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Bill Gates Says He's Sorry About Control-Alt-Delete

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If I ever meet you (Score:5, Funny)

by maxrate (886773)

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I'll comPost | Reply you (Weird Al)

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Re:If I ever meet you (Score:5, Informative)

by Beau Hai ... Wednesday September 20, 2017 @08:27PM (#55235409)

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The reason they used that combo in the first place was for compatibility with legacy applications. In legacy Windows, CTRL+ALT+DEL was handled at a low level and could bring up task manager or restart the machine. Applications could not detect the keypress.

When they went to implement multi-user and logins, they realized they needed to ensure applications could not spoof the login screen to trick users into entering their credentials. A malicious application could potentially save and reuse these credentials especially if they were of a DIFFERENT user or an admin user.

What to do? Well if they had the user press a key combination that applications couldn't detect to log in, or even a key combination that would result in a different action if they were already logged in, a fake application would not be able to detect this keypress and spoof the actual login screen. Guess what, an existing key combination fit this criteria. They could have invented a new combination, of course, but chances are a legacy application might use this combination as a hotkey, and reserving it for login user would break that application.

--
I'm trapped in a Slashdot Sig Factory, send help!

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Re:If I ever meet you (Score:5, Funny)

by jandrese (485) <kensama@vt.edu> on Wednesday September 20, 2017 @09:29PM (#55235727) Homepage Journal
Of course it also gave MS-DOS users pause the first time they were asked to log into a WinNT machine. "Is this a prank?"

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Re:If I ever meet you (Score:5, Insightful)

by rudy_wayne (414635) on Wednesday September 20, 2017 @10:11PM (#55235929)
The reason they used that combo in the first place was for compatibility with legacy applications.
Back in the olden days of DOS, pressing Ctrl-Alt-Del immediately rebooted your computer. But, it's not really possible to accidentally press Ctrl-Alt-Del and lose whatever you were working on.
Bill has nothing to apologize for. There's nothing wrong with Ctrl-Alt-Del.

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Re: (Score:2)

by Z00L00K (682162)

No, it was not the right solution since it did not always work, which almost everyone coding i C under MS-DOS can attest to. The computers should have had a true reset button instead, but not on the keyboard.

So even when the three finger salute was created it wasn't the best solution.

Re:If I ever meet you (Score:4, Informative)

by Strider- (39683) on Wednesday September 20, 2017 @10:35PM (#55236037)

The whole point of Ctrl-Alt-Del was that it's protected in the BIOS. Invoking it would jump to a routine that was hard to override. In most cases, though, under DOS the subroutine just caused a reboot. Later operating systems, it was trapped for and was the one key combination that a user application couldn't map.

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Re: (Score:2)

by YukariHirai (2674609)

There's nothing wrong with Ctrl-Alt-Del.

I dunno, it seems like it'd be a bit difficult if you had the kind of accessibility issues that features like Sticky Keys were designed around. A single button that did the same thing would be a bad idea, but a two button combination would be friendlier to that and still not have all that bad a risk of being accidentally activated.

You're Both Right--History (Score:3)

by SeattleLawGuy (4561077)

Ctrl+Alt+Delete is a combination used for historical reasons.

It is the most secure way of doing a login because it triggered an "interrupt" in the system, like a signal that could not be caught by the program running in the foreground. So programs couldn't fake the login screen.

But it was an interrupt--and one that took three keys--because it was used in the old days to reboot a system with a hung program. You wouldn't WANT a computer to reboot when you pressed one key, because then a random mistaken keypre

1 hidden comment

Re: (Score:2)

by apoc.famine (621563)

As an example how this is useful, back when I was in college we had an old Vax network with green terminals. Being a cleaver asshole, I wrote a login screen emulator, which ran from my logged-in account. It captured the login and password, popped up an "incorrect password" notice, and then logged me out, terminating the login emulator. The victim would have a slighter longer than normal delay as they got dumped back to the login prompt, but the network was dodgy enough that it wasn't totally out of the ordi

1 hidden comment

Re: (Score:3)

by hey! (33014)

And in a way that makes it the last bit of *user responsiveness* left in a world where software acts as if it knows better. A world where you aren't considered responsible enough to have a power switch, so that in certain circumstances the only way to shut a computer off is to take it apart with a screwdriver. CTL-ALT-DELETE may be overloaded with multiple functions, but at least the system does it's best to prioritize responding to you.

Re: (Score:2)

by spitzak (4019)

Yea this whole thing is silly.

Ctrl+Alt+Delete was a key combination trapped by the BIOS keyboard driver in the original IBM PC and it caused the machine to reboot. This meant it worked almost all the time (it did not work if the interrupt going into the BIOS was disabled or if something was done to the keyboard hardware so that it did not produce the right key codes). It was also pretty obvious that it should be hard to type accidentally, and this was pretty common on all computers at that time.

Since typing

Re: If I ever meet you (Score:2)

by Evtim (1022085)

Sounds reasonable to me. Why then Gates did not explain it? Has he forgotten?

Re: (Score:2)

by AC-x (735297)

They could have invented a new combination, of course, but chances are a legacy application might use this combination as a hotkey, and reserving it for login user would break that application.

If they were able to get keyboard manufacturers to add a dedicated "Windows" key, I don't know why they couldn't have added a login key at the same time!

Yes, we will be going to OSI, Mars, and Pluto, but not necessarily in that order. -- Jeffrey Honig

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