

Hot Tips

Good info for the new ham, and old stuff to refresh your memory



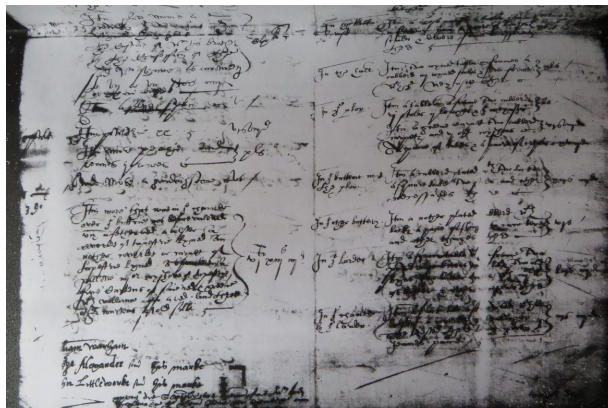
Avoid simply telling people to read the manual

When you're confronted by a problem with a device you're using, or simply want to learn how to operate a particular feature with it, you might pull out its manual and search its contents. Today, most manuals are thankfully in digital format, like PDF, often making it easier to search for the topic of concern.

Once in a while, however, the answer to a question can elude you, even after scouring the manual, forcing you turn to others for the answer. Unfortunately, the less-than-helpful response you sometimes receive is **RTFM**, or **read the fine manual** (or similar), typically indicating a level of irritation or frustration on the part of the responder.

Here are some reasons why you should never simply tell a person to go read the manual:

- They have probably already thought of that (give them [the benefit of the doubt](#))
- Even after reading the manual, the reader might be looking for additional insight or another point of view that isn't always laid out in the manual
- Simply telling a person to read the manual typically only helps you, not them (you might only be trying to get the questioner off your back under the pretense of appearing helpful)
- It's not the kinder approach (it's often better to help them find the text that answers the question)
- The manual might be poorly written or a little too technically advanced for the reader
- The manual might be worded in an unfamiliar way (English might not be the reader's native language)
- Your dismissive or unhelpful response might not only create a hostile learning environment, but can also be a reflection on your character in the minds of others



- If you truly are irritated or frustrated, leave the answering to others, or refer the inquirer to another person

You might feel that new hams, especially the youth, are lazy, and that they won't lift a finger and take the effort to find their own answers. If you think they're always trying to take the easy road, maybe you should look at yourself. Simply telling somebody to go read the manual is your way of taking the easy way out of answering a question by evading responsibility and placing the entire burden of research on the inquirer. So, who's the lazier one?

On the other hand, there are times when it's appropriate and even helpful to refer a person to the manual if you do so in a kind way, but it might require a little effort on your part. For example, look up in the manual where the information is located, then offer the link, the chapter, and the verse of the answer to the inquirer. You might find that the person is unable to locate the manual, or didn't even know what to search for.

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