

# The administrator is an idiot

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 [devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20070508-00](http://devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20070508-00)

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Nearly all computer administrators are idiots. That's not because the personnel department is incompetent or because it's impossible to train competent administrators. It's because, for a consumer operating system, the computer administrator didn't ask to be one. In nearly all cases, the computer administrator is dad or grandma.<sup>†</sup> They didn't ask to be the computer administrator. They just want to surf the web and read email from Jimmy.<sup>‡</sup> All this means is that you can't say, "Well, if the user is an administrator, as opposed to a normal user, then it's okay to show them all these dangerous things (such as critical operating system files) because they know what they're doing." Grandma doesn't know what she's doing. For a consumer operating system, a friendly user interface means protecting the administrators from themselves. **Nitpicker's corner** Sigh. One article without a nitpicker's corner and look what happens. <sup>†</sup>The words "dad" and "grandma" refer to archetypes for non-technical home users and are not intended to be interpreted as literally dad and grandma.

<sup>‡</sup>Not all grandchildren are named Jimmy.

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