

SysAdmin

Horror Stories



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We all know that a SysAdmin's job is no easy task, but apart from constantly having systems to update, bugs to fix and users to please, System Administrators encounter all sorts of weird and wacky situations throughout their careers. In this free ebook, we have gathered some of the funniest and most horrifying stories - live from the trenches - to share with you.

From tricky tech situations to funny anecdotes, terrible mishaps and chilling incidents, this ebook should be a treat, as it provides real insight into what SysAdmins go through daily.

Enjoy your read!



One week we had one floor lose connectivity for about 20 minutes every day. When it got escalated to me, I went on site and waited around to see what was happening. Lo and behold it was the cleaner unplugging the rack to use the plug for the vacuum cleaner. Mystery solved!

Carl H.



When I worked in tech support, I helped an older gentleman remotely. I asked him to close all of the windows so that we could start from scratch. He said "Okay" and that he would "be right back". Ten minutes later get got back on the phone and said "Well, I closed all the windows, now what?"

Ryan G.

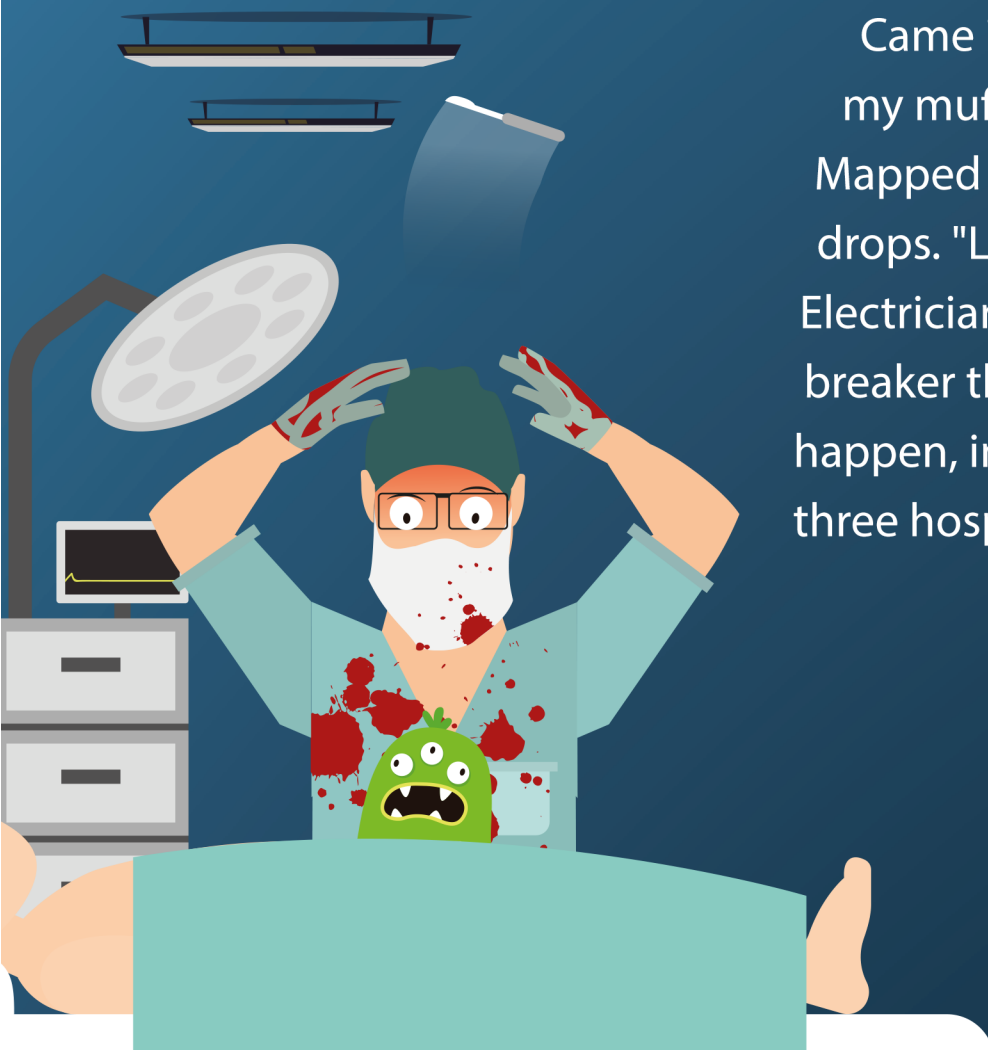


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As a Sysadmin, one of the craziest stories I've ever had was with a company in a small village. The server had a high temperature, when we opened it to change the fans, we found a nest of mice inside - amazing discovery!

