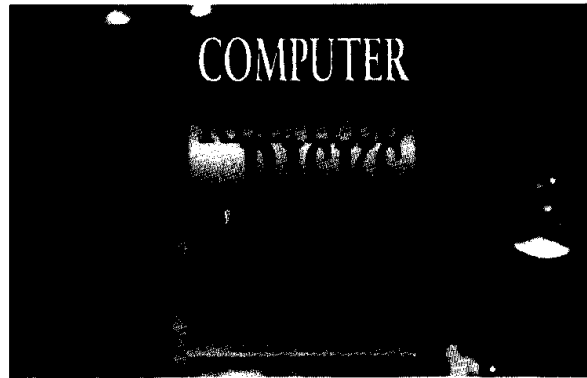


## Abort, Retry, Fail?

**Y**ou just can't find a more complete catalog of computer-related catastrophes than in Peter G. Neumann's *Computer Related Risks*. In this book, you'll learn about telephone network and Internet failures, plane crashes, electronic privacy violations, and even the occasional forged e-mail message. Poor technology implementations that can lead to such disasters are more common than you might think.

Some of the problems described arise from human error: Neumann details situations in which typos wrecked a space probe, caused a telephone system to collapse, and blew up a European chemical plant. Other disasters appear to have their roots in faulty hardware. But, in the final analysis, most are the result of fundamental design flaws and accidents just waiting to happen.

Neumann, of course, is the moderator of The Risks-Forum Digest, one of the most widely read special-interest groups on the Internet ([risks-request@csl.sri](mailto:risks-request@csl.sri))



Is your computer network an accident waiting to happen? [.com](http://www.wired.com)). (See "The Dean of Disaster," *Wired* 1.06, page 42.) In *Computer Related Risks*, Neumann brings the best submissions to the book, organizes them by subject, and tries to analyze the repeated system failures that occur in our technological society.

Where *Computer Related Risks* falls short is in the analysis. Neumann fails to present a comprehensive theory of risks. He also repeats himself: doubtless, he simply didn't have enough time to finish the book and keep up with his duties as a principal scientist at SRI International in Menlo Park, California.

Time pressures, of course, are another risk that can lead to hazardous system failures. Even as it stands, *Computer Related Risks* is a pleasure to read and a must for all who entrusts their lives or livelihoods to a machine.

**And that's all of us, isn't it? – Simson L. Garfinkel**

*Computer Related Risks*, by Peter G. Neumann: US\$24.69. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company: (800) 822 6339, +1 (617) 944 3700, fax +1 (617) 944 8964, e-mail [barbarw@aw.com](mailto:barbarw@aw.com).