining to land under a car, just beyond reach. (The technical term for this force is "car suck".)

The higher the quality of a catch or the comment it receives, the greater the probability of a crummy return throw. ("Good catch. . . Bad throw.")

One must never precede any maneuver by a comment more predictive than, "Watch this!" (Keep 'em guessing.)

The higher the costs of hitting any object, the greater the certainty it will be struck. (Remember: The disk is positive; cops and old ladies are clearly negative.)

The best catches are never seen. ("Did you see that?" "See what?")

The greatest single aid to distance is for the disc to be going in a direction you did not want. (Wrong way = long way.)

The most powerful hex words in the sport are: "I really have this down -- watch." (Know it? Blow it!)

In any crowd of spectators at least one will suggest that razor blades could be attached to the disc. ("You could maim and kill with that thing.")

The greater your need to make a good catch, the greater the probability your partner will deliver his worst throw. (If you can't touch it, you can't trick it.)

The single most difficult move with a disc is to put it down. ("Just one more!")

Laws of Understanding

Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.

No matter what goes wrong, there is always somebody who knew it would.

Lawson's Paradox

The average woman would rather be beautiful than smart because the average man sees better than he thinks.

Lawyer's Rule

When the law is against you, argue the facts. When the facts are against you, argue the law. When both are against you, call the other lawyer names.

Le Chatelier's Law

If some stress is brought to bear on a system in equilibrium, the equilibrium is displaced in the direction which tends to undo the effect of the stress.

Le Pelley's Law

The bigger the man, the less likely he is to object to caricature.

Leahy's Law

If a thing is done wrong often enough, it becomes right.

Corollary - Volume is a defense to error.

Lee's Axioms

No books are lost by lending except those you particularly wanted to keep.

The book you buy today for \$17.95 will come out tomorrow in paperback.

Lefty Gomez's Principle of Productive Procrastination

They can't hit it while I'm standing here holding it.

Lenin's Law

Whenever the cause of the people is entrusted to professors, it is lost.

Les Miserables Metalaw

All laws, whether good, bad, or indifferent, must be obeyed to the letter.

Levy's Eighth Law

No amount of genius can overcome a preoccupation with detail.

Levy's Laws of Research

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.

Nobody notices the big flaw in your research until a reporter for the most respected professional journal in your field arrives to interview you.

Levy's Laws of the Disillusionment of the True Liberal

Large numbers of things are determined, and therefore not subject to change.

Anticipated events never live up to expectations.

That segment of the community with which one has the greatest sympathy as a liberal inevitably turns out to be one of the most narrow-minded and bigoted segments of the community.

Always pray that your opposition be wicked. In wickedness there is a strong strain toward rationality. Therefore there is always the possibility, in theory, of handling the wicked by outthinking them.

Levy's Ten Laws of the Disillusionment of the True Liberal

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Corollary 1: Good intentions randomize behavior.

Corollary 2: Good intentions are far more difficult to cope with than malicious intent.

Corollary 3: If good intentions are combined with stupidity, it is impossible to outthink them.

Corollary 4: Any discovery is more likely to be exploited by the wicked than applied by the virtuous.

In unanimity there is cowardice and uncritical thinking.

To have a sense of humor is to be a tragic figure.

To know thyself is the ultimate form of aggression.

No amount of genius can overcome a preoccupation with detail.

Only God can make a random selection.

Eternal boredom is the price of constant vigilance.

Lewis's Laws

People will buy anything that's one to a customer.

No matter how long or how hard you shop for an item, after you've bought it it will be on sale somewhere cheaper.

Law of Libraries

No matter which book you need, it's on the bottom shelf.

Law of The Lie

No matter how often the lie is shown to be false, there will still remain a percentage of people who believe it to be true.

Liebermann's Law

Everybody lies; but it doesn't matter since nobody listens.

Liebling's Law

If you just try long enough and hard enough, you can always manage to boot yourself in the posterior.

Lilly's Megalaw

All laws are simulations of reality.

Lilly's Metalaw

All laws are simulations of reality.

Law of living

As soon as you're doing what you wanted to be doing, you want to be doing

something else.

Lloyd-Jones's Law of Leftovers

The amount of litter on the street is proportional to the local rate of unemployment.

Law of Local Anesthesia

Never say "oops" in the operating room.

Locksmith's Dilemma

The probability of having someone close the safe and spin the dial while you have the back of the lock off will vary directly with the square of the number of people you tell not to touch the safe while you get something out of the truck.

Loehmann on Loss

If we lose much by having things go wrong, take all possible care.

If we have nothing to lose by change, relax.

If we have everything to gain by change, relax.

If it doesn't matter, it does not matter.

Loman's law of product design

If you can't fix it, feature it.

Long's Notes

Always store beer in a dark place.

Certainly the game is rigged. Don't let that stop you; if you don't bet, you can't win.

Any priest or shaman must be presumed guilty until proved innocent.

Always listen to experts. They'll tell you what can't be done, and why. Then do it.

If it can't be expressed in figures, it is not science; it is opinion.

It has long been known that one horse can run faster than another -- but which one? Differences are crucial.

A fake fortuneteller can be tolerated. But an authentic soothsayer should be shot on sight. Cassandra did not get half the kicking around she

deserved.

Delusions are often functional. A mother's opinions about her children's beauty, intelligence, goodness, et cetera ad nauseam, keep her from drowning them at birth.

A generation which ignores history has no past -- and no future.

A poet who reads his verse in public may have other nasty habits.

Small change can often be found under seat cushions.

History does not record anywhere at any time a religion that has any rational basis. Religion is a crutch for people not strong enough to stand up to the unknown without help. But, like dandruff, most people do have a religion and spend time and money on it and seem to derive considerable pleasure from fiddling with it.

It's amazing how much "mature wisdom" resembles being too tired.

Of all the strange "crimes" that human beings have legislated out of nothing, "blasphemy" is the most amazing -- with "obscenity" and "indecent exposure" fighting it out for second and third place.

It's better to copulate than never.

Everything in excess! To enjoy the flavor of life, take big bites.

Moderation is for monks.

It may be better to be a live jackal than a dead lion, but it is better still to be a live lion. And usually easier.

Never appeal to a man's "better nature". He may not have one. Invoking his self-interest gives you more leverage.

Little girls, like butterflies, need no excuse.

Avoid making irrevocable decisions while tired or hungry.

An elephant: A mouse built to government specifications.

A zygote is a gamete's way of producing more gametes. This may be the purpose of the universe.

Stupidity cannot be cured with money, or through education, or by legislation. Stupidity is not a sin; the victim can't help being stupid.

But stupidity is the only universal capital crime; the sentence is death, there is no appeal, and execution is carried out automatically and without pity.

God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. It says so right here on the label. If you have a mind capable of believing all three of these divine attributes simultaneously, I have a wonderful bargain for you. No checks, please. Cash and in small bills.

Beware of altruism. It is based on self-deception, the root of all evil.

The most preposterous notion that H. sapiens has ever dreamed up is that the Lord God of Creation, Shaper and Ruler of all the Universe, wants the saccharine adoration of His creatures, can be swayed by their prayers, and becomes petulant if He does not receive this flattery. Yet this absurd fantasy, without a shred of evidence to bolster it, pays all the expenses of the oldest, largest, and least productive industry in all history.

The second most preposterous notion is that copulation is inherently sinful.

Everybody lies about sex.

Rub her feet.

Never underestimate the power of human stupidity.

Always tell her she is beautiful, especially if she is not.

In a family argument, if it turns out you are right, apologize at once.

To stay young requires unceasing cultivation of the ability to unlearn old falsehoods.

Does history record any case in which the majority was right?

Secrecy is the beginning of tyranny.

The greatest productive force is human selfishness.

Be wary of strong drink. It can make you shoot at tax collectors -- and miss.

Expertise in one field does not carry over into other fields. But experts often think so. The narrower their field of knowledge the more likely they

are to think so.

Never try to outstubborn a cat.

Tilting at windmills hurts you more than the windmills.

Yield to temptation; it may not pass your way again.

Waking a person unnecessarily should not be considered a capital crime.

For a first offense, that is.

The correct way to punctuate a sentence that starts: "Of course it's none of my business, but... " is to place a period after the word "but". Don't use excessive force in supplying such a moron with a period. Cutting his throat is only a momentary pleasure and is bound to get you talked about.

A skunk is better company than a person who prides himself on being "frank".

Natural laws have no pity.

You can go wrong by being too skeptical as readily as by being too trusting.

Anything free is worth what you pay for it.

Climate is what we expect; weather is what we get.

Pessimist by policy, optimist by temperament -- it is possible to be both.

How? By never taking an unnecessary chance and by minimizing risks you can't avoid. This permits you to play out the game happily, untroubled by the certainty of the outcome.

"I came, I saw, SHE conquered." (The original Latin seems to have been garbled.)

A committee is a life form with six or more legs and no brain.

Don't try to have the last word. You might get it.

(F)law of Long-Range Planning

The longer ahead you plan a special event, and the more special it is, the more likely it is to go wrong.

Lord Falkland's Rule

When it is not necessary to make a decision, it is necessary not to make a

decision.

Los Angeles Dodgers Law

Wait till last year.

Law of the Lost Inch

In designing any type of construction, no overall dimension can be totalled correctly after 4:40 p.m. on Friday.

Corollaries:

Under the same conditions, if any minor dimensions are given to sixteenths of an inch, they cannot be totalled at all.

The correct total will become self-evident at 9:01 a.m. on Monday.

Louie's "IF" Rules

If it ain't no big deal, don't worry about it.

If you can't do anything about it, don't worry about it.

If it's someone else's problem, don't worry about it.

If it's easily fixed, it don't matter whose fault it was.

If it's done it's done, if it can't be undone--don't worry about it.

If there's no damage, don't make a project out of it.

Law of Love

A dandelion from a lover means more than an orchid from a friend.

Low's First Law of Management

Some people manage by the book even though they don't know who wrote the book or even what book.

Lowry's Additional Lie

I've never done this before.

Lowrey's Law

If it jams -- force it.

If it breaks, it needed replacing anyway.

Lowrey's Law of Expertis

Just when you get really good at something, you don't need to do it any more.

Lowrey's Law of Expertise

Just when you get really good at something, you don't need to do it any more.

Lubarsky's Law of Cybernetic Entomology

There's always one more bug.

Lubin's Law

If another scientist thought your research was more important than his, he would drop what he is doing and do what you are doing.

Luce's Law

No good deed goes unpunished.

Lucy Van Pelt's Observation

There must be one day above all others in each life that is the happiest.

Corollary - What if you've already had it?

Lucy's Laws

The alternative to getting old is depressing.

