

## **Users smash up PCs in outbreaks of "network rage"**

By George Anderson

Violent acts against computers have become such a problem psychologists have termed this digital vandalism as "network rage." Eighty-three per cent of network managers surveyed reported abusive and often violent behavior by users as a result of computer problems. Acts of violence resulted in shattered monitors, smashed keyboards and kicked-in hard drives. Sometimes the PC GBH was so badly damaged, it was impossible to make out the identity of mice that had been flung across a room -- their plastic shells dashed against walls and shattered into tiny fragments. "When people are under a lot of stress from supervisors and managers to meet tight deadlines, they can become frustrated and lose control of their temper," said Boston-based psychologist Dr Will Calmas. "Instead of voicing their frustrations to their supervisors, some people choose to take out their aggression on inanimate objects -- in this case, their monitor, keyboard or mouse." According to the survey conducted by Concord Communications, the number one piece of equipment broken during an act of network rage is the keyboard. Broken mouse and shattered monitors tied for second place and kicked-in hard drives placed third. One network manager who asked to remain anonymous said: "I had a user who complained that her cursor would not move, so she would repeatedly slap the terminal on one side to move it." And another told of how one irate woman was close to breaking point after being unable to send any e-mail. "After I calmed her down, I asked to see a sample of an email message she was trying to send. The email address included street name, town, county and full postal code." If you or an employee, family member or friend has any symptoms of network rage, contact one of the providers on our Certified Anger Management provider list.