

THIS & THAT

by
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My beautiful bride has taken to watching the Dr. Phil show on NBC TV, weekdays, at five o'clock. It appears that he is on a crusade to bring basic human psychology and value systems into the public spotlight, with the hope that it will help us untangle the web of life we all weave in relationships. Whether you believe this to be a helpful format for this goal, or not, he does have a point when he states, "There is no reality. There is only perception." Embedded in that statement is his conclusion that we make our own reality by the way we perceive things, and that my reality will not be exactly the same as anyone else's, ergo there is no one true anything.

That's pretty heady stuff, but let's just piggyback on this thought for a second. It seems to me that there might be a type of reality that exists for people whenever, and wherever, a group of individual perceptions agree.

And so, now hold your breath while I bring this all together into the point I want to make in this article, the common understanding of the words (terms) we use to describe and think about things is central to common perceptions.

Now watch out for this segue, the term *computer virus* is a term we need to

understand in a common way if we are to be able to operate productively when confronted with one...or two...or three...or more; oh my!

I went to the Web in search of the definition of this term, and here's what I found.

1. A computer virus is "a software program capable of reproducing itself and usually capable of causing great harm to files or other programs on the same computer; 'a true virus cannot spread to another computer without human assistance.'"

2. A computer virus is "a program or piece of code that is loaded onto your computer without your knowledge and runs against your wishes. Most viruses can also replicate themselves and spread to other computers. All computer viruses are man made. Antivirus programs periodically check your computer system for the best-known types of viruses."

3. A computer virus is "a piece of programming code inserted into other programming to cause some unexpected and usually undesirable event, such as lost or damaged files. Viruses can be transmitted by downloading programming from other sites or be present on a diskette. The source of the file you're downloading or of a diskette you've received is often unaware of the virus. The virus lies dormant until circumstances cause its code to be executed by the computer."

4. A computer virus is "a piece of programming code usually disguised as something else that causes some unexpected and, for the victim, usually undesirable event and which is often designed so that it is automatically spread to other computer users. Viruses can be transmitted by sending them as attachments to an e-mail note, by

downloading infected programming from other sites, or be present on a diskette or CD. The best protection against a virus is to know the origin of each program or file you load into your computer or open from your e-mail program.”

5. “A virus is software used to infect a computer. Virus code is usually buried within the code of another program. Once the program is executed the virus is activated and attaches copies of itself to other programs in the system. Infected programs copy the virus to other programs. The effects of a virus can range from harmless messages that appear on screen to destruction of data, either right away or on a set date. File attachments in e-mail messages are a common source of virus. One rule of thumb is to NEVER double click (execute) an attachment to a e-mail unless you are sure who it is from and that it is safe to do so.”

6. A computer virus is “a software program that attaches itself to another program in computer memory or on a disk, and spreads from one program to another. Viruses can cause damage to data, make the computer crash, display messages, or lie dormant.”

7. A computer virus is “a program designed to replicate itself and spread to other computers. Some viruses additionally are designed to damage data or halt operations on a system. Viruses can spread through diskettes, CD-ROMs, email attachments, and the Internet.”

7. “A computer virus is an insidious piece of software that infects other software and moves from computer to computer when software is transferred. A virus may compound itself once it's inside your

computer, thereby destroying software programs and a great deal of data, or it may do other nasty things. Some viruses are benign. Modems can transmit viruses, but illegally copied or ‘bootleg’ diskettes are the most likely carriers. Virus protection software is the best defense, and is available commercially or as freeware/shareware.”

I have offered, here, seven of the thirty definitions I found during a single session on the ‘net.

It’s obvious to me how perceptions can differ when you read these definitions, but after reading them, I was able to make my own perception more clear. Here’s my perception:

“A computer virus is a program, made up of computer program instructions which, when executed against your wishes in a computer, alters other programs, and/or data in unexpected and unwanted ways.

Computer viruses enter your computer from one or more of these external computer sources: An Internet web site download, An email attachment, and/or A “bootleg” diskette or CD which houses an infected program.

I know you are on the edge of your chair right now, but you will just have to wait for more on this until next time. I know it’s going to be hard to do, but just work on it, okay? My printer’s cartridge is running out of ink.