(U) Acronyms Anonymous (repost)

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(U) A relatively new NSAer writes about her impressions coming to the Agency after many years in private industry. This was first posted on November 14, 2005.

(U) Mine is an unusual career - with more twists and turns than an aerobics class. Two and a half years ago, at the age when most NSA employees are leaving their government career behind to join the ranks of the "for profit" contractor world, I was doing just the opposite. The defense contractor I was working for as a technical writer announced they were relocating to Texas, and I found myself in the unsettling position of job hunting. So when the opportunity to work for an organization that I was pretty sure wasn't going anywhere (MSOC Build-Out doesn't count), I was delighted. Two and a half years later, I still am - but there were adjustments.

(U) First on the list is the complex itself. It is large and confusing, especially to someone who considers a GPS as standard on a car as a steering wheel. After trying to find a parking spot at 7:45 every morning and then trying to find that same spot again after work, I became an "Airplane Lot" regular. This way I know where my car is at the end of the day and I get some exercise. And that's only the outside. Trying to find my way to a new office through the maze of buildings still sparks a sense of panic, although I have not had to resort to the breadcrumb trail routine.

(U) And then there's the language barrier. I don't mean just the Constant Use of Complicated Acronyms (CUCA) but the preferred NSA writing style - more is better. All those introverts they told us about at Orientation who can't talk to you in the halls become magpies when they get behind the computer. Why use six well-chosen words when you can use (utilize) 12 multi-syllable ones and show off that vocabulary list you memorized for your SAT test? Except, of course, for that four-word phrase "as soon as possible." That is just way too long to type out, so let's use (utilize) soonest. When I first saw that word, I was sure it was a mistake. The second time I saw it, I wondered if we had Pennsylvania Dutch linguists.

(U) Now I hope, dear engineer-type reader, that you recognize hyperbole, as well as hyperbola, when you see it. For in reality, I have felt very honored to be part of such a hard-working, dedicated, and bright group of people and look forward to meeting and working with more of you soonest.

(U) See also a couple of articles prompted by the above:

(U) Letter to the Editor: Please Don't Utilize That Word!

(U) Letter to the Editor: Succinct Memos of Yore