WHO IS THIS GOOBER?

For someone who does not consider themselves a writer, I sure do write a lot. Probably about half of it is computer programs, and I take great pride in making those work well and be understandable. But the other half of what I write is prose, such as what you're reading right now. And due to how my brain is put together, writing prose is simultaneously very easy and nearly impossible. Having a cohesive thought, and expressing it unambiguously, are two very different things.

Take this character for example. I created him as a character in a story I wrote as an assignment in my 10th

Limits Homework
Show your work, then verify using a calculator.
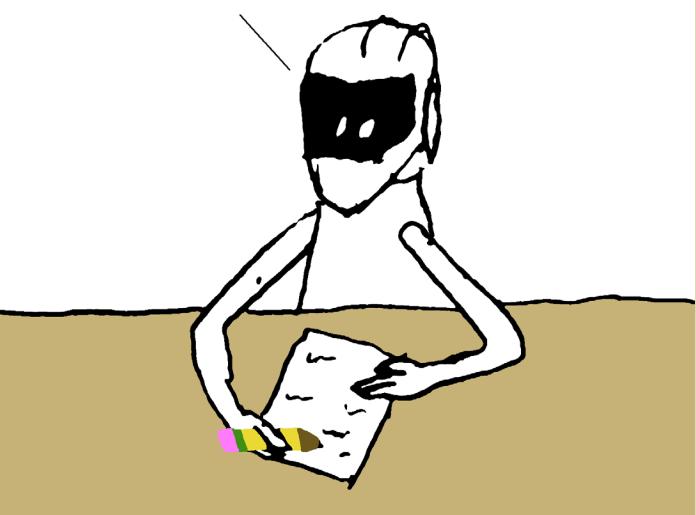
$$1.\ \lim_{x \to 3} \frac{4}{(x-3)^3}$$
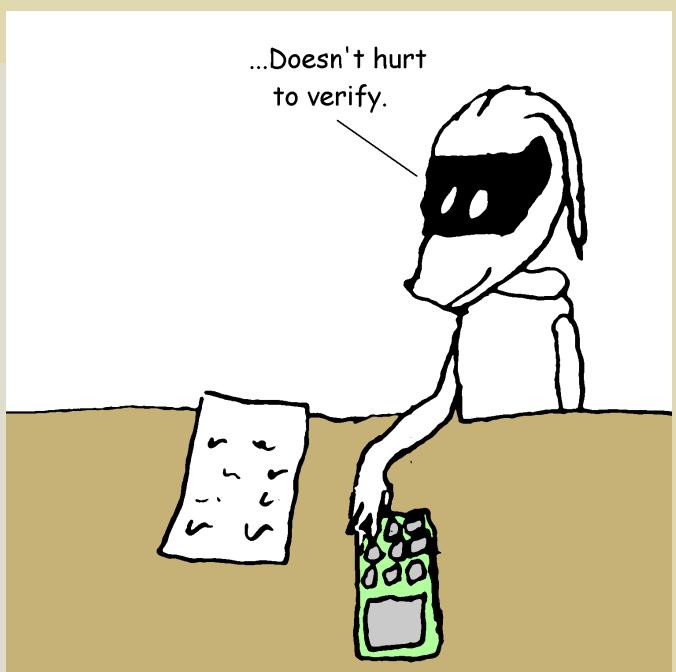
grade English class before generative AI was a thing. I had quite a task in developing that character, and rather than come up with a storyboard plan before I started, I just opened a
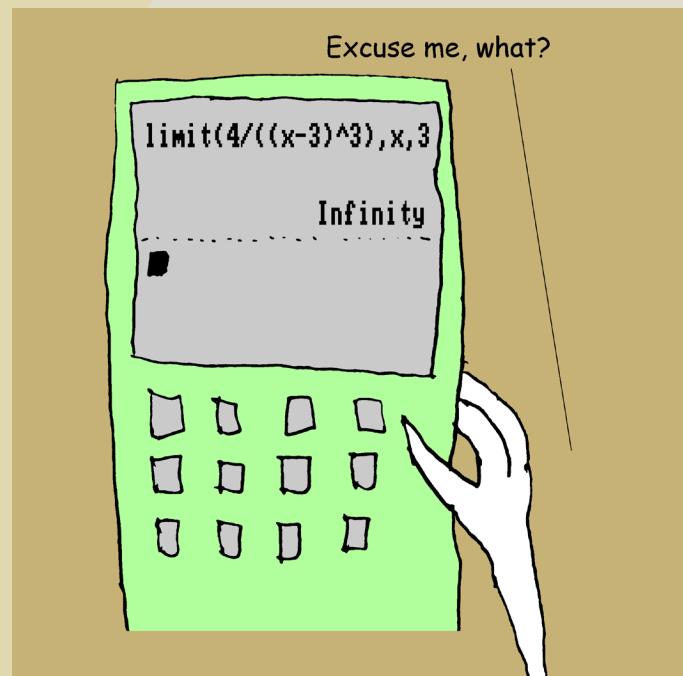