No good deed goes unpunished.

Luten's Laws

When properly administered, vacations do not diminish productivity: for every week you're away and get nothing done, there's another week when your boss is away and you get twice as much done.

It's not so hard to lift yourself by your bootstraps once you're off the ground.

Lyall's Conjecture

If a computer cable has one end, then it has another.

Lyall's Fundamental Observation

The most important leg of a three legged stool is the one that's missing.

Lydia's Axiom

Nothing is as temporary as that which is called permanent.

Corollary - Nothing is as permanent as that which is called temporary.

Lynch's Law

When the going gets tough, everybody leaves.

Lyndons principal

The light at the end of the tunnel is the headlamp of an oncoming train.

Lyon's Law of Hesitation

He who hesitates is last.

M

MacDonald's Second Law

Consultants are mystical people who ask a company for a number and give it back to them.

Macpherson's Theory of Entropy

It requires less energy to take an object out of it's proper place than to put it back.

Madison's Question

If you have to travel on a Titanic, why not go first-class?

Mae West's Observation

To err is human, but it feels terrific.

Mahr's Law of Restrained Involvement

Don't get any on you.

Maier's Law

If the facts do not conform to the theory, they must be disposed of.

Corollaries:

The bigger the theory, the better.

The experiment may be considered a success if no more than 50% of the observed measurements must be discarded to obtain a correspondence with the theory. (Compensation Corollary)

Main's Law

For every action there is an equal and opposite government program.

Malek's Law

Any simple idea will be worded in the most complicated way.

Malinowski's Law

Looking from far above, from our high places of safety in the developed civilization, it is easy to see all the crudity and irrelevance of magic.

Malloy's Maxim

The fact that monkeys have hands should give us pause.

Management Truths

Think before you act; it's not your money.

All good management is the expression of one great idea.

No executive devotes effort to proving himself wrong.

Cash in must exceed cash out.

Management capability is always less than the organization actually needs.

Either an executive can do his job or he can't.

If sophisticated calculations are needed to justify an action, don't do it.

If you are doing something wrong, you will do it badly.

If you are attempting the impossible, you will fail.

The easiest way of making money is to stop losing it.

Organizations always have too many managers.

Manley's Maxim

Logic is a systematic method of coming to the wrong conclusion with confidence.

Margaret Mead's Law of Human Migration

At least fifty percent of the human race doesn't want their mother-in-law within walking distance.

Mark Miller's Exception to Crane's Law

There are no "free lunches", but sometimes it costs more to collect money than to give away food.

Mark's mark

Love is a matter of chemistry; sex is a matter of physics.

Mark's Observation

Love is a matter of chemistry; sex is a matter of physics.

Marshall's Generalized Iceberg Theorem

Seven eighths of everything can't be seen.

Marshall's Universal Laws of Perpetual Perceptual Obfuscation

Nobody perceives anything with total accuracy.

No two people perceive the same thing identically.

Few perceive what difference it makes -- or care.

Martha's Maxim

If God had meant for us to travel tourist class, He would have made us narrower.

Martin's Exclusion

Committee reports dealing with wages, salaries, fringe benefits, facilities, computers, employee parking, libraries, coffee breaks, secretarial support, etc., always call for dramatic expenditure increases.

Martin's Law of Committees

All committee reports conclude that "it is not prudent to change the policy (or procedure, or organization, or whatever) at this time."

Martin's Exclusion: Committee reports dealing with wages, salaries, fringe benefits, facilities, computers, employee parking, libraries, coffee breaks, secretarial support, etc., always call for dramatic expenditure increases.

Martin's Law of Communication

The inevitable result of improved and enlarged communication between different levels in a hierarchy is a vastly increased area of misunderstanding.

Martin's Laws of Academia

The faculty expands its activity to fit whatever space is available, so that more space is always required.

Faculty purchases of equipment and supplies always increase to match the funds available, so these funds are never adequate.

The professional quality of the faculty tends to be inversely proportional

to the importance it attaches to space and equipment.

Martin's Minimax Maxim

Everyone knows that the name of the game is to let the other guy have all of the little tats and to keep all of the big tits for yourself.

Martin's Principle of Design Inertia

Any change looks terrible at first.

Martin-Berthelot Principle

Of all possible committee reactions to any given agenda item, the reaction that will occur is the one which will liberate the greatest amount of hot air.

Mason's First Law of Synergism

The one day you'd sell your soul for something, souls are a glut.

Mason's Law of Gastro Intestinal Disorders

If your stomach only occasionally growls it will happen on the first date with a beautiful woman you have been trying to get to go out with you for five months.

Matsch's Law

It is better to have a horrible ending than to have horrors without end.

Matsch's Maxim

A fool in a high station is like a man on the top of a small mountain: everything appears small to him and he appears small to everybody.

Matz's Warning

Beware of the physician who is great at getting out of trouble.

Maugham's Thought

Only a mediocre person is always at his best.

First Maxim of Computers

To err is human, but to really screw things up requires a computer.

May's Law

The quality of the correlation is inversely proportional to the density of the control (the fewer the facts, the smoother the curves)

May's Mordant Maxim

A university is a place where men of principle outnumber men of honor.

Maytag's Rule

Washing machines only break down during the wash cycle when they are full of water.

McCarthy's Law

Being in politics is like being a football coach. You have to be smart enough to understand the game and dumb enough to think it's important.

McClaughry's Law of Public Policy

Politicians who vote huge expenditures to alleviate problems get re-elected; those who propose structural changes to prevent problems get early retirement.

McClaughry's Law of Zoning

Where zoning is not needed, it will work perfectly; where it is desperately needed, it always breaks down.

McDonald's Second Law

Consultants are mystical people who ask a company for a number and give it back to them.

McGoon's Law

The probability of winning is inversely proportional to the amount of the wager.

McGovern's Law

The longer the title, the less important the job.

McGregor's Revised Maxim

The shortest distance between two points is under construction.

McGurk's Law

Any improbable event which would create maximum confusion if it did occur, will occur.

McIllvenna's Theory of Wrongness

If anything can go wrong, it will.

If anything just cannot go wrong, it will anyway.

If anything simply cannot go wrong, it will anyway.

If there is a worse time for something to go wrong, it will happen then.

If everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

If everything seems to be going well, you obviously don't know what's going on.

If there is a possibility of several things going wrong, the one that will cause the most damage will be the one to go wrong.

McKenna's Law

When you are right, be logical. When you are wrong, be-fuddle.

McLaughlin's Law

The length of any meeting is inversely proportional to the length of the agenda for that meeting.

McLean's Maxim

There are only two problems with people. One is that they don't think. The other is that they do.

McNaughton's Rule

Any argument worth making within the bureaucracy must be capable of being expressed in a simple declarative sentence that is obviously true once stated.

Melcher's Law

In a bureaucracy, every routing slip will expand until it contains the maximum number of names that can be typed in a single vertical column.

Mencken's Law

Those who can- do. Those who cannot- teach. Those who cannot teach-administrate.

Mencken's Metalaw

For every human problem, there is a neat, simple solution, and it is always

wrong.

Law of mental health

If you're feeling good, don't worry, you'll get over it.

Merkin's Maxim

When in doubt, predict that the present trend will continue.

Merrill's Corollaries

There are no winners in life; only survivors.

In the highway of life, the average happening is of about as much true significance as a dead skunk in the middle of the road.

Merrill's Laws of Scholarship

Never let your major professor know that you exist.

The final exam will be based entirely on the one lecture you missed about the book you didn't read.

The more studying you did for the exam, the less sure you are as to which answer they want.

When you are occasionally able to schedule two classes in a row, they will be held in classrooms at opposite ends of the campus.

Meskimen's Laws

When they want it bad (in a rush), they get it bad.

There's never time to do it right, but always time to do it over.

Mesta's Law of Parties

Those who live closest arrive last.

Meteorological Law

As soon as the stewardess serves coffee, the airliner encounters turbulence.

Scientific Explanation

Serving coffee on an airliner causes turbulence.

Meyer's Law

In a social situation, that which is most difficult to do is usually the right thing to do.

Michehl's Theorem

Less is more.

Pastore's Comment on Michehl's Theorem

Nothing is ultimate.

Mickelson's Law of Falling Objects

Any object that is accidentally dropped will hide under a larger object.

Miksch's Law

If a string has one end, then it has another end.

Miller's Christmas Card Rule

After you've mailed your last card, you will receive a card from someone you've overlooked.

Miller's Law (Martin's Extension)

You can't tell how deep a puddle is until you step into it.

Mills's Law of Transportation Logistics

The distance to the gate from which your flight departs is inversely proportional to the time remaining before the scheduled departure of the flight.

Corollaries (Woods):

This remains true even as you rush to catch the flight.

From this it follows that you are invariably rushing the wrong way.

Miscellaneous Pessimistic Musings

The chance of a piece of bread falling down with the buttered side down is directly proportional to the cost of the carpet.

Friends come and go, but enemies accumulate.

No matter how long or hard you shop for an item, after you've bought it, it will be on sale somewhere else cheaper.

Nature always sides with the hidden flaw.

Whatever plan one makes, there is a hidden difficulty somewhere.

If you do not understand a particular word in a piece of technical writing, ignore it. The piece will make perfect sense without it.

eware the day in which you don't have something to bitch about.

If it looks easy it's tough. If it looks tough it's damn well impossible.

Complex problems have simple, easy-to-understand, wrong answers.

If everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

There is nothing so small that it can't be blown out of proportion.

If you're feeling good, don't worry. You'll get over it.

If people listened to themselves more often, they would talk less.

MIT'S Law (Man In The Street)

The number of people watching you is directly proportional to the stupidity of your action.

Mobil's Maxim

Bad regulation begets worse regulation.

Moer's Truism

The trouble with most jobs is the resemblance to being in a sled dog team:

No one gets a change of scenery, except the lead dog.

Money Maxim

Money isn't everything. (It isn't plentiful, for instance.)

Montagu's Maxim

The idea is to die young as late as possible.

Montgomery's Maxim

If at first you don't succeed read the manual.

More of Murphy's Laws

Here is no limit to how bad things can get. There is no job so simple that it cannot be done wrong.

Morley's Conclusion

No man is lonely while eating spaghetti.

Morley's Conclusion

No man is lonely while eating spaghetti.

Morner's Rule of Thumb

Experience varies directly with equipment ruined.

Morton's Law

If rats are experimented upon, they will develop cancer. ("What this country needs are some stronger white rats.")

Mosher's Law

It's better to retire too soon than too late.

Mother Sigafoos's Observation

A man should be greater than some of his parts.

Mother's Laws

You can't fall off the floor. (it takes children three years to learn this law.)

