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System Administration
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System Administration

"System Administrator—
Anyone who manages a
computer not solely
for their own use."

—*System Administrators Guild of Australia (SAGE-AU)*



Jokes

Q: What's the difference between a System Administrator and God?

A: God doesn't walk around pretending to be a System Administrator!



Warning!

WARNING

The sheer power of the root login can be addictive. When you log in as root you don't have to worry about file permissions, access rights, or software settings. You can do anything at anytime. This power is very attractive to newcomers to the operating system, who tend to do everything while logged in as root. It's only after the system has been damaged that the root login's problems become obvious: There are no safeguards! As a rule, you should only use the root login for system maintenance functions. Do not use the superuser account for daily usage!

—Redhat Linux Unleashed

The Sys. Admin. Task

⌘ system administrators need to develop a particular set of skills and attributes, including:

⏏ a healthy dose of paranoia

⊗ *Whatever I do is wrong for one of you! Do I detect a hacker?*

⏏ fascist tendencies

```
# kill -9 `ps aux | awk '$1=="bob" { print $2 }`
```

⏏ plumbing capabilities

⊗ *Hmm...this cable is labeled 1c3 but goes to port 1a42...that isn't right!*

⏏ persistence

⊗ *\$#&^%\$ machine! Boot damn you, boot!*

⏏ laziness

⊗ *I'll just adapt Fred's backing-up script for this task...*

⏏ becoming a social engineer

⊗ *You really **shouldn't** unplug the mainframe you know! Try ^C next time you need to stop your program...*

⏏ obsessive-compulsive tendencies

⊗ *Did I really do that backup—I'd better go and check...whoops!*

⏏ the ability to see into the future

⊗ *When are we going to need more disk/RAM/CPU/...?*

What You Do

- ⌘ disaster recovery
- ⌘ desktop applications support
- ⌘ hardware maintenance
- ⌘ telecommunications infrastructure support
- ⌘ user training
- ⌘ software installation
- ⌘ database administration
- ⌘ purchasing and licensing
- ⌘ backup dumps/restores
- ⌘ performance tuning
- ⌘ system security
- ⌘ hardware installation
- ⌘ software distribution and support
- ⌘ LAN services
- ⌘ software configuration
- ⌘ OS support
- ⌘ security auditing
- ⌘ etc., etc., etc.