If I just plug in 3 for x, I get 4/0. That's an asymptote, not an indeterminate form, so the limit doesn't exist.

blank document and started writing. I didn´t visualize the character at all while I was writing the story, and maybe that was a bad idea. Looking back at that story now, I didn´t do a very good job. But hindsight is 20/20 – and no amount of ChatGPT would have been able to help me.


...Doesn't hurt to verify.
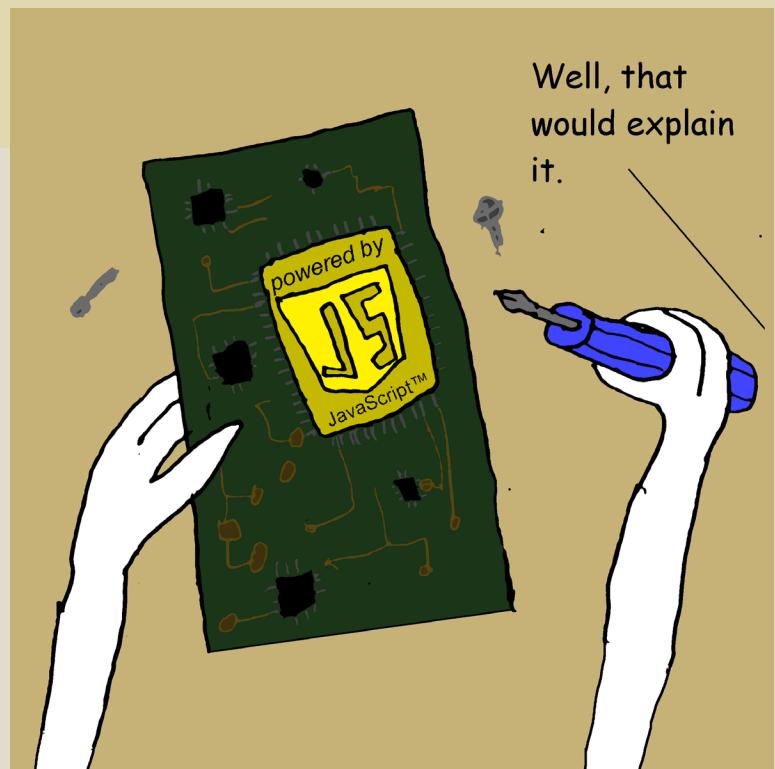
Fast-forward to now and I have developed that character a lot. I still haven´t settled on a name, but regardless of whether I ever do, this little guy is undeniably something that just can´t be replaced with generative AI.

Excuse me, what?

limit(4/((x-3)^3),x,3

Infinity

Of course, developing a character in your mind is useless if you can´t describe or express that character to others. That´s mostly the reason why there´s only two of these comic strips featuring this character here; I haven´t finished the third! The holdup turned out to be a literal pencil -- I drew these on paper first, and then scanned them and did some light image processing in GIMP.