A child will not spill on a dirty floor.

Any child who chatters non-stop at home will adamantly refuse to utter a word when requested to demonstrate for an audience.

An unbreakable toy is useful for breaking other toys.

Motor Vehicle Postulate

Eighty percent of all people consider themselves to be above-average drivers.

Motorist's Axioms

The driver in front of you wants to go five miles per hour slower than you.

When you're not in a hurry, the traffic light will turn green as soon as your vehicle comes to a complete stop.

You never really learn to swear until you learn to drive.

Your own car uses more gas and oil than anyone else's.

Four wheel drive just means getting stuck in more inaccessible places.

A short cut is the longest distance between two points.

Mr. Cole's Axiom

The sum of the intelligence on the planet is a constant; the population is growing.

Mr. Cooper's Law

If you do not understand a particular word in a piece of technical writing, ignore it. The piece will make perfect sense without it.

Mrs. Parkinson's Law

Heat produced by pressure expands to fill the mind available, from which it can pass only to a cooler mind.

Muir's Law

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.

Munnecke's Law

If you don't say it, they can't repeat it.

Munroes Observation

Common sense is not that common.

Murchison's Law of Money

Money is like manure. If you spread it around, it does a lot of good. But if you pile it up in one place, it stinks like hell.

The Murphy Philosophy

Smile, tomorrow will be worse.

Murphy's Constant

Matter will be damaged in direct proportion to its value.

Murphy's Corollaries

Murphy's Law may be delayed or suspended for an indefinite period of time, provided that such delay or suspension will result in a greater catastrophe at a later date.

The magnitude of the catastrophe is directly proportional to the number of people watching.

The magnitude of the catastrophe is exponentially proportional to the importance of the occasion.

If an outcome has a 50% chance of occurring, its actual probability of happening is inversely proportional to the desirability of the outcome.

If two corollaries of Murphy's Law contradict each other, the one with

greater potential for damage takes precedence.

Murphy's Faux Pas

The intensity of an itch is proportional to the formality of the occasion.

Light clothing attracts dark-colored food spills; Dark clothing attracts light-colored food spills.

The probability that you forget somebody's name is directly proportional to the degree to which they would feel insulted.

Other people will not notice your subtle hints, no matter how hard you try.

You will not notice other people's subtle hints, no matter how hard they try.

Law of Murphy's Law

Murphy's law was not propounded by Murphy, but by another man with the same name.

Murphy's Law of Copiers

The legibility of a copy is inversely proportional to its importance.

Murphy's Law of Research

Enough research will tend to support your theory.

Murphy's Law of the Open Road

When there is a very long road upon which there is a one-way bridge placed at random, and there are only two cars on that road, it follows that: (1) the two cars are going in opposite directions, and (2) they will always meet at the bridge.

Murphy's Law of Thermodynamics

Things get worse under pressure.

Murphy's Restatement

Everything goes wrong all at once.

Murray's Consumer Axioms

Never ask a barber if you need a haircut.

Never ask a salesman if his is a good price.

Always hire a rich attorney.

Never buy from a rich salesman.

Law of Museums

The most interesting specimen will not be labeled.

The First Myth of Management

It exists.

N

The N-1 Law

If you need four screws for the job, the first three are easy to find.

Nader's Law

The speed of exit of a civil servant is directly proportional to the quality of his service.

NASA Skylab Rule

Don't do it if you can't keep it up.

NASA Truisms

Research is reading two books that have never been read in order to write a third that will never be read.

A consultant is an ordinary person a long way from home.

Statistics are a highly logical and precise method for saying a half-truth inaccurately.

Law of Nations

In an underdeveloped country, don't drink the water; in a developed country, don't breathe the air.

Navy Law

If you can keep your head when all about you others are losing theirs, maybe you just don't understand the situation.

NBC's Addendum to Murphy's Law

You never run out of things that can go wrong.

Nef's Law

There is a solution to every problem; the only difficulty is finding it.

Nessen's Law

Secret sources are more credible.

Law of new civically backed football stadiums

If they build it, you will pay.

Law of New Fangled Gadgetry

The most expensive component is the one that breaks.

The New Math Version of Murphy's Law

If there is a 50/50 chance of something going wrong, nine times out of ten it will.

New Theory of Relativity

How long a minute is depends on which side of the bathroom door you are on.

Newman's Law

Hypocrisy is the Vaseline of social intercourse.

Newton's Little-known Seventh Law

A bird in the hand is safer than one overhead.

Nick the Greek's Law

All things considered, life is 9-to-5 against.

Nienberg's Law

Progress is made on alternate Fridays.

Nies's Law

The effort expended by the bureaucracy in defending any error is in direct proportion to the size of the error.

Ninety-ninety Rule of Project Schedules

The first ninety percent of the task takes ninety percent of the time, and the last ten percent takes the other ninety percent.

Nixon's Rule

If two wrongs don't make a right, try three.

No. 3 Pencil Principle

Make it sufficiently difficult for people to do something, and most people

will stop doing it.

Corollary - If no one uses something, it isn't needed.

Nobel Effect

There is no proposition, no matter how foolish, for which a dozen Nobel signatures cannot be collected. Furthermore, any such petition is guaranteed page-one treatment in the New York Times.

Nobel Principle

Only someone who understands something absolutely can explain it so no one else can understand it.

Noble's Law of Political Imagery

All other things being equal, a bald man cannot be elected President of the United States.

Corollary - Given a choice between two bald political candidates, the American people will vote for the less bald of the two.

Nonreciprocal Laws of Expectations

Negative expectations yield negative results.

Positive expectations yield negative results.

North Carolina Equine Paradox

Vyarzerzomanimororsezassezanzereorse?

Nowlan's Truism

An 'acceptable level of unemployment' means that the government economist to whom it is acceptable still has a job.

Nursing Mother Principle

Do not nurse a kid who wears braces.

Nyquist's Theory of Equilibrium

Equality is not when a female Einstein gets promoted to assistant professor; equality is when a female schlemiel moves ahead as fast as a male schlemiel.

O

O'Brian's Law

If you change lines, the one you just left will start to move faster than the one you are now in.

O'Brien's First Law of Politics

The more campaigning, the better.

O'Brien's Principle (The \$357.73 Theorem)

Auditors always reject any expense account with a bottom line divisible by 5 or 10.

O'Brien's Rule

Nothing is ever done for the right reason.

O'Reilly's Law of the Kitchen

Cleanliness is next to impossible.

O'Toole's Commentary on Murphy's Laws

Murphy was an optimist...

Jones' Extension to O'Toole's Commentary on Murphy's Laws

Not just an optimist- he was a hopeless romantic.

Oaks's Unruly Laws for Lawmakers

Law expands in proportion to the resources available for its enforcement.

Bad law is more likely to be supplemented than repealed.

Social legislation cannot repeal physical laws.

Law of Observation

Nothing looks as good close up as it does from far away.

The Obvious Law

Actually, it only SEEMS as though you mustn't be deceived by appearances.

Occam's Electric Razor

The most difficult light bulb to replace burns out first and most frequently.

Occam's Razor

Entities ought not to be multiplied except from necessity.

Reformulations:

The explanation requiring the fewest assumptions is the most likely to be

correct.

Whenever two hypotheses cover the facts, use the simpler of the two.

Cut the crap.

Oesner's Law (Oeser's Law?)

There is a tendency for the person in the most powerful position in an organization to spend all his time serving on committees and signing letters.

Old and Kahn's Law

The efficiency of a committee meeting is inversely proportional to the number of participants and the time spent on deliberations.

Old Children's Law

If it tastes good, you can't have it. If it tastes awful, you'd better clean your plate.

Old Engineer's Law

The larger the project or job, the less time there is to do it.

Old Scottish Prayer

O Lord, grant that we may always be right, for Thou knowest we will never change our minds.

Oliver's Law of Location

No matter where you are, there you are.

Olum's Observation (and see Martha's Maxim and Farrow's Finding)

If God had intended us to go around naked, He would have made us that way.

Ophthalmologist's Principle

A flying particle will seek the nearest eye.

Oppenheimer's Observation

The optimist thinks this is the best of all possible worlds, and the pessimist knows it.

Optimum Optimorum Principle

There comes a time when one must stop suggesting and evaluating new solutions, and get on with the job of analyzing and finally implementing one

pretty good solution.

Ordering Principle

Those supplies necessary for yesterday's experiment must be ordered no later than tomorrow noon.

Law of Organization

Disorder expands proportionately to the tolerance for it.

Organizational Law

The less work an organization produces, the more frequently it reorganizes.

Orion's Law

Everything breaks down.

Orwell's Law of Bridge

All bridge hands are equally likely, but some are more equally likely than others.

Osborn's Law

Variables won't; constants aren't.

Otoole's Axiom

One child is not enough, but two are too many.

Otten's Law of Testimony

When a person says that, in the interest of saving time, he will summarize his prepared statement, he will talk only three times as long as if he had read the statement in the first place.

Otten's Law of Typesetting

Typesetters always correct intentional errors, but fail to correct unintentional ones.

Ozian Option

I can't give you brains, but I can give you a diploma.

P

Panic Instruction

When you don't know what to do, walk fast and look worried.

Paperboy's rule of Weather

No matter how clear the skies are, a thunderstorm will move in 5 minutes after the papers are delivered.

Paradox of Selective Equality

All thing being equal, all things are never equal.

Paradoxical Law

Doing it the hard way is always easier.

Pardo's Postulates

Anything good is either illegal, immoral, or fattening.

The three faithful things in life are money, a dog, and an old woman.

Don't care if you're rich or not, as long as you live comfortably and can have everything you want.

Pareto's Law (The 20/80 Law)

20% of the customers account for 80% of the turnover, 20% of the components account for 80% of the cost, and so forth.

Parker's Law of Political Statements

The truth of a proposition has nothing to do with its credibility, and vice versa.

Parker's Prophecies

If anything is used to it's full potential, it will break.

Anything labeled "new" and/or "improved" isn't.

If an item is advertised as "under \$50.00," you can bet it's not \$19.95.

The one you want is never the one on sale.

If you like it, they don't have it in your size.

You never want the one you can afford.

Parker's Rule of Parliamentary Procedure

A motion to adjourn is always in order.

Parker's Third Rule of Tech Support

If you can't navigate a one-level, five-item phone tree, you didn't need a computer anyway.

Parkin's Law of Irritation

Anything that happens enough times to irritate you will happen at least once more.

Parking Laws

Parking place Defined: A huge space large enough for six cars on the other side of the street.

Axioms:

As soon as you have made your U Turn to take one of the places six cars come along and take all of them all.

