NAME
rtfm − Acronym for Read The F*cking Manual

USAGE
Person1: "How do I...?"

Person2: "RTFM"

Person1: "huh?"

DESCRIPTION
RTFM is often used as a response to technical questions. Unfortunately, many people don't even know how to ***find*** the manual, let alone understand it.

If someone tells you to RTFM, they could mean any of the following:

(1)

The manual says it better than I do, please look there.

(2)

I'm too busy to answer you right now; try to find the answer yourself.

(3)

I don't know the answer to your question.

(4)

I've been asked this question too many times and I'm irritable. Find the answer yourself.

OPTIONS
There are a number of options available when you have been told to RTFM:

(1)

Try the man pages. (Or info, or −−help) This is useful if you know the name of the command or application you are using. Type "**man**" (without the quotes) followed by the name of the command. For more information on man, (which is short for "manual") type "**man man**" (without the quotes.)

If you don't know the exact command you need, try using apropos or man -k to get a list of commands that do have man pages available. (eg "**man −k rename**")

Also, sometimes there is more than one man page with the same name that might be listed like this: "*hiccup(8)*" To get to that particular page, use "**man 8 hiccup**".

Similarly, you can use the "**info**" command to get more information on some applications, (type "**info info**" to learn more about info) and you can often use the **−−help** or **−h** flag (eg "**man −−help**") to get a quick summary of options.

(2)

Look for other documentation on your machine.

Try looking in */usr/doc* or */usr/doc/HOWTO* or other documentation directories. (The location of the documentation will vary depending on how your system is setup.)

(3)
Look at the Linux Documentation Project.

It can be found at *http://www.linuxdoc.org/*. In fact, this is probably easier than looking for documentation on your system.

(4)

Search the web.

Try looking through archives to see if anyone else has asked the same question. I suggest using Google (*http://www.google.com/*) for websearches or searching newsgroups using *http://groups.google.com*, but there are many other ways to do it.

If your queries are coming up with information that doesn't help you, try including the search terms like "HOWTO", "FAQ" or "Guide".

If you're using a specific application, make sure to look up the webpage for that application. And try to look at the homepage for your distribution (Eg: *http://www.debian.org, http://www.redhat.com, http://www.slackware.com,* etc.). Often they have search engines of their own.

(5)

Rephrase your query.

Maybe what you asked was too broad or wasn't well understood. Rather than just asking exactly the same thing again, try to explain yourself further, telling people what you've tried and what documentation you've already read. Ask if anyone knows of a good HOW-TO or can direct you to a webpage. As a rule, the more information you give about your problem the more likely someone is to be able to help, and people are much more willing to help you if you're showing that you're really interested in learning.

If you've posted on a public forum, often there are many people listening to your query, so give them a chance to respond before giving up hope!

(6)

Ask a knowledgeable friend.

If you know someone, they're more likely to feel guilty about brushing you off and telling you to read the manual. It's not a bad idea to offer to make them dinner or do them a favour as a thank you!

SEE ALSO
man, info, help, http://www.linuxdoc.org