WE KNOW IT!

System Administrators encounter all sorts of strange situations through their daily operations. The previously published SysAdmin Horror Stories Vol.1 and Vol.2 highlighted a few of them.

These stories proved so successful that we decided to produce a third and final edition this year.

We’ve managed to gather some more real-life stories to share with you, that are both funny and horrific. Here’s a fresh set of tricky technical situations, terrible mishaps, and messy misadventures direct from the trenches. We hope you’ll enjoy every single story!
I received a call from one of our Assisted Living Facilities that their internet was down, as they are in an area which is prone to internet outages due to bad weather. After verifying that the weather was not the issue, I had the maintenance staff check if they had power in the network room, they did not. Turns out that a Doctor plugged in their Tesla to a power outlet on the outside wall to charge, without asking anyone in the facility. The power outlet was on the same circuit as the network equipment. Staff disconnected the charger, and everything powered up. 30 minutes later I received another call that everything is down again. The doctor plugged back his car to charge again after being told not to. The outlet is now properly locked to prevent further outages.

A story by: Chaim K

One time we had a server which was showing time by time errors and the HDDs were going down one by one. There is a saying: ‘There will not be an HDD that will not fail at a certain time’. I managed to replicate it on time to another server, but again the user could not work for a couple hours. But, actually with ALTARO Backup these situations are solved faster and more securely. We are implementing a local backup of the servers and a disaster recovery backup.

A story by: Edvald S
Had a client phone call, complaining that their desktop PC wouldn't **turn on**. After lots of troubleshooting over the phone the client went to look at the back of the PC and said "Let me find my torch", to which we replied "why do you need a torch?" - he replied "because there's been a **power cut** and all the lights are out" ...... to which we politely suggested that this may also be the reason his PC wouldn't boot!

A story by: **Brendan L**

One of our customers literally had their building **burn down**. We had Altaro off-site backups though and were able to restore all their data and get them back up and running in less than 24 hours. Altaro saved our asses.

A story by: **Jarom W**

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Ever **broke your leg** with a hard drive? I did. It was 1992 as I wanted to insert a new hard drive to a NCR mainframe host. It was almost a meter in length, 40cm in height and 30cm width - and the worst - it had a weight of about 40kg - but the capacity was only 30MB!!!

I tried to insert it into the chassis by my own, for that i had to lift it up one and a half meter. So at one point my physical strength wasn't enough, and **the disk fell down**. My leg was an obstacle it hit while falling. So I broke my leg with a 30MB Harddrive.

A story by: **Huber U**

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Once we bought a new storage system. After unboxing, we connected everything, put the system to the net and choose to sync everything from the old system to the new one and went home to sleep. Since it was late and there were some beers, we accidentally chose not to sync from old to new - we chose sync from new to old - and **deleted EVERYTHING** on our productive storage system.

All VMs, all user data, **everything**. The next day was a total disaster and it took us 3 days to recover everything from our backup site. That’s the reason I stopped drinking from then on!!

A story by: **Alexander K**
I had to replace a router at a bank branch about 15 miles away. I went into the data center and disconnected the router which I thought was broken (backup router) and replaced it with the new one. As I was walking down the stairs to leave, the bank manager saw me and came running out to me.

Do you know what happened? All of the tellers and personal bankers just lost their network connection. She is telling this to me as I’m holding their connection to their network in my hands. I had taken down the wrong router!!

I said, “I know we saw you were having issues and I have the part right here, I am going to replace it right now!” 10 minutes later they were all reconnected and processing transactions again!!

A story by: **Aaron D**

Worst catastrophe was fire on SBG site of OVH cloud hosting. My VPS was lost at this incident even with backup solution was implemented by OVH. And why? Because backups were located at the same datacentre as VPS services.

A story by: **Ivo B**
I once used an internal Phishing simulator to run a test on April Fools Day. The email said that the company was going paperless, and all printers would be removed from the building unless they clicked the link.

Well, I hadn’t considered just how stressed-out people get with Technology and I actually made one of our newest employees cry when they read the email. I guess they didn’t enjoy the Rick-rolling as much as I did. Lessons learned.

1. Don’t joke about going paperless!

2. And seriously, if you want your employees to care about email security, it’s probably best not to trick them.

A story by: Wesley H

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Windows Phone **failed to boot**. Please insert your Windows installation disc.

A story by: **Visar M**

Once I deployed a new Enterprise Security Solution and it blocked communication between **all my servers**, mind you it was tested in our test environment and none of these symptoms happened.

We spent nearly three hours trying to push a script to bulk uninstall but that did not work, after all network communication was blocked by the a/v.

Then, we started doing **manual uninstall** on a per machine basis. We were in the middle of uninstalling when it hit me that we should just performed a restore from our backup solution.