If you have to park six blocks away and walk back to the building, you will find two new parking spaces right in front of the building entrance when you get there.

If only two cars are left in a huge parking lot, one will be blocking the other.

Parkinson's Axioms

An official wants to multiply subordinates, not rivals.

Officials make work for each other.

Parkinson's Law of 1000

An enterprise employing more than 1000 people becomes a self-perpetuating empire, creating so much internal work that it no longer needs any contact with the outside world.

Parkinson's Law of Delay

Delay is the deadliest form of denial.

Parkinson's Law of Medical Research

Successful research attracts the bigger grant which makes further research impossible.

Parkinson's Law of the Telephone

The effectiveness of a telephone conversation is in inverse proportion to the time spent on it.

Parkinson's Laws

Work expands to fill the time available for its completion; the thing to

be done swells in perceived importance and complexity in a direct ratio with the time to be spent in its completion.

Expenditures rise to meet income.

Expansion means complexity; and complexity decay.

The number of people in any working group tends to increase regardless of the amount of work to be done.

If there is a way to delay an important decision the good bureaucracy, public or private, will find it.

The progress of science varies inversely with the number of journals published.

Parkinson's Principle of Non-Origination

It is the essence of grantsmanship to persuade the Foundation executives that it was THEY who suggested the research project and that you were a belated convert, agreeing reluctantly to all they had proposed.

Parson's Laws

If you break a cup or plate, it will not be the one that was already chipped or cracked.

A place you want to get to is always just off the edge of the map you happen to have handy.

A meeting lasts at least 1 1/2 hours however short the agenda.

The Party Law

The more food you prepare, the less your guests eat.

Pastore's Comment on Michehl's Theorem

Nothing is ultimate.

Pastore's Truths

Even paranoids have enemies.

Most jobs are marginally better than daytime TV.

On alcohol: four is one more than more than enough.

Patrick's Theorem

If the experiment works, you must be using the wrong equipment.

Patton's Law

A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow.

Paturi Principle

Success is the result of behavior that completely contradicts the usual expectations about the behavior of a successful person.

Corollary - The amount of success is in inverse proportion to the effort involved in attaining it.

Paul Principle

People become progressively less competent for jobs they once were well equipped to handle.

Paul's Law (of Drinking)

You can't fall off the floor.

Paul's Law of Group Insurance

The illness you come down with is the one ailment not covered under your insurance policy.

Paulg's Law

In America, it's not how much an item costs, it's how much you save.

Peck's Programming Postulates (Philosophic Engineering applied to programming)

In any program, any error which can creep in will eventually do so.

Not until the program has been in production for at least six months will the most harmful error be discovered.

Any constants, limits, or timing formulas that appear in the computer manufacturer's literature should be treated as variables.

The most vital parameter in any subroutine stands the greatest chance of being left out of the calling sequence.

If only one compiler can be secured for a piece of hardware, the compilation times will be exorbitant.

If a test installation functions perfectly, all subsequent systems will malfunction.

Job control cards that positively cannot be arranged in improper order, will be.

Interchangeable tapes won't.

If more than one person has programmed a malfunctioning routine, no one is at fault.

If the input editor has been designed to reject all bad input, an ingenious idiot will discover a method to get bad data past it.

Duplicated object decks which test in identical fashion will not give identical results at remote sites.

Manufacturer's hardware and software support ceases with payment for the computer.

Peckham's Law (Beckhap's Law?)

Beauty times brains equals a constant.

Peer's Law

The solution to a problem changes the problem.

Perelman's Point

There is nothing like a good painstaking survey full of decimal points and guarded generalizations to put a glaze like a Sung vase on your eyeball.

Perkin's Postulate

The bigger they are, the harder they hit.

Perlsweig's Law

People who can least afford to pay rent, pay rent. People who can most afford to pay rent, build up equity.

Law of Permanence

Political power is as permanent as today's newspaper. Ten years from now, few will know or care who the most powerful man in any state was today.

Persig's Postulate

The number of rational hypotheses that can explain any given phenomenon is infinite.

The Perverse Principles of Temperature Regulation

The air conditioner in your car will break down on the hottest day of the year, the heater will be stuck on "High", and all of the windows will be seized shut.

The heater will break down on the coldest day of the year, the air conditioner will be stuck on "High" and the windows will be seized open.

Law of the Perversity of Nature

You cannot successfully determine beforehand which side of the bread to butter.

Perversity of Nature Law

You cannot successfully determine beforehand which side of the bread to butter.

Peter Principle

In every hierarchy, whether it be government or business, each employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence; every post tends to be filled by an employee incompetent to execute its duties.

Corollaries:

Incompetence knows no barriers of time or place.

Work is accomplished by those employees who have not yet reached their level of incompetence.

If at first you don't succeed, try something else.

Peter's Hidden Postulate According to Godin

Every employee begins at his level of competence.

Peter's Inversion

Internal consistency is valued more highly than efficiency.

Peter's Law of Evolution

Competence always contains the seed of incompetence.

Peter's Law of Substitution

Look after the molehills and the mountains will look after themselves.

Peter's Observation

Super-competence is more objectionable than incompetence.

Peter's Paradox

Employees in a hierarchy do not really object to incompetence in their colleagues.

Peter's Perfect People Palliative

Each of us is a mixture of good qualities and some (perhaps) not-so-good qualities. In considering our fellow people we should remember their good qualities and realize that their faults only prove that they are, after all, human. We should refrain from making harsh judgments of people just because they happen to be dirty, rotten, no-good sons-of-bitches.

Peter's Placebo

An ounce of image is worth a pound of performance.

Peter's Prognosis

Spend sufficient time in confirming the need and the need will disappear.

Peter's Rule for Creative Incompetence

Create the impression that you have already reached your level of incompetence.

Peter's Theorem

Incompetence plus incompetence equals incompetence.

Peters principal

In any hierarchy, each individual rises to his own level of incompetence, and then remains there.

There is never time to do it right but there is always time to do it over.

People specialize in their area of greatest weakness.

Every organization has an allotted number of positions to be filled by incompetents.

Peterson's Law

History shows that money will multiply in volume and divide in value over the long run. Or, expressed differently, the purchasing power of currency will vary inversely with the magnitude of the public debt.

Phases of a Project

Exultation.

Disenchantment.

Confusion.

Search for the Guilty.

Punishment of the Innocent.

Distinction for the Uninvolved.

Phelps's Law of Retributive Statistics

An unexpectedly easy-to-handle sequence of events will be immediately followed by an equally long sequence of trouble.

Phelps's Laws of Renovation

Any renovation project on an old house will cost twice as much and take three times as long as originally estimated.

Any plumbing pipes you choose to replace during renovation will prove to be in excellent condition; those you decide to leave in place will be rotten.

Phillip's Principle of Observable Repairs

The number of witnesses available is inversely proportional to the skill you demonstrate.

There will never be anyone around to see you do something brilliant

When you really screw up, you will get network coverage with a 40 share.

The only thing you didn't check for a malfunction, will be the source of the problem, but you won't find it until you are called back.

Phone Booth Rule

A lone dime always gets the number nearly right.

The Third Law of Photography

If you did manage to get any good shots, they will be ruined when someone inadvertently opens the darkroom door and all of the dark leaks out.

Second Law of Physics

You cant push on a rope.

Pierce's Law

In any computer system, the machine will always misinterpret, misconstruct, misprint, or not evaluate any math or subroutines or fail to print any output on at least the first run through.

Corollary to Pierce's Law

When a compiler accepts a program without error on the first run, the program will not yield the desired output.

Pierson's Law

If you're coasting, you're going downhill.

Pike Law of Punditry

The successful pundit is provided more opportunities to say things than he has things worth saying.

Pineapple Principle

The best parts of anything are always impossible to remove from the worst parts.

Pitfall of Genius

No boss will keep an employee who is right all the time.

Plotnick's Law

The time of departure will be delayed by the square of the number of people involved.

The Point of No Return Law

The light at the end of the tunnel could turn out to be the headlight of an oncoming train.

Political Axioms

When attempting to predict and forecast macro-economic moves or economic legislation by a politician, never be misled by what he says; instead watch what he does.

Politicians will always inflate when given the opportunity.

Law of Political Erosion

Once the erosion of power begins, it has a momentum all its own.

Political Postulate

Formation of a party signals the dissolution of the movement.

Politicians' Rules

When the polls are in your favor, flaunt them.

When the polls are overwhelmingly unfavorable, either (a) ridicule and dismiss them or (b) stress the volatility of public opinion.

When the polls are slightly unfavorable, play for sympathy as a struggling underdog.

When too close to call, be surprised at your own strength.

The Pollyanna Paradox

Every day, in every way, things get better and better; then worse again in the evening.

Pope's Law of Retroactivity

It is easier to get forgiveness than permission.

Postal Postulate

The announcement of the one event you most wanted to attend will arrive in the mail the day after the it has taken place.

First Postulate of Isomorphism

Things equal to nothing else are equal to each other.

Potter's Law

The amount of flak received on any subject is inversely proportional to the subject's true value.

Poulsen's Law

When anything is used to its full potential, it will break.

Pournelle's Law of Costs and Schedules

Everything costs more and takes longer.

Powell's Law

Never tell them what you wouldn't do.

Pragmatic Principal

Necessity is the mother of strange bedfellows.

Law of Predictive Action

The second most powerful phrase in the world is "Watch this!" The most powerful phrase is "Oh yeah? Watch this!"

Preudhomme's Law of Window Cleaning

It's on the other side.

Price's Law of Politics

It's easier to be a liberal a long way from home.

Price's Law of Science

Scientists who dislike the restraints of highly organized research like to remark that a truly great research worker needs only three pieces of equipment -- a pencil, a piece of paper, and a brain. But they quote this maxim more often at academic banquets than at budget hearings.

The Principle Concerning Multifunctional Devices

The fewer functions any device is required to perform, the more perfectly it can perform those functions.

Principle of Displaced Hassle

To beat the bureaucracy, make your problem their problem.

Principles of success

Everyone has a scheme for getting rich that will not work.

When in doubt, mumble. When in trouble, delegate.

Whatever you have done is never a complete failure. It can always serve as a bad example.

When the going gets tough, everyone leaves.

In case of doubt, make it sound convincing.

It's a simple task to make things complex, but a complex task to make them simple.

If you try to please everybody, nobody will like it.

Law of Probability

Random events tend to occur in groups:

Law of Probable Dispersal

Whatever hits the fan will not be evenly distributed. (also known as the How Come It All Landed On Me Law)

Law of problems

If one views the problem closely enough, he will recognize himself as part of the problem.

Whenever you set out to do something, something else must be done first.

Corollary - Every solution breeds new problems.