My process for coming up with these ideas is probably fairly common in the cartoonist world -- I took them straight from the one thing that generative AI will never have - life experiences. This strip that just ended on this page was based on a real occurrence based on a rather embarrasing experience I had in my Calculus I class.
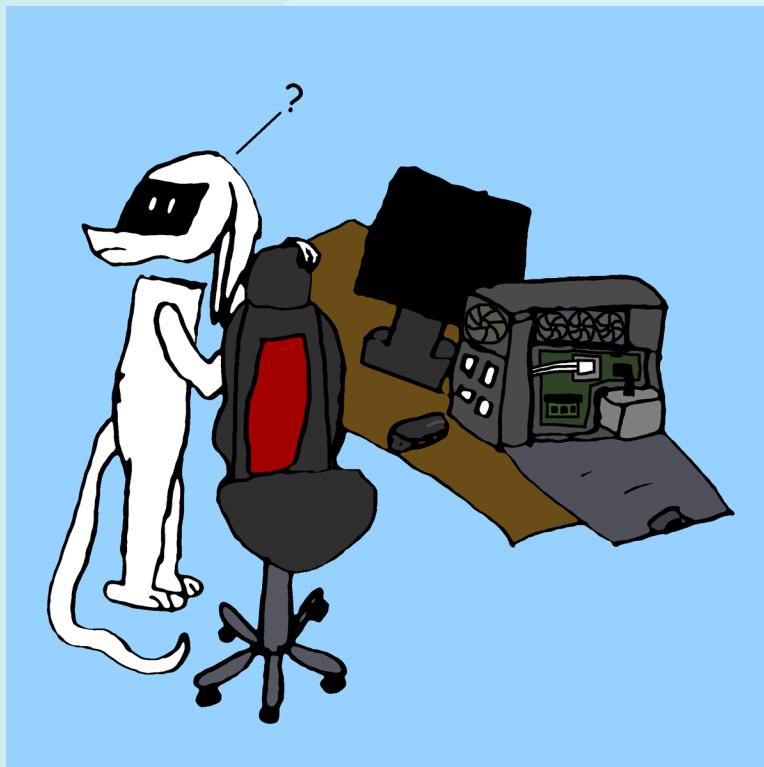
During a lesson on L´Hôpital´s rule, the teacher presented a problem, and then reminded us that the first thing we should do regardless of what we now know is to plug in the limit value directly and try to evaluate it. I momentarily forgot that Javascript uses IEEE-754 floating point math, and typed in the limit into a Javascript console. In this case the integral reduced to 4/0, which mathematically is undefined. But according to Javascript it was infinity, so I raised my hand and quickly made a fool of myself confidently giving the wrong answer. Such is life!
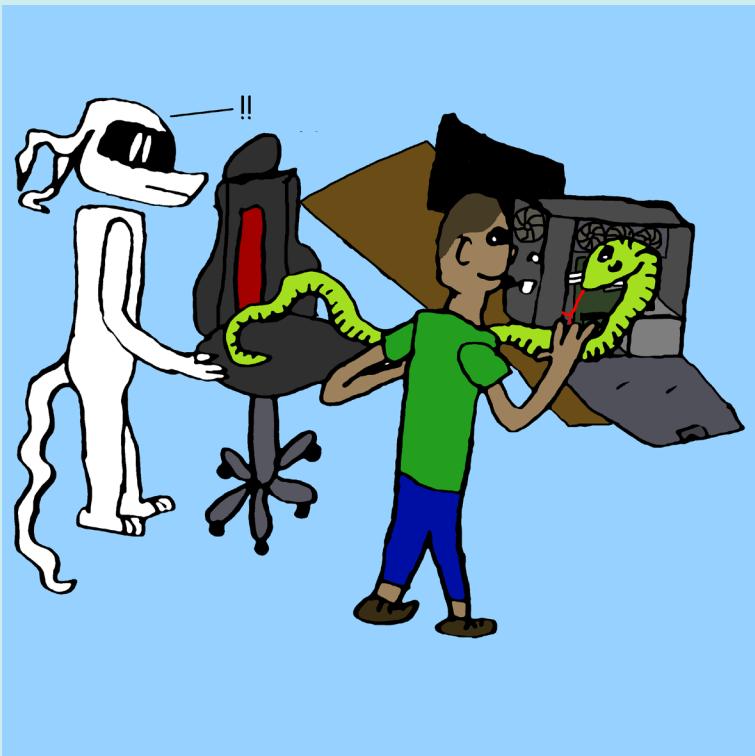
Such is also the inconvenience of having a 5-panel strip and putting two panels on each page of this zine. The bottom half here is looking kind of lonely.