Miguel A.



Came in one morning, eating my muffin, sipping my coffee. Mapped drives drop, Exchange drops. "Let's go see what's up..." Electricians on site had flipped a breaker thinking nothing would happen, instead they took down three hospitals. Datacentre dead silent and dark. ER/ICU on paper? Fun.

Mark B.

We had a customer send us a screenshot of their cracked screen using print screen.

Liam R.



A man called me to help him figure out why his computer wouldn't turn on after he changed out the hardware. He had been in IT for 15 years at the time, and it was driving him crazy. So I came over, followed the cord and plugged it in for him. His wife lost it! Laughing hysterically at him..

Brandon C.



My father always says "Assume nothing, trust no one". A customer called up saying they couldn't connect to their server. Tech reached out and was trying to walk them through troubleshooting. Turns out the user was on a laptop because the power had gone out and everything was down.

Nathan B.



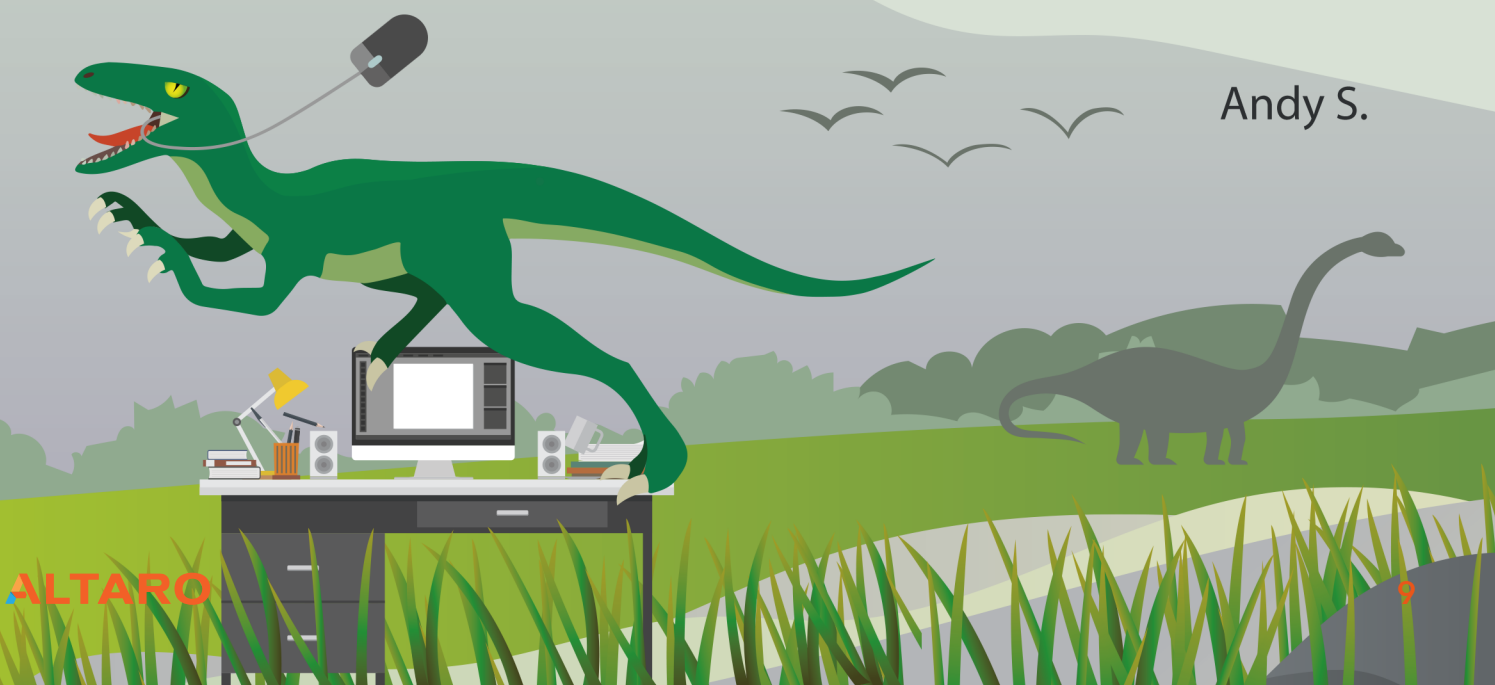
I used to have a salamander in a tank at work. Although the lid was covered, the salamander kept climbing out. One day he up and vanished. When my computer wouldn't start, I opened up the case and pulled out a stick jammed in the power supply... except that it wasn't a stick!