Productivity Equation

The productivity, P, of a group of people is:

$$P = N \times T \times (.55 - .00005 \times N \times (N - 1))$$

where N is the number of people in the group and T is the number of hours in a work period.

Professional's Law

Doctors, dentists, and lawyers are only on time for appointments when you're not.

Professor Corey's Law

The amount of expertise varies in inverse proportion to the number of statements understood by the general public.

Professor Gordon's Rule of Evolving Bryophytic Systems

While bryophytic plants are typically encountered in substrata of earthy or mineral matter in concreted state, discrete substrata elements occasionally display a roughly spherical configuration which, in presence of suitable gravitational and other effects, lends itself to combined translatory and rotational motion. One notices in such cases an absence of the otherwise typical accretion of bryophyta. We conclude therefore that a rolling stone gathers no moss.

Rutger's Corollary - Generally the subjective value assignable to avian lifeforms, when encountered and considered within the confines of certain orders of woody plants lacking true meristematic dominance, as compared to a possible valuation of these same lifeforms when in the grasp of -- and

subject to control by -- the manipulative bone/muscle/nerve complex typically terminating the forelimb of a member of the species homo sapiens (and possibly direct precursors thereof) is approximately five times ten to the minus first power.

Profundo's Laws on Staffing

The number of customers that visit your shop is inversely proportional to the number of employees you have to wait on them.

When your entire staff is available no one will come.

When you are there alone, everyone will come and they will be impatient.

First Law of Project Management

Fuzzy project objectives are used to avoid the embarraament of estimating the corresponding costs.

Sixth Law of Project Management

No matter what stage of completion one reaches, the cost of the remainder of the project remains constant.

Project scheduling "99" rule

The first 90 percent of the task takes 10 percent of the time. The last 10 percent takes the other 90 percent.

Proverbial Law

For every proverb that so confidently asserts its little bit of wisdom, there is usually an equal and opposite proverb that contradicts it.

Psychiatrist's At Home Test

One out of four people is mentally ill. Check three friends; If they're O.K. it must be you.

Public Relations Client Turnover Law

The minute you sign a client is the minute you start to lose him.

First Rule of Public Speaking

Nice guys finish fast.

Law of Public Transit

If you start walking, the first bus will come precisely when you are halfway

between stops.

Public Transit Definitions

A bus is a vehicle in a bus zone on the other side of the street going in the opposite direction than which you wish to go.

A bus is a vehicle which left the bus zone one minute ago.

Pudder's Laws

Anything that begins well ends badly.

Anything that begins badly ends worse.

The Puncture Principle

Nails are selectively attracted to the inside wheel on a dual wheeled vehicle.

Puritan's Law

Evil is live spelled backwards.

Corollary - If it feels good, don't do it.

Putney's Law

If the people of a democracy are allowed to do so, they will vote away the freedoms which are essential to that democracy.

Putt's Law

Technology is dominated by two types of people -- those who understand what they do not manage, and those who manage what they do not understand.

Q

Q's Law

No matter what stage of completion one reaches in a North Sea (oil) field, the cost of the remainder of the project remains the same.

The Queue Principal

The longer you wait in line, the greater the likelihood that you are in the wrong line.

Quigley's Law of Highway Driving

When travelling down the freeway, the first bug to hit a clean windshield will always land directly in front of the driver's face.

R

Rule of Radio Reception

Your walkman radio won't pick up the station you want to hear most.

Rakove's Laws of Politics

The amount of effort put into a campaign by a worker expands in proportion to the personal benefits that he will derive from his party's victory.

The citizen is influenced by principle in direct proportion to his distance from the political situation.

Ralph's Observation

It is a mistake to allow any mechanical object to realize that you are in a hurry.

Randolph's Cardinal Principle of Statecraft

Never needlessly disturb a thing at rest.

Rangnekar's Modified Rules Concerning Decisions

If you must make a decision, delay it.

If you can authorize someone else to avoid a decision, do so.

If you can form a committee, have them avoid the decision.

If you can otherwise avoid a decision, avoid it immediately.

Rapoport's Rule of the Roller-Skate Key

Certain items which are crucial to a given activity will show up with uncommon regularity until the day when that activity is planned, at which point the item in question will disappear from the face of the earth.

Raskin's Zero Law

The more zeros found in the price tag for a government program, the less Congressional scrutiny it will receive.

Law of Raspberry Jam

The wider any culture is spread, the thinner it gets.

Rather's Rule

In dealing with the press do yourself a favor. Stick with one of three responses: (a) I know and I can tell you, (b) I know and I can't tell you,

or (c) I don't know.

Rayburn's Rule

If you want to get along, go along.

RB's Five- Thumbs Postulate

Experience varies directly with the equipment ruined.

Rule of Reason

If nobody uses it, there's a reason.

Law of Regressive Achievement

Last year's was always better.

Relativity For Children

Time moves slower in a fast moving vehicle.

Repairman's Laws

The probability of arriving at the job site without a needed tool or with the wrong hardware are directly proportional with the square of the travel distance.

Corollary - You will always have what you need when the job is next to your shop.

Law of Reruns

If you have watched a TV series only once, and you watch it again, it will be a rerun of the same episode.

Law of Research

Enough research will tend to support your theory.

Researchers Law

The closest library doesn't have the material you need.

Law of Restaurant Acoustics

In a restaurant with seats which are close to each other, one will always find the decibel level of the nearest conversation to be inversely proportional to the quality of the thought going into it.

Law of Restitution

The time it takes to rectify a situation is inversely proportional to the

time it took to do the damage. Example: it takes longer to glue a vase together than to break one.

Rev. Mahaffy's Observation

There's no such thing as a large whiskey.

Law of Revelation

The hidden flaw never remains hidden.

(Fyfe's) First Law of Revision

Information necessitating a change of design will be conveyed to the designer after - and only after - the plans are complete. (Often called the Now They Tell Us' Law)

Corollary

In simple cases, presenting one obvious right way versus one obvious wrong way, it is often wiser to choose the wrong way, so as to expedite subsequent revision.

(Fyfe's) Second Law of Revision

The more innocuous the modification appears to be, the further its influence will extend and the more plans will have to be redrawn.

(Fyfe's) Third Law of Revision

If, when completion of a design is imminent, field dimensions are finally supplied as they actually are, instead of as they were meant to be, it is always simpler to start over from scratch.

Corollary

It is usually impractical to worry beforehand about interferences -- if you have none, someone will make one for you.

(Fyfe's) Fourth Law of Revision

After painstaking and careful analysis of a sample, you are always told that it is the wrong sample and doesn't apply to the problem.

Revolutionary Law

The sloppier the rebel uniform, the more likely the successful overthrow of the existing government.

Richard's Complementary Rules of Ownership

If you keep anything long enough you can throw it away.

If you throw anything away, you will need it as soon as it is no longer accessible.

Richman's Inevitables of Parenthood

Enough is never enough.

The sun always rises in the baby's bedroom window.

Birthday parties always end in tears.

Whenever you decide to take the kids home, it is always five minutes earlier that they break into fights, tears, or hysteria.

Riddle's Constant

There are coexisting elements in frustration phenomena which separate expected results from achieved results.

Riesman's Law

An inexorable upward movement leads administrators to higher salaries and narrower spans of control.

Rigg's Hypothesis

Incompetence tends to increase with the level of work performed. And, naturally, the individual's staff needs will increase as his level of incompetence increases.

Law of Road Construction

After large expenditures of federal, state, and county funds; after much confusion generated by detours and road blocks; after greatly annoying the surrounding population with noise, dust, and fumes -- the previously existing traffic jam is relocated by one-half mile.

Robert Lee's Truce

Judgement comes from experience. Experience comes from poor judgement.

Robert's Law of Space Sharing

The odds are 6:5 that if one has late classes, one's roommate will have the earliest possible classes.

Robertson's Law

Everything happens at the same time with nothing in between.

The Rockefeller Principle

Never do anything you wouldn't be caught be dead doing.

Rodovic's Rule

In any organization, the potential is much greater for the subordinate to manage his superior than for the superior to manage his subordinate.

Rodriguez's Observation

A consultant is someone who, when hired to find out what time it is, borrows your watch to find out.

Corollary (Martin) - If you hire a consultant to read your own watch to you, you got your money's worth.

Rodriguez's Observations On Consultants

A consultant is someone who, when hired to find out what time it is, borrows your watch to find out.

A consultant is a fool with a briefcase more than two miles from home.

Consultants are mystical people who ask a company for a number and sell it back to them.

Corollary - If you hire a consultant to read your own watch to you, you've gotten your money's worth.

Roemer's Law

The rate of hospital admissions responds to bed availability. If we insist on installing more beds, they will tend to get filled.

Roger's Ratio

One-third of the people in the United States promote, while the other two-thirds provide.

Rooster's First Law on School Affairs

The exam will ask the only topic you didn't study.

First corollary - The Bonus Rescue question is harder than the regular ones.

Rosenbaum's Rule

The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement.

Rosenfield's Regret

The most delicate component will be dropped.

Rosenstock-Huessy's Law of Technology

All technology expands the space, contracts the time, and destroys the working group.

(Charles) Ross's Law

Never characterize the importance of a statement in advance.

(Al) Ross's Law

Bare feet magnetize sharp metal objects so they always point upward from the floor -- especially in the dark.

Rudin's Law

In a crisis that forces a choice to be made among alternative courses of action, most people will choose the worse one possible.

The Fifth Rule

You have taken yourself too seriously.

Rules of Pratt

If a severe problem manifests itself, no solution is acceptable unless it is involved, expensive, and time consuming.

Sufficient moneys to do the job correctly the first time are not available, however, ample funds are much easier obtained for repeated revisions.

Rules regarding Fools

It is impossible to make anything foolproof because fools are so ingenious.

The only difference between the fool and the criminal who attacks a system is that the fool attacks unpredictably and on a broader front.

A pipe gives a wise man time to think and a fool something to stick in his

mouth.

Whenever a system becomes completely defined, some damn fool discovers something which either abolishes the system or expands it beyond recognition.

Build a system that only a fool can use and only a fool will use it.

It is impossible to make anything foolproof because fools are so ingenious.

Never argue with a fool. People might not know the difference.

Any fool can make a rule, and every fool will mind it.

There are four kinds of people: those who sit quietly and do nothing, those who talk about sitting quietly and doing nothing, those who do things, and those who talk about doing things.

Fools rush in where fools have been before.

The only difference between the fool and the criminal who attacks a system is that the fool attacks unpredictably and on a broader front.

A fool in a high station is like a man on the top of a small mountain: everything appears small to him and he appears small to everybody.

