In the course of my current employment I have cause to examine logs from a wide variety of systems. I am often struck by the utter uselessness of the so-called error codes displayed in some of these, inasmuch as no reliable and convenient means seems to exist to match the cryptic numerics with any functional description of the problem they purport to represent. Even when the harried system administrator does manage to stumble across a Rosetta Stone for decoding these mystical glyphs, the explanations are, more often than not, about as useful as a fork in a tomato-soup-eating contest. (Note to the analogy-impaired: that’s not very useful.)

RodentSoft Corporation
RatsNest 2007. SP666
Misinformation Base Article #XC4-2347-0099-8675309
System Error Codes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>System error. Or possibly not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222</td>
<td>Switching to toaster-only mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>557</td>
<td>Bad juju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>560</td>
<td>Could be a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601</td>
<td>Service engine soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>747</td>
<td>CPU not found. How are you reading this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>911</td>
<td>Please exit to the rear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1024</td>
<td>Bad code in some library or other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5555</td>
<td>Oopsie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6767</td>
<td>Sumpin’ ain’t right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8080</td>
<td>Probably time to reboot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9999</td>
<td>Consider getting a typewriter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNIX isn’t entirely immune from this malady, but in my experience the issue there, rather than error codes that don’t tell you anything, is error messages that give you more information than you want to know or, at times, are willing to fall for. One of the driving forces behind this phenomenon is probably the lemming-like explosion of *nix variants available for the eager consumer to deploy and enjoy. Every flavor wants to stand out from the pack. What better way than rolling your own custom error codes, available for a limited time only with two proofs of purchase (some parts may not exist)? By my conservative estimate there are 2,357 better ways, in point of fact. But they never ask me.

I was digging around in a closet the other day looking for Christmas presents I misplaced during the...
Reagan era when I came across an ancient pizza box containing my SPACKLE-1 processor with the 0.8-MHz frontside micro-bus (and a petrified slice of pepperoni with extra mushrooms). To give you an idea of how old this computer is, the backplane was made by Sopwith.

Anyway, I decided to fire that puppy up. I broke out the priming fluid and hand crank and in no time (less than two hours) I was chugging along the information goat trail. This system, being the relic it is, had a messages log (which I had to translate on the fly using sanskrit2english.pl) that was replete with interesting errors, some of which have never before been seen in civilized society. In pursuit of esoteric knowledge and a modicum of sanity (I am, if nothing else, ever the optimist), I plumbed the depths of a file system grown fully hoar and uncovered the antediluvian artifact /usr/include/sys/errornonono.h, from which I here liberally and unabashedly quote:

```c
#define EEEE 900 /* Poltergeist discovered in system */
#define EEOW 901 /* Chassis dropped on foot */
#define E##!* 902 /* Monitor dropped on same foot */
#define ENUFF 903 /* SMTP flame limit reached */
#define EIEIO 904 /* Barnyard odor detected */
#define EEEW 905 /* Keyboard jammed with old tuna */
#define EHH? 906 /* Microphone input not enabled */
#define EBERT 907 /* Streaming video rejected */
#define ENEBRIB 908 /* Unreadable configuration data */
#define EYEEEYE 909 /* Talk Like a Pirate Day notification */
#define EGOLD 910 /* Deprecated */
#define ELMER 911 /* Vendor FUD alert */
#define EEEAW 912 /* Extreme overclocking in progress */
#define EMO 913 /* All display colors set to #000000 */
#define EGAD 914 /* Language file needs updating */
#define EZZZT 915 /* Electrical short detected */
#define ENTROP 916 /* File system randomization underway */
#define EGON 917 /* Warning: streams crossed */
#define ESSSS 918 /* Mouse ingested by passing snake */
#define ENDER 919 /* Numerous bugs in system */
#define EGGCESS 920 /* Too many shells installed */
#define EBBAY 921 /* Cheap surplus components failure */
#define EZZC 922 /* Extra large font selected */
#define EARWIG 923 /* Contact exterminator ASAP */
#define ENRON 924 /* Auditing disabled */
```

Boy howdy, that puts the “head” in “header,” don’t it?

N.B.: Auditing those pesky security logs does not consist of glancing at them briefly over a cup of double mocha decaf before you get back to Homestarrunner. You actually have to pay attention to logged events and look them up ‘n’ stuff. Maybe, if the planets are right, you might even want to do something about them.

This has been a public service announcement by the Council for Clearing Things Up.