

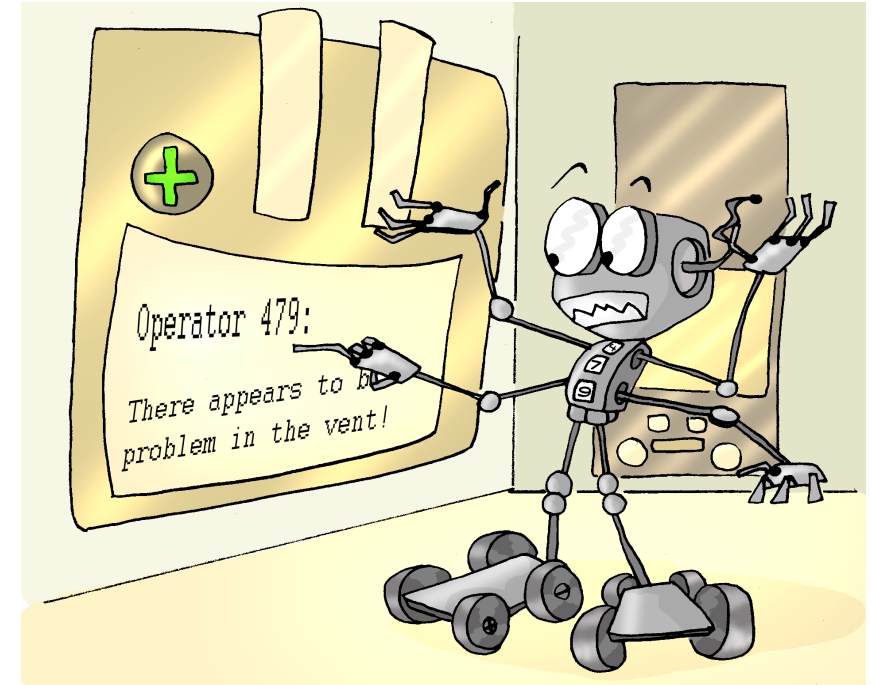
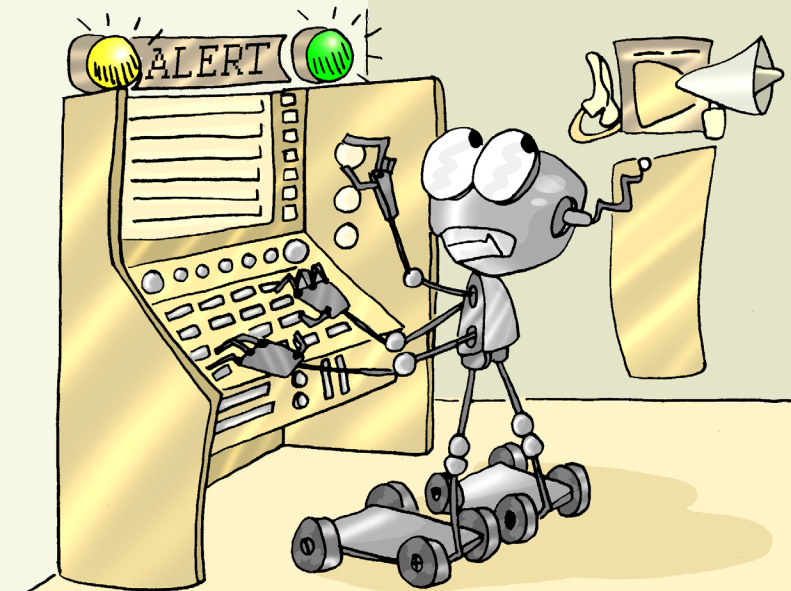
A PROBLEM ON GLASTAR

Standing two feet tall, with two sets of arms and wheels for feet, Operator 479 was busy at work on Glastar, the space station he called home. He was a glastabot, one of a large group of robots who were responsible for the life-support system of the space station.

Each glastabot had a specific duty, and they were collectively needed to ensure that the life-support system on the space station was running smoothly. The glastabots were given their work instructions from the mainframe computer, which broadcasted information onto a small screen located on their third arm.

Operator 479 was very pleased with his duty to program and monitor the generator that purified and recycled the air. He had been doing it for a long time and was quite proficient at it.

"Operator 479," his screen flashed one day, "your help is needed in the airflow system in sector five, subsection nine. There appears to be a problem in the vent. Your assignment is to identify the problem and correct it."



"A problem in the vent?" he reported back to the mainframe. "Isn't vent troubleshooting Operator 468's job?"

"Operator 468 has malfunctioned, and is unable to do his task," read the screen.

"Why am I being sent to perform this task?" Operator 479 grumbled as he dragged his wheels through the vents on his way to sector five. "I have a very, very important job running the generator. I shouldn't have to be rolling through the vents troubleshooting problems."

Arriving at subsection nine, 479 glanced around. "I can't see anything wrong," he said, then turned and headed back.

After reporting to the mainframe that all was well, he was back on the job of monitoring the generator. "Ah, that's better," he whirled.

The following day, the air regulation monitoring systems registered serious problems in sector five, subsection nine. The problems were also spreading to subsection ten. Reports were coming in that there was a strange, foul-smelling mist filling the air.

Lights flashed. Sirens wailed. Every glastabot was on alert. Special teams of glastabots were dispatched to the problem areas to find and eliminate the problem.

It was difficult and it took a long time, but the glastabot teams bravely struggled on until they found the problem. A piece of food had fallen through a vent and proceeded to rot, causing a vile smell that permeated more and more air space until it was discovered.

Meanwhile, Operator 479 was a very sorry glastabot. Because he had halfheartedly filled in for another glastabot and had done a poor job at it, he bore a lot of the responsibility for the problems that had been caused. Right there and then, Operator 479 determined that he would become a more helpful and willing robot in the future.

And he did. Operator 479 became known throughout Glastar as one of the most helpful robots aboard the space station. Not only did he perform his own tasks well, but he also cheerfully filled in for other robots when they malfunctioned or needed extra assistance.

Eventually, Operator 479 was awarded "Most Useful Robot" status, and to this day can still be seen rolling silently down the halls of the Glastar space station, quietly and cheerfully performing whatever tasks have been assigned to him, as well as filling in wherever he sees a need.



Aaron rolled his Lego robot through the space station. He had a new task for Operator 479 to embark on when his dad popped his head through the door.

"Aaron, we need your help on dishes tonight."

"I'm not on dishes tonight, Dad. It's Melissa's turn."

"I know. But she's not feeling well and needs to get to bed early. We'd be very grateful if you could fill in for her. We can finish dishes more quickly that way and still have time for a story tonight."

Aaron looked at the Lego robot in his hand.

I'm going to be as helpful as Operator 479 turned out to be, he thought with a smile, and headed toward the kitchen.