Runamok's Law

There are four kinds of people: those who sit quietly and do nothing, those who talk about sitting quietly and doing nothing, those who do things, and those who talk about doing things.

Rune's Rule

If you don't care where you are, you ain't lost.

Runyon's Law

The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but that's the way to bet.

First Rule of Rural Mechanics

If it works, don't fix it.

Ryan's Application of Parkinson's Law

Possessions increase to fill the space available for their storage.

Ryan's Law

Make three correct guesses consecutively and you will establish yourself as an expert.

S

Sadat's Reminder

Those who invented the law of supply and demand have no right to complain when this law works against their interest.

Safeway Principles

The bag that breaks is the one with the eggs.

Salary Axiom

The pay raise is just large enough to increase your taxes and just small enough to have no effect on your take-home pay.

Sam Slick's Sophism

The number of salesmen that will call on you on any given day will be directly proportional to the amount and urgency of the work you have to get done.

Corollary - None of them will be selling anything you want.

Sam's Axioms

Any line, however short, is still too long.

Work is the crabgrass of life, but money is the water that keeps it green.

Samuels Postulate

Never offend people with style when you can offend them with substance.

Sattinger's Law

It works better if you plug it in.

Sattler's Law

There are 32 points to the compass, meaning that there are 32 directions in which a spoon can squirt grapefruit; yet, the juice almost invariably flies straight into the human eye.

Sattlinger's Law

It works better if you plug it in.

Saunders's Discovery

Laziness is the mother of nine inventions out of ten.

The Sausage Principle

People who love sausage and respect the law should never watch either one being made.

Sayre's Third Law of Politics

Academic politics is the most vicious and bitter form of politics, because the stakes are so low.

Schenk's First Principle of Industrial Market Economics

Good salesmen and good repairmen will never go hungry.

Schickel's TV Theorems

Any dramatic series the producers want us to take seriously as a representation of contemporary reality cannot be taken seriously as a representation of anything -- except a show to be ignored by anyone capable of sitting upright in a chair and chewing gum simultaneously.

The only programs a grown-up can possibly stand are those intended for children. Or, more properly, those that cater to those pre-adolescent fantasies that most have never abandoned.

Schmidt's Law

Never eat prunes when you're hungry.

Schmidt's Law (probably a different Schmidt)

If you mess with something long enough, it'll break.

Schmidt's Observation

All things being equal, a fat person uses more soap than a thin person.

Schmidt's Observations

Never eat prunes when you're hungry. All things being equal, a fat person uses more soap than a thin person.

Schuckit's Law

All interference in human conduct has the potential for causing harm, no

matter how innocuous the procedure may be.

Schultze's Law

If you can't measure output, then you measure input.

Schumpeter's Observation of Scientific and Nonscientific Theories

Any theory can be made to fit any facts by means of appropriate additional assumptions.

First Law of Science

You can observe a lot just by watching.

Rule of Scientific Endeavor

The simple explanation always follows the complex solution.

Scott's First Law

No matter what goes wrong, it will probably look right.

Scott's Second Law

When an error has been detected and corrected, it will be found to have been correct in the first place.

Corollary - After the correction has been found in error, it will be impossible to fit the original quantity back into the equation.

Screwdriver Syndrome

Sometimes, where a complex problem can be illuminated by many tools, one can be forgiven for applying the one he knows best.

Searchers Laws

You can always find what you're not looking for.

If a lost thing is found, something else will disappear.

If you file it, you'll know where it is but never need it. If you don't file it, you'll need it but never know where it is.

The first place to look for anything is the last place you would expect to find it.

You will always find what you have lost in the last place you look for it.

Law of Secrecy

The best way to publicize a governmental or political action is to attempt to hide it.

Segal's Law

A man with one watch knows what time it is; a man with two watches is never sure.

Law of Selective Gravity (the Buttered Side Down Law)

An object will fall so as to do the most damage.

Corollary (Klipstein) - The most delicate component will be the one to drop.

By the way- what happens if you glue the bread with the buttered side up to a cat's back and drop it- will the cat float in the air? or vanish?

Jenning's Corollary to the Law of Selective Gravity

The chance of the bread falling with the buttered side down is directly proportional to the cost of the carpet.

Sells's Law

The first sample is always the best.

Sevareid's Law

The chief cause of problems is solutions.

Seymour's Principle of Investment

Never invest in anything that eats.

Shaffer's Law

The effectiveness of a politician varies in inverse proportion to his commitment to principle.

Shalit's Law

The intensity of movie publicity is in inverse ratio to the quality of the movie.

Shanahan's Law (O'Hanahan's Law)

The length of a meeting rises with the square of the number of people present.

Sharkey's Fourth Law of Motion

Passengers on elevators constantly rearrange their positions as people get on and off so there is at all times an equal distance between all bodies.

Shaw's Laws of Meetings

In any dealings with a collective body of people, the people will always be more tacky than originally expected.

The person with the least expertise has the most opinions.

Those most opposed to serving on committees are made chairmen.

Shaw's Principle

Build a system that even a fool can use, and only a fool will want to use it.

Shelton's Laws of Pocket Calculators

Rechargeable batteries die at the most critical time of the most complex problem.

When a rechargeable battery starts to die in the middle of a complex calculation, and the user attempts to connect house current, the calculator will clear itself.

The final answer will exceed the magnitude or precision or both of the calculator.

There are not enough storage registers to solve the problem.

The user will forget mathematics in proportion to the complexity of the calculator.

Thermal paper will run out before the calculation is complete.

Shirley's Law

Most people deserve each other. Forgive and remember.

Short's Quotations

Any great truth can -- and eventually will -- be expressed as a cliché. A cliché is a sure and certain way to dilute an idea. For instance, my grandmother used to say, "The black cat is always the last one off the fence." I have no idea what she meant, but at one time it was undoubtedly true.

Half of being smart is knowing what you're dumb at.

Malpractice makes malperfect.

Neurosis is a communicable disease.

The only winner in the War of 1812 was Tchaikovsky.

Nature abhors a hero. For one thing, he violates the law of conservation of energy. For another, how can it be the survival of the fittest when the fittest keeps putting himself in situations where he is most likely to be creamed?

A little ignorance can go a long way.

Learn to be sincere. Even if you have to fake it.

There is no such thing as an absolute truth -- that is absolutely true.

Understanding the laws of nature does not mean we are free from obeying them.

Entropy has us outnumbered.

The human race never solves any of its problems -- it only outlives them.

Hell hath no fury like a pacifist.

Simmon's Law

The desire for racial integration increases with the square of the distance from the actual event.

Simon's Law

Everything put together sooner or later falls apart.

Sinner's Law of Retaliation

Do whatever your enemies don't want you to do.

Sir Walter's Law

The tendency of smoke from a cigarette, barbecue, campfire, etc., To drift into a persons face is directly proportional with that persons sensitivity to smoke.

Skinner's Constant (Flannegan's Finagling Factor)

That quantity which, when multiplied by, divided into, added to, or subtracted from the answer you got, gives you the answer you should have

gotten.

Skole's Rule for Antique Dealers

Never simply say, "Sorry, we don't have what you're looking for." Always say, "Too bad, I just sold one the other day."

Skydivers' Law of Hesitation

He who hesitates shall inherit the earth.

Law of Slide Presentation

In any slide presentation, at least one slide will be upside down or backwards, or both.

Smith's Principles of Bureaucratic Tinkertoys

Never use one word when a dozen will suffice.

If it can be understood, it's not finished yet.

Never be the first to do anything.

Snafu Equations

Given any problem containing n equations, there will be $n+1$ unknowns.

An object or bit of information most needed, will be least available.

In any human endeavor, once you have exhausted all possibilities and fail, there will be one solution, simple and obvious, highly visible to everyone else.

Badness comes in waves.

Snafu Equation No. 6

Badness comes in waves.

First Law of Socio-Economics

In a hierarchical system, the rate of pay for a given task increases in inverse ratio to the unpleasantness and difficulty of the task.

First Law of Socio-Genetics

Celibacy is not hereditary.

Sociology's Iron Law of Oligarchy

In every organized activity, no matter the sphere, a small number will become the oligarchical leaders and the others will follow.

Sodd's First Law

When a person attempts a task, he or she will be thwarted in that task by the unconscious intervention of some other presence (animate or inanimate). Nevertheless, some tasks are completed, since the intervening presence is itself attempting a task and is, of course, subject to interference.

Sodd's Second Law

Sooner or later, the worst possible set of circumstances is bound to occur.

Corollary - Any system must be designed to withstand the worst possible set of circumstances.

Sodd's Other Law

The degree of failure is in direct proportion to the effort expended and to the need for success.

Law of Space And Time

The universe is not only weirder than we suppose. It's weirder than we can suppose.

The Spare Parts Principle

The accessibility, during recovery, of small parts which fall from the work bench, varies directly with the size of the part, and inversely with its importance to the completion of the work underway.

Spark's Nine Rules for the Project Manager

Strive to look tremendously important.

Attempt to be seen with important people. Speak with authority; however, only expound on the obvious and proven facts.

Don't engage in arguments, but if cornered, ask an irrelevant question and lean back with a satisfied grin while your opponent tries to figure out what's going on -- then quickly change the subject.

Listen intently while others are arguing the problem. Pounce on a trite statement and bury them with it.

If a subordinate asks you a pertinent question, look at him as if he had lost his senses. When he looks down, paraphrase the question back at him.

Obtain a brilliant assignment, but keep out of sight and out of the limelight.

Walk at a fast pace when out of the office -- this keeps questions from subordinates and superiors at a minimum.

Always keep the office door closed. This puts visitors on the defensive and also makes it look as if you are always in an important conference.

Give all orders verbally. Never write anything down that might go into "Pearl Harbor File."

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Specht's Meta-Law

Under any conditions, anywhere, whatever you are doing, there is some

ordinance under which you can be booked.

Sport Car Laws

If you drive an expensive sport car and park it in a corner of the parking lot far from the entrance, when you return the only other car in the parking lot will be parked next to yours and your car will have a new dent in the door.

The little old lady who just ran her shopping cart into the door of your new Porsche will invariably say "it's just a teeny dent," or "after all, it's only a car."

Law of Sports Contracts

The more money the free agent signs for, the less effective he is the following season.

Sprinkle's Law

Things always fall at right angles.

Stamp's Statistical Probability

The government is extremely fond of amassing great quantities of statistics. These are raised to the n th degree, the cube roots are extracted, and the results are arranged into elaborate and impressive displays. What must be kept ever in mind, however, is that in every case, the figures are first put down by a village watchman, and he puts down anything he damn well pleases.

Stanley's Law of Taking Things Apart

When putting things back together again, there will always be at least one piece left over that will not fit anywhere.