After having been a programmer for many years now, I have encountered an innumerable number of bugs in code that resulted from a problem as simple as misinterpreting the documentation. Even with sophisticated high-level programming languages and compilers giving the most helpful error messages in the world, misinterpreting the meaning of data and using it in the wrong context will never be caught by anything like that and the code will happily spit out garbage.

It's also quite embarrasing when you realize that the problem someone else is having is because you provided them with the incorrect interpretation of the code or data. I did that once, and suffice to say I almost considered retiring from the project as a result of my error.
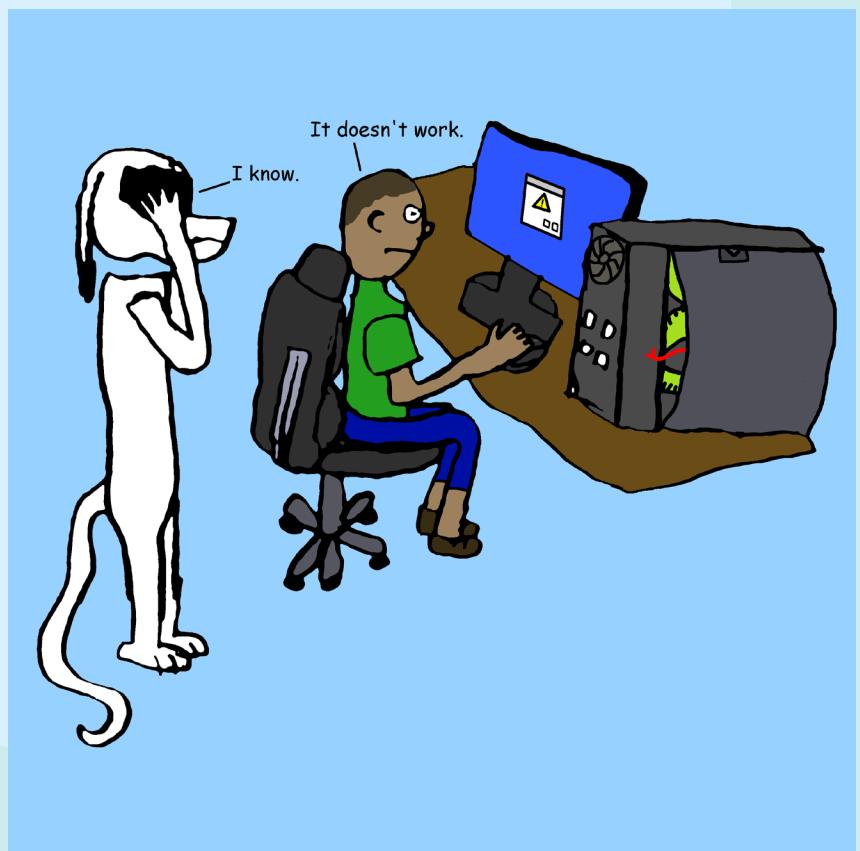
It was so long ago I forget exactly what it was, but the level of embarassment stuck with me - it was on the order of misinterpreting "Python" for "a python", as I drew in this second strip.

There's nothing about this strip's situation, however, that requires the character representing myself to be who it is. I chose this character as one that fully represents me and how I feel.

No one else seems to know what this character could be described as (I've had people call him a dog before; and one person even said horse), but I would describe him as an extraterrestrial cyborg from an unspecified planet.

It doesn't work.

I know.

As you might imagine, a robot would almost certainly take a liking to computers and technology, being made out of it. I'm primarily a nerd (and not an artist), so the designation to make him a robot was not by accident. But he's not fully robotic — a pure robot would contain nothing but a soulless AI program running it, and not a human personality. What good would that accomplish? It is worthless compared to a human-designed embodiment of a human personality.