Rob H.

Ten to fifteen years ago, when I was still working with a service provider, I got a call one day from a kind woman that was very open about being no good with computers. She said that she could not open application 'X'; I was just two minutes from her location so I just went to her home to figure it out. So, I get there and sat down and I told her to open the 'Start Menu' and to find the application and she replied "what is a Start menu?". Bit by bit we managed to enter the Start menu and found the application she requested, and everything was fine. But as I'm on my way out the door she said "Wait, wait, there is one other thing I need you to take care of".

She told me that her daughter said that there was a way to turn the mouse cursor into a dinosaur. I wasn't aware of this, but did some search and found out that Windows XP, the operating system she was using, at that time had an amount of customised mouse cursors backed in. That was a simple quick change, but she was super, super happy that her mouse cursor was now a dinosaur. I went back to the office, and that was an interesting ticket to fill out: "Helped user to find application 'X' and changed mouse cursor into a dinosaur".

Andy S.



Once I went crazy because all the electricity of a floor was powered off, and we couldn't find the origin of power failure. All of a sudden we heard this voice coming from the next room: "oooh I spilled all my water bottle onto the plug". We ran over to take a look at it, and the electric plug was sitting in a pool of water...

Jorge B.





When working on a printer, I told the user that I needed to replace the printer cable (old IEEE). She grabbed a trash bag and tried to hold it behind her computer. I asked why and she said it was to catch all the stuck jobs when they poured out of her computer...

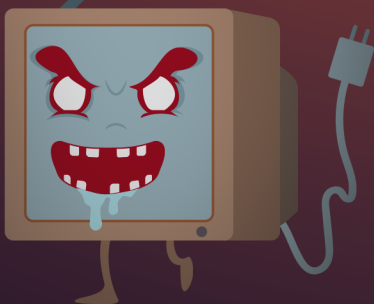
Mike V.

I sent out some user instructions for users to install an update for their iPads. I had attached screen shots of the process taken from my iPad. After about 4 hours we received a call from one user as it was taking too long. They had kept the screenshot open waiting for the install to finish...



Aaron L.

I once had a woman on the phone who needed to enter her email address on her TV. After a few minutes struggling to enter the email address, I asked her to confirm she was using the correct remote. She was trying to use her TV as a touchscreen.... Luckily she took it in stride, we both laughed!



Eric K.

Over the last 20 years I have had a lot of experiences, good and bad. However, there is one that will always stick out in my mind. Back in 1999 I was working at a helpdesk for a hospital, I received a call for assistance from an executive assistant. She wanted to order 20 cases of pop, and place a catering order. I had to explain to her what an IT helpdesk did, and that we didn't do that. She still proceeded to tell me her order, and then argue with me about it. After the phone call, I had quite a laugh explaining it to my colleagues.

Paul S.



A client of ours bought a GPU from us and decided to install it by himself. Soon after that, we got a call from him saying the new GPU wouldn't work.

Etu H.



I started at the helpdesk like most SysAdmins out there. It once took me over 20 minutes to explain to a new user how to hit ALT CTRL DEL to log into the computer. She just couldn't get the concept of pressing 3 keys simultaneously.

Konrad J.



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I had a Department Heads meeting to go over strict guidelines for 911 software training. Instructions were sent out Friday morning, so training could begin the following Monday.

2 users activated 911 on Friday and scrambled all police officers because they couldn't read and follow directions!

Zach D.



One building maintenance worker was working in a ceiling where some of our network runs are. Later we got calls about losing connections, which led us to the maintenance worker. He let us know he cut some of the network cables but fixed them by putting them back together with wire nuts.

Wallace F.