Stanley's Laws of Fat

Fat expands to fill any apparel worn.

Law of Status

Keep Up With The Fletcher's. You'll Never Make Enough To Keep Up With The Jones's.

Steele's Plagiarism of Somebody's Philosophy

Everyone should believe in something -- I believe I'll have another drink.

Stein's Law of Cards

Never play Poker with a player named Doc or Ace.

Stein's Maxim

The fact that you do not know the answer does not mean that someone else does.

Steinbeck's Law

When you need towns, they are very far apart.

Stenton's Law (Conrad's Conundrum)

Technology don't transfer.

Stephens's Soliloquy

Finality is death. Perfection is finality. Nothing is perfect. There are lumps in it.

Stewart's Law of Retroaction

It is easier to get forgiveness than permission.

Stock Market Axiom

The public is always wrong.

Stock's Observation

You no sooner get your head above water than someone pulls your flippers off.

Stockbroker's Declaration

The market will rally from this or lower levels.

Stockmayer's Theorem

If it looks easy, it's tough. If it looks tough, it's damn near impossible.

Stone's Law

If you miss one issue of any magazine, it will be the issue which contained the article or story or installment you were most anxious to read.

Street's Laws of Mail Order

If you don't write to complain you'll never receive the order.

If you do write to complain, you'll receive the merchandise before your angry letter reaches the company.

The most important item in an order will be back ordered.

Sturgeon's Law

Ninety percent of EVERYTHING is crud.

Jones' browsing addendum to Sturgeon's Law

Of the ten percent, ninety percent are reprints.

Sueker's Note

If you need n items of anything, you will have $n - 1$ in stock.

Suhor's Law

A little ambiguity never hurt anyone.

Law of Superiority

The first example of superior principle is always inferior to the developed example of inferior principle.

Law of Supermarkets

The item you wanted to price compare with other items is not priced.

Law of Superstition

It's bad luck to be superstitious.

Survival Formula for Public Office

Exploit the inevitable (which means, take credit for anything good which happens whether you had anything to do with it or not).

Don't disturb the perimeter (meaning don't stir up a mess unless you can be sure of the result).

Stay in with the Outs (the Ins will make so many mistakes, you can't afford to alienate the Outs).

Don't permit yourself to get between a dog and a lamppost.

Sutton's Law

Go where the money is.

Sweeney's Law

The length of a progress report is inversely proportional to the amount of progress.

Swipple's Rule of Order

He who shouts loudest has the floor.

T

Taxi Principle

Find out the cost before you get in.

Law of Teenage Opportunity

When opportunity knocks, you've got headphones on.

Law of Television

If you have only watched a TV series once, and you watch it again, it will be a rerun of the same episode.

Terman's Law

There is no direct relationship between the quality of an educational program and its cost.

Terman's Law of Innovation

If you want a track team to win the high jump you find one person who can jump seven feet, not seven people who can jump one foot.

Teslacle's Deviant to Fudd's Law

It goes in -- it must come out.

Them what has -- gets. Wakefield's Refutation of the Iron Law of Distribution

Them what gets -- has.

Theory of organizational deviance

Every organization has an allotted number of positions to be filled by incompetents.

Theory of the International Society of Philosophic Engineering

In any calculation, any error which can creep in will do so.

Any error in any calculation will be in the direction of most harm.

In any formula, constants (especially those obtained from engineering handbooks) are to be treated as variables.

The best approximation of service conditions in the laboratory will not begin to meet those conditions encountered in actual service.

The most vital dimension on any plan or drawing stands the greatest chance of being omitted.

If only one bid can be secured on any project, the price will be unreasonable.

If a test installation functions perfectly, all subsequent production units will malfunction.

All delivery promises must be multiplied by a factor of 2.0.

Major changes in construction will always be requested after fabrication is nearly completed.

Parts that positively cannot be assembled in improper order will be.

Interchangeable parts won't.

Manufacturer's specifications of performance should be multiplied by a factor of 0.5.

Salespeople's claims for performance should be multiplied by a factor of 0.25.

Installation and Operating Instructions shipped with the device will be promptly discarded by the Receiving Department.

Any device requiring service or adjustment will be least accessible.

Service Conditions as given on specifications will be exceeded.

If more than one person is responsible for a miscalculation, no one will be at fault.

Identical units which test in an identical fashion will not behave in an identical fashion in the field.

If, in engineering practice, a safety factor is set through service experience at an ultimate value, an ingenious idiot will promptly calculate a method to exceed said safety factor.

Warranty and guarantee clauses are voided by payment of the invoice.

Therapist's Observation

It's easy to criticize paranoid people, but if everybody hated you, you'd be paranoid too.

Fourth Law of Thermodynamics

If the probability of success is not almost one, then it is damned near zero.

Thinking Man's Tautology

If you think you're wrong, you're wrong.

Corollary - If you think you're wrong, you're right.

Thomas's Law of Consumerism

A one year warranty guarantees that the product will self-destruct on the 366th day.

All warranties expire upon payment of invoice.

The negative "Consumer Report" on the item you want to buy will come out one week after you've purchased it.

Thoreau's Law

If you see a man approaching you with the obvious intention of doing you good, you should run for your life.

Thoreau's Rule

Any fool can make a rule, and every fool will mind it.

Thoughts on Management

If everyone dislikes it, it must be looked into. If everyone likes it, it must be looked into.

Thoughts on Programming, Number 52

The user does not know what he wants until he sees what he gets.

The Three Laws of Robotics

A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.

A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Laws.

Three Lies According to Playboy

The check's in the mail.

Anticipation is half the fun.

I promise I won't come in your mouth.

Hare's Additional Lie

This will hurt me more than it hurts you.

Lowry's Additional Lie

I've never done this before.

Thurber's Conclusion

There is no safety in numbers, or in anything else.

Thwartz's Theorem of Low Profile

Negative expectation thwarts realization, and self-congratulation guarantees disaster. (Or, simply put: If you think of it, it won't happen quite that way.)

Thyme's Law

Everything goes wrong at once.

Time Observation

Good times end too quickly. Bad times go on forever.

Tinker's Law

Nature abhors people.

Tipper's Law

Those who expect the biggest tips provide the worst service.

Titanic Coincidence

Most accidents in well-designed systems involve two or more events of low probability occurring in the worst possible combination.

Titanics Generalized Iceberg Theorem

Seven-eighths of everything can't be seen.

Todd's Political Principles

No matter what they're telling you they're not telling you the whole truth.

No matter what they're talking about, they're talking about money.

The length of time it takes a bill to pass through the legislature is in inverse proportion to the number of lobbying groups favoring it.

No politician talks about taxes during an election year.

Truth varies.

Law of the Too Solid Goof

In any collection of data, the figures that are obviously correct beyond all need of checking contain the errors.

Corollary 1: No one you ask for help will see the error either.

Corollary 2: Any nagging intruder, who

Torquemada's Law

When you are sure you're right, you have a moral duty to impose your will upon anyone who disagrees with you.

Transcription Square Law

The number of errors made is equal to the sum of the squares employed.

First Law of Travel

No matter how many rooms there are in the motel, the fellow who starts up his car at five o'clock in the morning is always parked under your window.

Travel Axiom

He travels fastest who travels alone... but he hasn't anything to do when he gets there.

Trial Lawyer's Dilemma

You can't guard against the arbitrary.

Trischmann's Paradox (Axiom of the Pipe)

A pipe gives a wise man time to think and a fool something to stick in his mouth.

Law of Triviality

The time spent on any item of the agenda will be in inverse proportion to the sum involved.

Troutman's Laws of Computer Programming (and see Peck's Programming Postulates)

Any running program is obsolete.

Any planned program costs more and takes longer.

Any useful program will have to be changed.

Any useless program will have to be documented.

Any program will expand to fill available memory.

Andi's Addendum - And beyond.

The size of a program expands to fill all available memory.

The value of a program is inversely proportional to the weight of its output.

The complexity of a program grows until it exceeds the capability of its maintainers.

Any system that relies on computer reliability is unreliable.

Any system that relies on human reliability is unreliable.

Make it possible for programmers to write programs in English, and you will find that programmers cannot write in English.

Profanity is the one language all programmers know best.

Troutman's Programming Postulates

If a test installation functions perfectly, all subsequent systems will malfunction.

Not until a program has been in production for at least six months will the most harmful error be discovered.

Job control cards that positively cannot be arranged in proper order will be.

Interchangeable tapes won't.

If the input editor has been designed to reject all bad input, an ingenious idiot will discover a method to get bad data past it.

Truman's Law

If you cannot convince them, confuse them.

Trump's Quirk of Human Nature

Nobody loves a winner who wins all the time.

Truths of Management

Think before you act; it's not your money.

All good management is the expression of one great idea.

No executive devotes effort to proving himself wrong.

Cash in must exceed cash out.

Management capability is always less than the organization actually needs.

Truth 5.1 of Management: Organizations always have too many managers.

Either an executive can do his job or he can't.

If sophisticated calculations are needed to justify an action, don't do it.

If you are doing something wrong, you will do it badly.

If you are attempting the impossible, you will fail.

The easiest way of making money is to stop losing it.

Tuccille's First Law of Reality

Industry always moves in to fill an economic vacuum.

Turnauckas's Observation

To err is human; to really foul things up takes a computer.

Turner's Law

Nearly all prophecies made in public are wrong.

Twain's Rule

Only kings, editors, and people with tapeworm have the right to use the editorial "we".

Tylk's Law

Assumption is the mother of all foul-ups.

U

Ubell's Law of Press Luncheons

At any public relations luncheon, the quality of the food is inversely related to the quality of the information.

Uhlmann's Razor

When stupidity is a sufficient explanation, there is no need to have

recourse to any other.

Corollary (Law of Historical Causation) - It seemed like the thing to do at the time."

The Ultimate Law

All general statements are false.

The Ultimate Principle

By definition, when you are investigating the unknown, you do not know what you will find.

The Ultimate Wisdom

Philosophers must ultimately find their true perfection in knowing all the follies of mankind by introspection.

Umbrella Law

You will need three umbrellas: one to leave at the office, one to leave at home, and one to leave on the train.

The Unapplicable Law

Washing your car to make it rain doesn't work.

Universal Field Theory of Perversity (Mule's Law)

The probability of an event's occurring varies directly with the perversity of the inanimate object involved and inversely with the product of its desirability and the effort expended to produce it.

Universal Law

Anything that begins well ends badly. Anything that begins badly ends worse.

Unnamed Law

If it happens, it must be possible.

The Unspeakable Law

As soon as you mention something, if it's good, it goes away; if it's bad, it happens.

V

Vail's Axiom

In any human enterprise, work seeks the lowest hierarchical level.