Just like that we backed up within a half hour.

A story by: **Joseph J**
Last week I had to relocate my NetApp scan storage to new location for remote DR. I gave instruction to my junior to perform this activity. I asked him to note down all these total 4 network connection which are for 2-network controller and 2 for storage controller. After a weekend I went back to my office and I could not see new weekend backup jobs data on NetApp. On further investing I found that my junior has plugged cables to all network controller ports and did not plug cables to ISCI Host storage controller port. We together had a laugh on it as I have checked everything on software side. Mingling with cable caused an issue of skipping backup for weekend jobs.

A story by: Haris I

When I was junior IT staff of a High School, my boss gave me the task of backing up the mail server (a homemade Linux mail system) and at that time, only cloning was available to full image backup a Linux system. I set up a new blank disk as the destination for cloning, but unfortunately, when I wrote the cloning command line, I swapped out the parameters of source disk and destination disk, erasing the source disk with all the data entirely. I was in real trouble, and I needed to pay a recovery service for retrieving the lost information.

A story by: Javier C
One company was hit by ransomware. The secretary’s mailbox served as the door. She opened a dangerous attachment and ransomware encrypted all her files as well as the network storage she had access to. Unfortunately, she had access to pretty much everything. The boss was very angry with her – that she wouldn’t inherit security. Fortunately, the company had data backups. About a month later, there was a second ransomware attack. This time, however, the boss was to blame. He created RDP access to his computer. Since he had a simple password, there was no problem to hack into his computer and encrypting almost the entire network again.

A story by: Zdenko I

Funniest IT catastrophe: ‘Hey, we should replace our Blackberrys with Microsoft phones!’

A story by: Daniel Cloutier

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The new CPD was wonderful and my equipment was new. Everything was perfect, backup systems, UPS systems, everything prepared for a problem. Only when they did the CPD they forgot that a family of moles lived there. And we had to find out that moles are attracted to cables.

The poor moles bit the cables and the cpd lost power. Everything fell apart and thank goodness that our backup Altaro helped us with the vm that did not start, we had a bad time, worse the moles. Can you put that your backup is anti mole attack?

A story by: Alberto DM

Many years ago when I first started in IT a lady in the admin office called me, as she couldn’t get her fax machine work. I went down, found the unit was out of paper and said to her, ‘it just needs paper’ she looked surprised and said, ‘no, I’m only receiving faxes and not printing’.

I explained that paper is needed for the fax to print. She then explained that she thought that Faxes came down the line on paper already! Had to explain that paper doesn’t come down in a phone cable!

A story by: Stephen W
HE FELL FOR IT!

THIS BIG BOY IS TOAST! LET'S GET SOME MORE!
There was one time, back in New Zealand when I was running an IT business that was part of an IT franchise. Our master franchisee thought it would be a good idea to run a local advertising campaign at a stall in a big indoor shopping centre (mall). On our stand amongst other things, we had a big bowl of stickers with our logo and brand on them.

A whole lot of kids came past and grabbed a big handful which we didn't think much of at the time, until later that day we started seeing them stuck to all the shop windows throughout the mall!! They weren't very easy to remove either!

The mall management we’re impressed and tried to sue us for it. In the end, we paid a professional cleaner to go and remove all the stickers.

No such thing as bad publicity!

A story by: Jack J

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Some time ago, I used to work as an external IT manager for some customers. One of these customers got a crypto locker that encrypted a PC and few folders in a file server. I recovered all the files from previous night backup and, apparently, all was OK again. Only the girl who initially got the crypto locker was looking me in a strange way.

‘Everything OK?’ I asked. ‘The PC yes, but...’ She was ashamed in telling me the problem. After a while she told me that she had her personal USB drive connected when she got the virus and all her photos and videos where encrypted. Also she didn’t have another copy of most of them. I told her I would have taken the drive with me and looked if something was possible.

She was not very happy of leaving me the drive, and finally she gave it to me, but with the promise not to look inside. It was not a bad crypto locker and I succeeded in decrypting the drive. Because I’m a professional, I respected the promise and I don’t know what was inside the drive, but when I returned it to the girl I said laughing “nice content”.

Immediately after I said that I was joking, but she was extremely ashamed and I think she’s still not sure if I saw the content or not. For months she looked shy every time I said hello to her. Really a funny situation.

A story by: Massimo P
“Threats do everything in their power to blend in and attempt to become ghosts in the network.

Load up the right software to catch them!”
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We hope you enjoyed these true stories from the daily adventures of SysAdmins around the globe.

For similar anecdotes, check out

SysAdmin Horror Stories Vol.1

&

SysAdmin Backup Horror Stories Vol.2