

Carbon Paper

It seemed like such a harmless prank at the time. Up on the third floor most of us had a bit of a mischievous streak in us, but of course there is always someone who doesn't seem to have a clue.

This was back in the days of fan-fold paper; you know, the kind that had the strip of sprocket holes along the sides. We had only dot-matrix printers, and the paper for it came in large boxes that held a couple of thousand sheets each. We had to order it special ourselves and find a charge number to cover it.

The fun started when my friend David made a mistake and ordered the wrong kind of paper. We received 27 boxes of three-part paper instead. This was made from three layers of ultra-thin fanfold paper with two carbons in-between. It was really a pain to try to use. But we had spent our money and were stuck with it.

For my work, I decided I would have to separate out the carbons and use only the paper parts. I laid it out on a table and folded it back and forth until I got a stack big enough to use. Of course, I was left with a lot of fan-fold carbon paper as well.

What could I do with it? I could have just thrown it away, but another idea struck me. Don't ask me how I came up with it; I really don't know! It occurred to me that I could take a small stack of the carbon paper and use the paper cutter to trim off a portion the width of, say, a toilet paper roll.

It took only a minute to run into the restroom and wrap the "special" paper around the real stuff. I giggled a little about it, and then forgot all about it.

A day or two later, I was working in my office when my supervisor came in. He was talking about some work problem when I saw his eyes lock on something behind me. He asked if that was my carbon paper in the window sill. I looked, and there was the remainder of the portion that I had sliced up. I couldn't really deny it.

He grinned and told me that Bill, the resident "scientist", had come into his office very irate. He complained very bitterly at some length about the type of low-life person who would substitute carbon paper for such a precious item. Now, the really funny part for me comes from the realization that Bill was such an absent-minded professor type that he probably used what came first on the roll without even looking. Why else would he have gotten so mad?

Fortunately, my supervisor was very understanding about the whole thing. I don't think that he ever told Bill who had done the terrible deed. I don't think that he could have done so without laughing, which would have made Bill even madder than before!