I was testing to confirm the email was functioning for a user at a plastic surgery company, and I accidentally opened an email with pictures of one of their patient's breasts!
Oops...

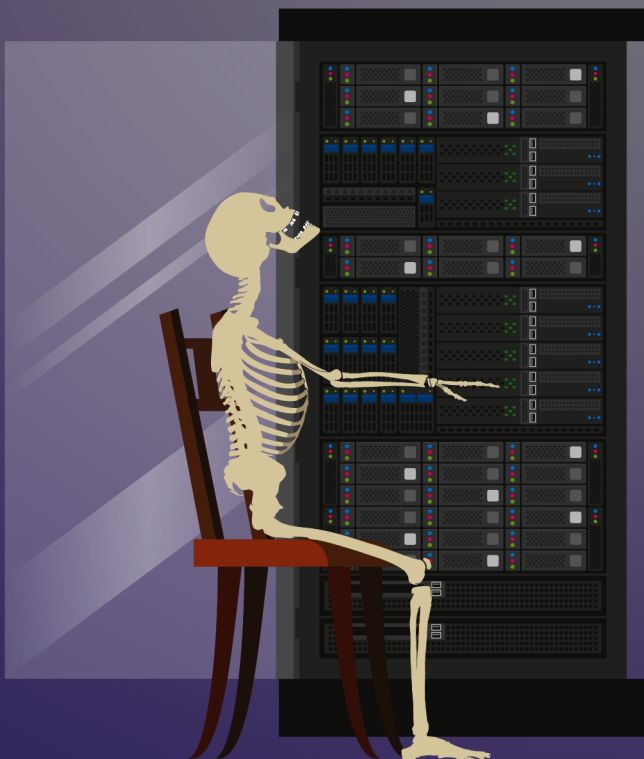
Kyle R.



I once had to hold the power button on a server for around 2 hours (back when a power button would power off on release).

It turns out I was instructed to turn off the wrong server, and by the time a colleague ran in to tell me it was the wrong server I had the power button firmly pressed down - I had to hold the button until the company could go without the server for a few minutes.

Daniel W.



It was early 2007. Our college's datacentre had been slowly built up over time in a converted classroom, with little regard for climate control. There was actually a residential-grade, wall-mounted Whirlpool room A/C unit cut into one wall. Our college was located in the Southwest Mojave Desert of Southern California. The college 'saved money' each weekend by turning off all A/C units across the campus - INCLUDING THE ONES IN THE DATACENTER - so, our servers were chugging along in 120-140 degree heat each Monday morning. In March 2007, we went to a backup vendor, as we had a dated Quantum LTO1 backup tape drive (with only a single tape magazine), and were experiencing minor issues with stability on our EMC Clarion CX400 SAN (due to environment heat). So we needed a solid backup set of our environment, but our existing solution would not back up opened files, and the campus would not give us a maintenance window of 1 week (which we needed with our slow tape drive) to pull a full backup set. We had asked for the money to purchase a redundant SAN in case of failure, but the administration denied the request.

We scheduled the backup vendor for 8:45 am, July 17, 2007 to arrive at our campus and run a full backup set for us. As Murphy's Law would have it, at approx. 10 pm on July 16th (yes, the night prior to the scheduled arrival of our backup vendor), the SAN failed, and one of our 900GB LUNs was lost forever. Yay planning.

Justin G.

While doing remote tech support a user called and said that their keyboard was not working. I confirmed that it was a wired keyboard and the user said that they had double checked it was plugged in. I remotely logged into their system and looked at the device manager and did not see any keyboard connected. It was not plugged in.

Brad C.



I had a user tell me her PC kept shutting down for no reason and with no warning. When I found the computer, it was on the floor with her under-the-desk heater aimed at it. Not only was the computer constantly overheating, she'd melted the face plate and it was drooping.

Rob G.



I used to work for Samsung in IT. A member of staff needed a password reset, so I reset the password to Samsung1. Then I told them that I had reset the password. They called back 2 minutes later and said that it wasn't working. I reset it again, not working again. I figured that there must be something wrong on the user's side so I went to see them. They were typing "Samsung" wrong... hint, it's the company you work for and it's written on the monitors!

Peter J.

