Dear Tech Support,

I'm currently running the latest version of Girl Friend, and I've been having some problems lately. I've been running the same version of Drinking Buddies 1.0 forever as my primary application, and all the GirlFriend releases I've tried have always conflicted with it. I hear that DrinkingBuddies won't crash if GirlFriend is run in background mode and the sound is turned off. I am embarrassed to say I can't find the switch to turn the sound off. I just run them separately, and it works okay.

Girlfriend also seems to have a problem coexisting with my Golf program, often trying to abort Golf with some sort of timing incompatibility. I probably would have stayed with Girl Friend 1.0, but I thought I might see better performance from Girl Friend 2.0.

After months of conflicts and other problems, I consulted a friend who has had experience with GirlFriend 2.0. He said I probably didn't have enough caches to run GirlFriend 2.0, and it eventually would require a Token Ring to run properly. He was right as soon as I purged my cache it uninstalled itself.

Shortly after that I installed Girl friend 3.0 beta. All the bugs were supposed to be gone, but the first time I used it, it gave me a virus anyway. I had to clean out my whole system and shut down for a while. I very cautiously upgraded to girlfriend 4.0. This time, I used a SCSI probe first and also installed a virus protection program. It worked okay for a while until I discovered that GirlFriend 1.0 was still in my system. I tried running GirlFriend 1.0 again with GirlFriend 4.0 still installed, but GirlFriend 4.0 has a feature I didn't know about that automatically senses the presence of any other version of GirlFriend and communicates with it in some way, which results in the immediate removal of both versions.

The version I have now works pretty well, but there are some problems. Like all versions of GirlFriend, it is written in some encrypted language I can't understand, much less reprogram. Frankly, I think there is too much attention paid to the look and feel with your hardware, you usually have to use gold-plated contacts. And I've never liked how GirlFriend is totally 'object oriented'.

A friend picked up GirlFriendPlus 1.0 a few years back, which is a Terminate and Stay Resident version of GirlFriend. He discovered that GirlFriendPlus1.0 expires within a year if you don't upgrade to Fiancée 1.0. So he did, but soon after that, he had to upgrade to Wife 1.0, which he describes as a huge resource hog. It has taken up all his space, so he can't load anything else. One of the primary reasons he decided to go with Wife 1.0 was because it came bundled with FreeSexPlus, particularly, the new Plug Ins he wanted to try. But, Wife 1.0 came with MotherInLaw which has an automatic pop-up feature he can't turn off. I told him to try installing Mistress 1.0, but he said he heard if you try to run it without first uninstalling Wife 1.0, Wife 1.0 will delete MSMoney files before doing the uninstall itself. Then Mistress 1.0 won't install anyway because of insufficient resources.

Looking for your advice on how to sort all this out.

Dear GirlFriend User:

Well, this is quite a problem, isn't it? Don't worry;
you are not alone. The easy solution is to remove all versions of "spouseware" and go back to a manual version. I recommend a thoroughly debugged version such as "Hand 5.0". If that is not satisfactory, you could hire a consultant to assist you periodically. They charge upwards of $100 per hour for full-service on-site visits, although on-site oral support is commonly available for about $50 and call-in support can cost as little as $1.99 a minute. A few notes - careless or malevolent consultants can infect your system and even cause a fatal system error, and consultants always charge far more if you attempt to run Drinking Buddies 1.0 while they work. Finally, DO NOT run Hand 5.0 and Drinking Buddies 1.0 simultaneously; a very serious Protocol Error will occur and the Drinking Buddies program may well be lost and need to be replaced.