Van Roy's Law

An unbreakable toy is useful for breaking other toys.

Vance's Rule of 2 1/2

Any military project will take twice as long as planned, cost twice as much, and produce only half of what is wanted.

Law of Vertical Transportation

In a three story building served by one elevator, the elevator car will be on a floor where you are not.

Vique's Law

A man without religion is like a fish without a bicycle.

Von Braun's Law of Gravity

We can lick gravity, but sometimes the paperwork is overwhelming.

Von Helsing's Theorem

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.

Vonnegut's Corollary

Beauty may be only skin deep, but ugliness goes right to the core.

W

Waddell's Law of Equipment Failure

A component's degree of reliability is directly proportional to its ease of accessibility (i.e., the harder it is to get to, the more often it breaks down).

Waffle's Law

A professor's enthusiasm for teaching the introductory course varies inversely with the likelihood of his having to do it.

Wain's Conclusion

The only people making money these days are the ones who sell computer paper.

Wakefield's Refutation of the Iron Law of Distribution

Them what gets, has.

Waldo's Observation

One man's red tape is another man's system.

Walinsky's First Law of Political Campaigns

If there are twelve clowns in a ring, you can jump in the middle and start reciting Shakespeare, but to the audience, you'll just be the thirteenth clown.

Walinsky's Law

The intelligence of any discussion diminishes with the square of the number of participants.

Walker's Law

Associate with well-mannered persons and your manners will improve. Run with decent folk and your own decent instincts will be strengthened. Keep the company of bums and you will become a bum. Hang around with rich people and you will end by picking up the check and dying broke.

Wallace's Observation

Everything is in a state of utter dishevelment.

Walters's Law of Management

If you're already in a hole, there's no use to continue digging.

Washington's Law

Space expands to house the people to perform the work that Congress creates.

The Watergate Principle

Government corruption is always reported in the past tense.

Watson's Law

The reliability of machinery is inversely proportional to the number and significance of any persons watching it.

Watson's Law of Cleaning

If you start to clean your desk in the spare bedroom you will probably have to clean the garage to find what you need to finish cleaning the desk.

Rule of the Way Out

Always leave room to add an explanation if it doesn't work out.

Law of Wealth

Victory goes to the candidate with the most accumulated or contributed wealth who has the financial resources to convince the middle class and poor that he will be on their side.

Weaver's Law

When several reporters share a cab on an assignment, the reporter in the front seat pays for all.

Corollary (O'Doyle) - No matter how many reporters share a cab, and no matter who pays, each puts the full fare on his own expense account.

Corollary (Germond) - When a group of newsmen go out to dinner together, the bill is to be divided evenly among them, regardless of what each one eats and drinks.

Weber-Fechner Law

The least change in stimulus necessary to produce a perceptible change in response is proportional to the stimulus already existing.

Weidner's Queries

The tide comes in and the tide goes out, and what have you got?

They say an elephant never forgets, but what's he got to remember?

Weiler's Law

Nothing is impossible for the man who doesn't have to do it himself.

Weinberg's First Law

Progress is made on alternate Fridays.

Weinberg's Second Law

If builders built buildings the way programmers wrote programs, then the first woodpecker that came along would destroy civilization.

Corollary - An expert is a person who avoids the small errors while sweeping on to the Grand Fallacy.

Weiner's Law of Libraries

There are no answers, only cross references.

Weisman's Law of Examinations

If you're confident after you've just finished an exam, it's because you don't know enough to know better.

Wells's Law

A parade should have bands OR horses, not both.

Weskimen's Law

There's never time to do it right, but there is always time to do it over.

Westheimer's Law

A few months in the laboratory can save a few hours in the library.

Westheimer's Rule

To estimate the time it takes to do a task estimate the time you think it should take, multiply by two and change the unit of the measure to the next highest unit. Thus, we allocate two days for a one hour task.

Wethern's Law

Assumption is the mother of all screw-ups.

The Whispered Rule

People will believe anything if you whisper it.

White Flag Principle

A military disaster may produce a better postwar situation than victory.

White's Chappaquiddick Theorem

The sooner and in more detail you announce bad news, the better.

White's Observations of Committee Operation

People very rarely think in groups; they talk together, they exchange information, they adjudicate, they make compromises. But they do not think; they do not create.

A really new idea affronts current agreement.

A meeting cannot be productive unless certain premises are so shared that they do not need to be discussed, and the argument can be confined to areas of disagreement. But while this kind of consensus makes a group more effective in its legitimate functions, it does not make the group a

creative vehicle -- it would not be a new idea if it didn't -- and the group, impelled as it is to agree, is instinctively hostile to that which is divisive.

White's Statement

Don't lose heart...

Owen's Comment on White's Statement: ... they might want to cut it out...

Byrd's Addition to Owen's Comment on White's Statement: ... and they want to avoid a lengthy search.

Whitehead's Law

The obvious answer is always overlooked.

Whole Picture Principle

Research scientists are so wrapped up in their own narrow endeavors that they cannot possibly see the whole picture of anything, including their own research.

Corollary - The Director of Research should know as little as possible about the specific subject of research he is administering.

Wicker's Law

Government expands to absorb revenue, and then some.

Wilcox's Law

A pat on the back is only a few centimeters from a kick in the pants.

Will's Rule of Informed Citizenship

If you want to understand your government, don't begin by reading the Constitution. (It conveys precious little of the flavor of today's statecraft.) Instead read selected portions of the Washington telephone directory containing listings for all the organizations with titles beginning with the word "National".

Williams and Holland's Law

If enough data is collected, anything may be proven by statistical methods.

Willie Brown's Principle

People who love sausage and respect the law should never watch either one

being made.

Wilson's Law of Demographics

The public is not made up of people who get their names in the newspapers.

The First Law of Wing Walking

Never let hold of what you've got until you've got hold of something else.

First Law of Wing-Walking

Never leave hold of what you've got until you've got hold of something else.

Wingo's Axiom

All Finagle Laws may be bypassed by learning the simple art of doing without thinking.

Law of Wisdom

Wisdom is considered a sign of weakness by the powerful because a wise man can lead without power but only a powerful man can lead without wisdom.

Witten's Law

Whenever you cut your fingernails, you will find a need for them an hour later.

Wober's SNIDE Rule (Satisfied Needs Incite Demand Excesses)

Ideal goals grow faster than the means of attaining new goals allow.

Wolf's Law (An Optimistic View of a Pessimistic World)

It isn't that things will necessarily go wrong (Murphy's Law), but rather that they will take so much more time and effort than you think if they are not to go wrong.

Wolf's Law of Decision-Making

Major actions are rarely decided by more than four people. If you think a larger meeting you're attending is really "hammering out" a decision, you're probably wrong. Either the decision was agreed to by a smaller group before the meeting began, or the outcome of the larger meeting will be modified later when three or four people get together.

Wolf's Law of History Lessons

Those who don't study the past will repeat its errors. Those who do study it will find OTHER ways to err.

Wolf's Law of Management

The tasks to do immediately are the minor ones; otherwise, you'll forget them. The major ones are often better to defer. They usually need more time for reflection. Besides, if you forget them, they'll remind you.

Wolf's Law of Meetings

The only important result of a meeting is agreement about next steps.

Wolf's Law of Planning

A good place to start from is where you are.

Wolf's Law of Tactics

If you can't beat them, have them join you.

Woltman's Law

Never program and drink beer at the same time.

Woman's Equation

Whatever women do, they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily, this is not difficult.

Wood's Law

The more unworkable the urban plan, the greater the probability of implementation.

Woods's Incomplete Maxims

All's well that ends.

A penny saved is a penny.

Don't leave things unfinished

Woods's Laws of Procrastination

Never put off till tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow.

Procrastinate today! (Tomorrow may be too late.)

NOW is the time to do things later!

If at first you don't succeed, why try again?

Woods's Refutation of the First Law of Socio-Genetics 155

On the contrary, if you never procreate, neither will your kids.

Woodward's Law

A theory is better than an explanation.

Worker's Dilemma Law (Management's Put-Down Law)

No matter how much you do, you'll never do enough.

What you don't do is always more important than what you do do.

Wynne's Law

Negative slack tends to increase.

Wyszkowski's Theorem

Regardless of the units used by either the supplier or the customer, the manufacturer shall use his own arbitrary units convertible to those of either the supplier or the customer only by means of weird and unnatural conversion factors.

Wyszowski's Laws

No experiment is reproducible.

Anything can be made to work if you fiddle with it long enough.

Regardless of the units used by either the supplier or the customer, the manufacturer shall use his own arbitrary units convertible to those of either the supplier or the customer only by means of weird and unnatural conversion factors.

Y

Yapp's Basic Fact

If a thing cannot be fitted into something smaller than itself, some dope will do it.

Yolen's Guide for Self-Praise

Proclaim yourself "World Champ" of something -- tiddly-winks, rope- jumping, whatever -- send this notice to newspapers, radio, TV, and wait for challengers to confront you. Avoid challenges as long as possible, but continue to send news of your achievements to all media. Also, develop a newsletter and letterhead for communications.

Young's Handy Guide to the Modern Sciences

If it is green or it wiggles -- it is Biology.

If it stinks -- it is Chemistry.

If it doesn't work -- it is Physics.

Young's Law

All great discoveries are made by mistake.

Corollary - The greater the funding, the longer it takes to make the mistake.

Z

Zamboni's Parts Laws

A dropped part will always roll to the exact geographic center of the largest available object for it to roll under.

The probability of the loss or breakage of any part is directly proportional to the difficulty of getting a replacement part.

Irreplaceable parts will always break or be lost, and at the worst possible time.

Replaceable parts will only become available after an important deadline has passed.

Parts that are difficult to install will freely fall out on their own.

Parts that go in easily will be extremely hard to remove, and removal will be necessary to accomplish the needed repair.

The part you will need will be the irreplaceable part you threw away last week because there is no more serviceable equipment of that type around.

Zellar's Law

Every newspaper, no matter how tight the news hole, has room for a story on another newspaper increasing its newsstand price.

Zimmerman's Law

Regardless of whether a mission expands or contracts, administrative overhead continues to grow at a steady rate.

Zimmerman's Law of Complaints

Nobody notices when things go right.

Zusmann's Rule

A successful symposium depends on the ratio of meeting to eating.

Zymurgy's First Law of Evolving Systems Dynamics

Once you open a can of worms, the only way to recan them is to use a larger can. (Old worms never die, they just worm their way into larger cans.)

Zymurgy's Law of Volunteer Labour

People are always available for work in the past tense.

Zymurgy's Seventh Exception to Murphy's Laws

When it rains, it pours.