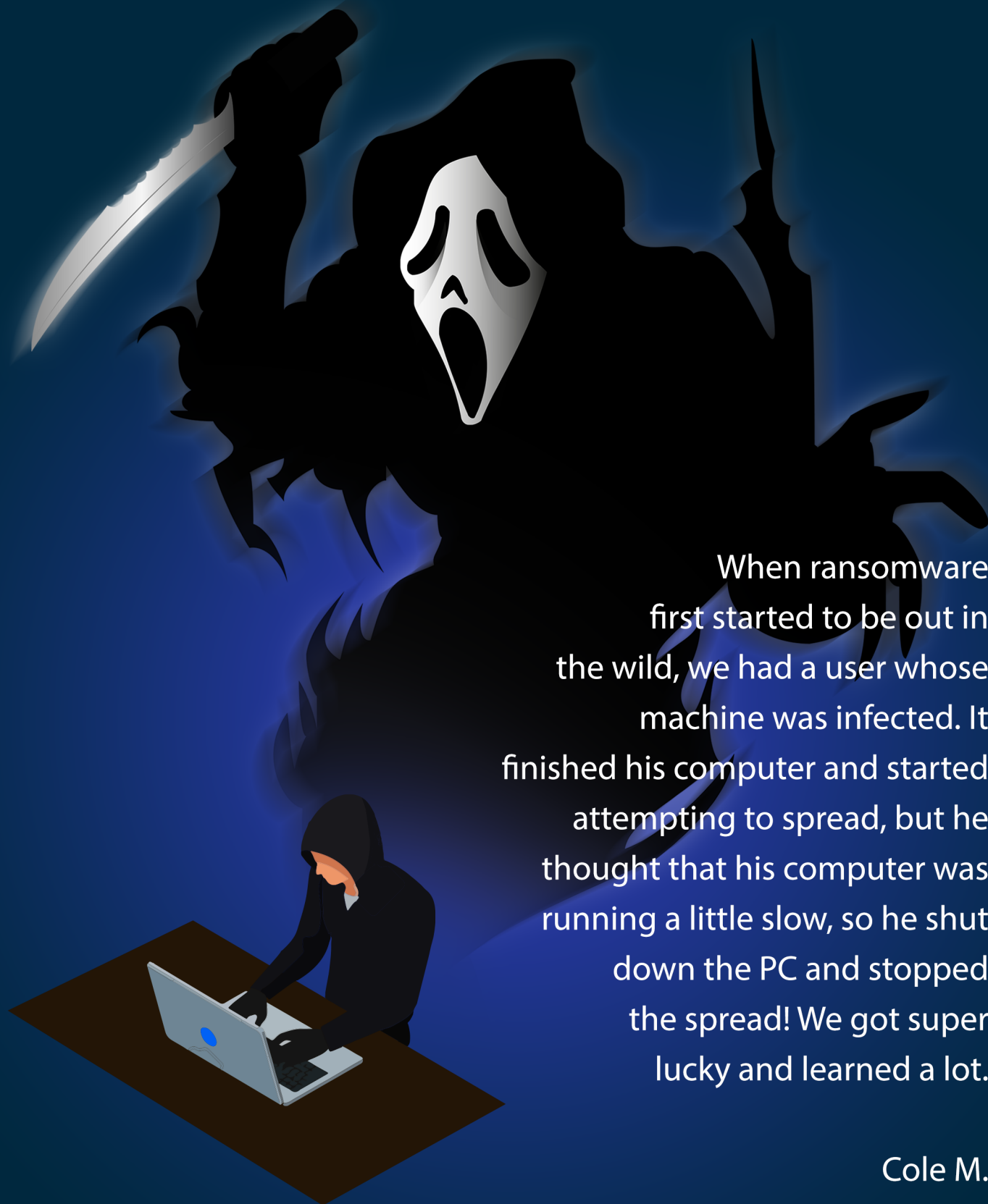


SEMSUNG



We do work for a good number of farms.
We had a customer who was retiring
a PC. Brought back the old one
to remove the hard drive and
found a dead mouse inside.
There was no telling how
long it had been inside
the computer, but by
the looks of it - it was
not recently deceased.

Greg T.



When ransomware first started to be out in the wild, we had a user whose machine was infected. It finished his computer and started attempting to spread, but he thought that his computer was running a little slow, so he shut down the PC and stopped the spread! We got super lucky and learned a lot.

Cole M.



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