

nce upon a time, in a far distant land, there lived a great President who cared enormously for designing new and better computers. He had many courtiers and the shareholders were very pleased that he was the interim leader of their great nation. He had produced so many varieties of computer, that he could play with a different model every hour of the day.

One day, two new designers came to town. They announced that they could make a computer so fine, so superior, that whilst the clever and elegant would appreciate it's infinitely intricate detail, to the stupid it would merely appear to be invisible. They decreed that the new computer would be called the Invisible-Mock (the I-Mock). The President thought this an excellent idea - not only would he find out who amongst his courtiers were incorrigibly stupid and sack them, for he feared they were many, but he would also have a fine new product to sell to the same people who bought millions of My Little Peonies and Belly Tubbies at Toyz R Chinese Junk. The President having noticed that movies made for nine year olds like Independence Day and Godzilla could top the ratings in his fine country, knew that such people would never buy his mighty GeeUp Three computers as they looked like proper computers, not toy bubble cars from an old episode of Blakes Seven.

Day and night the designers toiled behind locked doors. They kept asking for finest Italian take-aways. Boxes of M&Ms were summoned from the furthest reaches of the empire. Even fish and GeeUp Chips [groan] were ordered. Eventually, the President felt it was time to see how matters were progressing, so he sent his different thinking, marketing advisor, to see how the work was progressing. Alas, the poor man realising he could only see an invisible computer case was sorely troubled. "Am I not fit for office?" he thought. "Oh bollocks, I can't even see a floppy drive.

I must be very stupid". And "How the f**k am I ever going to sell this?"
However the marketing man did not say this. The designers invited him closer to examine the fine plastic and admire the retro' radioactive, MacOSX washes white, day glow, barbie-doll goes sixties, colours.

"Oh it is quite, er, enchanting .. and um, cool" said the poor man finally, trembling in his desert boots, lest his stupidity be revealed for all to see. "Yes, what a fine invention and what fine colours. I shall of course tell the Emperor, er I mean the President, how pleased I am." So the designers sent out for extra chips [groan] and several old boilers were delivered too [??]. "Let them eat cake" announced the President, thinking in a moment of excited delirium, he might be an aristocratic femme fatale in a costume drama about to lose all her marbles at one slice.

Soon the President sent forth another quaking executive to see how the designers were getting on ... Well you know how the story goes from here. Suffice to say that eventually, the President was standing at a huge exhibition, where the thousands of devotees all knew that only the stupid would not be able to see the I-Mock sell in vast numbers. A hushed silence descended ... lights dimmed, all except one large Super Trouper (last used at an Abba concert in 1978) which pointed centre stage, in keen anticipation, towards a dark, tasteful piece of cloth, covering the mysterious new computer. With a final fanfare of sci fi music and much pomp and circumstance, the President removed the cover to reveal ... a stumpy little box of transparent plastic that looked like something transplanted from a re-run of a science project in food hygiene, created for the Open University, BBC 2, circa 1974.

There was a gasp of intaken air from the crowd and many journalists rushed off to write glowing intelligent tributes to the strange little gizmo, standing proud in all it's naked glory.

The President had never enjoyed such tributes as these - the tide had been turned - his company's prosperity was secure, or so it seemed.

But then from the crowd a small child muttered ...

"But it hasn't got any PCI slots or SCSI connectors. It's only got a 15" screen, which is no longer really up to the mark and who wants to use a 33.6 Kbps

modern these days? It looks like a something from an old Jetson's cartoon. Did they they go for those duo tone colours of the keypad for a bet or was it a spare from the next generation of alpha testing late Newtoniums? ..."

"No" interrupted an older wiser hack, biting deep with evident satisfaction into a green shiny apple, he just happened to have handy. "They just wanted to make damn sure that any corporate buyer prepared to shell out three grand for a computer with the rather exceptional Gee Up chip (which after all is what this I-Mock uses), doesn't ever, not for a second, feel he could dare to bring one of these weird little \$1100 psycho-ducklings to the corporate office instead. But parents with nine year olds looking for their first computer this Christmas ... ah, now there's a market!"

"Oh, I see," said the nine year old child, not seeing at all. And in the clanking background, to the sound of stocks being nervously lowered from 29 to 26 Dollaroons, Wizards (financial of course) privately wondered 'just how many of these peculiar see through thingies might the kingdom ever actually, be able to sell anyway?'

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