

Computers

Help is at hand

There are often simple solutions to common software stumbling blocks.

THE most common computer problem that doctors or practice staff contact me about involves recall and reminder systems.

In Medical Director, the main problem is understanding the interconnection between the handling of urgent results, the recall system and how the outstanding actions work.

It is particularly frustrating for staff administering the recall system when non-compliant doctors don't mark off recalls and reminders once the patient has been seen.

The next most common problem is not being able to download templates correctly from a division website, usually because the fields do not work.

Often the reason is that the instructions were not read

carefully or, in some cases, not read at all. In many cases templates are opened and saved in Word, which "kills" the fields.

Always read the instructions for downloading templates and follow them to the letter.

A surprisingly common problem is writing progress notes into the wrong patient's history.

The way to correct this problem is outlined in my booklet *Medical Director — This Week's Problem Solved Volume 2*.

An example of this problem was a doctor who wanted to know how to "undecease" a patient.

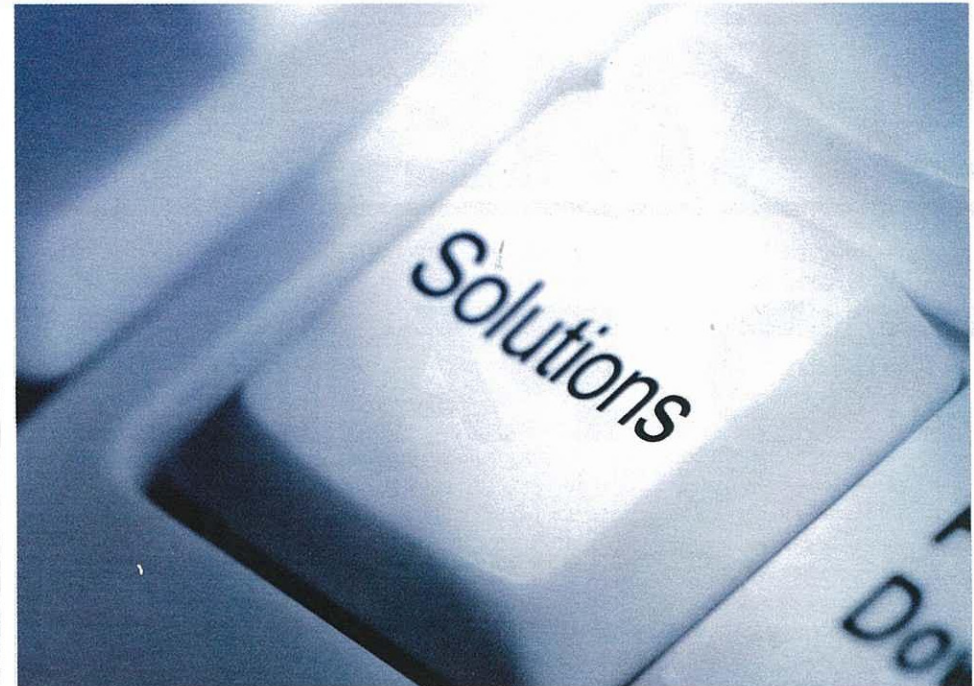
His brother, a fellow GP, was on holiday and he had inadvertently "electronically deceased" one of his patients, who was very much alive.

A surprisingly common problem is writing progress notes into the wrong patient's history.

The GP was too embarrassed to tell his brother.

We were able to bring the patient back to life (a modern electronic miracle) and the brother never found out what had happened.

Invariably someone else has already had your particular



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problem and there is often a simple solution.

I have developed six booklets based on a weekly Medical Director hints and problem-solving column in my local division's e-newsletter. The booklets — called *Medical Director Tips and Tricks*

and *Medical Director — This Week's Problem Solved* — are available free in PDF form to *Australian Doctor* readers.

For your copy of any of the books, email me at noel@nevdgp.org.au

And if you can't find your problem in these booklets, I

am happy to answer emails about specific Medical Director issues. ●

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