Top ~~Ten~~ … no wait… Eleven annoying questions posed by Biologists to Computer Programmers

From the home office in Detroit, Michigan

11. “Yes I understand. So let me ask you the same question again.”

10. Why isn’t my program working?

9. What do you mean my results aren’t practically significant?

8. Can I awk this? Can’t you just write a script for that?

(a. There are no magic wands. Also, yes.)

(b. You meant to ask “how do I write a … ?”)

(c. That may be the worst possible solution to a problem ever imagined.)

7. How do I convert X into Y using some sort of analysis?

(a. You’re supposed to tell me.)

6. What do you mean the result is that there is no result?

5. Why does my program give me the wrong answer?

(a. how do you know it is wrong answer?)

(b. is it just unexpected?)

4. Any question followed by “I didn’t try rebooting the computer.”

3. Can you check my code for errors?

(Syntactic yes, semantic no)

2. When will my program finish?

(a. this is unknowable)

(b. did you benchmark?)

1. May I have one of your donuts?

Bottom line: ask detailed, pointed questions