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## Being a SysAdmin and Loving IT

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It was a Monday afternoon and I was going out for lunch. Along the way, I stopped by and engaged in a conversation about “the Monday blues” with a user when another user interrupted with, “but you do nothing all day long anyway”. He was referring to me, and although I was surprised, I wasn’t exactly shocked since this is the sixth time that someone in my department has said this to my face. It still pretty much ruined my appetite for lunch.

I spent the rest of that afternoon coding away on a database aimed at increasing the department’s productivity by automating unnecessary manual calculation and data processing. Am I a programmer? Nope. On the contrary, I am a SysAdmin (Systems Administrator). You might find it strange that a SysAdmin would be coding a RDBMS at work, and you are right, it isn’t part of my official job description. So why am I doing it? Well, I felt sorry for my department’s clerks and coworkers for having to spend so many hours doing what could be processed in a few minutes with modern technology. While the end product will be extremely beneficial to the users, the burden of developing the software and ongoing maintenance falls on me.

I took on the mission voluntarily and coded continuously (other than the regular disturbances from users that should have called the helpdesk.). I took a look at the time - 6:40 pm. Even though my day officially ends at 5:30 pm, this is early as I usually stay until around 7:30 pm. Suddenly, I recalled what that user had said to me earlier this afternoon and with low morale, I called it quits for the day. No point staying late to do ‘nothing’.

On the way home, I began to mull over what that user had said and I recalled an article entitled [Why Not Become a SysAdmin](#) by Thomas Farrell.

While my current role as a SysAdmin doesn’t exactly mirror the nightmare described in his article, it does share some similarities. I continued to wonder what would give these users the impression that I am doing ‘nothing’ all day.

I personally feel that I’ve done much more than my fair share at work. I have lost count of the number of times when I was called on to solve problems just because nobody knew who really

should be responsible for it. These issues 'naturally' fell upon my shoulders since it required the use of a computer to get the job done (either that or the device was beige in color). My thoughts wander back to my student days in university where I took a module entitled "System Administration 302". I distinctly remember my professor warning us that real systems administration is a thankless job. You are only remembered when you have failed or when a frustrated user needs a punching bag regardless whether it is your fault or not.

I've worked as a tech-support engineer as well as a junior network engineer prior to taking a voluntarily pay cut as a SysAdmin in this establishment. This is the first time in my working life that I had been accused of doing 'nothing' 6 times straight during a period of 15 months! To think that I even stayed until 10pm just to finish my duties for the day (be it official and not). Sure there are some grateful users who thank me ever so often for making their life much easier but occasional accusations like these can be quite depressing.

I toyed with the idea of voicing out my grievances to the supervisor the next day so I can get it out of my system but then it occurred to me that if I do that too often, they might perceived me as a whiner.

I decided that there was no way that I was going to keep this to myself (I would turn mentally unstable if I do), I decided to write an article about the matter for MCMCSE.com. While composing my thoughts for the article, I recalled a few other articles written by authors of MCMCSE.com, namely [IT Is Not Easy](#) where similar experiences have been shared. I felt a lot better all of the sudden, because I realized that incidents of such issues are happening to us SysAdmin on a universal basis (misery loves company). I then tried to recall the reasons why I chose to stay in this industry. I started to smile, because I remembered all of the challenges I faced and the sense of satisfaction I got when I overcame them. I remembered my users' happiness when I have made their lives so much easier.

Yes, it is tough dealing with users who do not understand the problems we face at work, but I strive in this industry not for these users' ignorance or an egotistical attitude! I strive in this industry because I love the technology! I love the experience of learning something new everyday and the challenges that come with it. I started humming the tune "We are the champions" by Queen. Yes, I love my job as a Sysadmin.

Because I am still loving IT!

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