

# Re: Users and Groups

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*Source:* <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Fedora/2007-12/msg01172.html>

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- *From:* "Mikkel L. Ellertson" <mikkel@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Sat, 08 Dec 2007 20:50:18 -0600
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David Boles wrote:

Does not yelp do all, or most, of the 'help' calls? I have never really tried, or cared, because most 'help files' are a waste of time. Developers and such write really good code but they, sorry developer people, tend to stink at docs, helps, and howtos', ;-)

Yes, I believe yelp will handle them all. Now, when it comes to help files, or manual pages, usually the developer is the worst person to be writing it. It is too easy to forget to include minor details that you do without really thinking about it. The best way is if you can work with an "average user" of your program, and see if they understand what you wrote, and can use the program from just the documentation. If they can use the basic functions without looking at the documentation, that is even better.

As you say, the skills needed to write good code, and the skills needed to write good documentation are not the same. It is unusual to find a person that is good at both. What is needed are people that are good at writing documentation, and understand the program, to write better documentation. It would also help to have people go through the existing man pages and update them to match the current state of the programs.

As for the 'help files' for this really simple GUI? One that 'Joe Average user' will/should probably *\*never\** use or even see? And probably would *\*not\** read the help if it was there. And that Joe 'I know what the heck I am doing' Administrator should know without a simple helpme file?

The GUI that I looked at had, for example, an 'Add user' button. And an 'Edit user' button. And a 'Delete user' button. You need instructions for this? Think about this. If you need simple 'help me!!' instructions for this *\*you should not be here doing this!\**.

I tend to agree with you. But then again, I like using command line

## Re: Users and Groups

tools for jobs like this, so I am probably not the best judge of this. Then again, considering the post that started this thread, I guess help is needed, because users are going to be using this program even if they do not know what they are doing. If nothing else, it lets the writers sneak in a little advice on best practices and security. (I have not read through the help files to see if they actually do this.)

<rant mode on>

IMO – and I do understand what is happening here – the \*dumbing down\* of Linux so that it will attract \*dumb Windows users\* (not my words, or thoughts, just the general thinking of some elitist Linux users) has created a whole generation of Windows users turned Linus users that are \*dumb\*. Not \*dumb\* but just don't have any idea what the heck is going on or why.

If you follow this list you will see it every day. "I don't know what this is, or why it is like this, but I changed it and now my <fill in the blank here> which used to work does not work." And when someone, who knows what is/might be wrong, can help me fix it, and tries to help me I will argue with them?

<rant mode off>

Grrr...

I know exactly how you feel. I wonder if Fedora is really the distribution they should be using. You never know if there is a Fedora problem, or if they broke something themselves. Users like this are one of the reasons I don't give nearly as much advice as I used to, and if others are giving help, I usually leave it to them. You also get the ones that when ever something does not work the way they expect it to, it is a bug. So, like the boy who cried wolf, if by chance they do discover a bug, they get ignored.

What really makes me chuckle is that we did find what looks like a bug in system-config-users, but it is not what the OP complained about.

Mikkel

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Do not meddle in the affairs of dragons,  
for thou art crunchy and taste good with Ketchup!

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Re: Users and Groups

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