You'd think that with the name scratch, people wouldn't expect it to be around for a long time

devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20110607-00

Raymond Chen

There is a server run by the Windows team called `scratch`. Its purpose is to act as a file server for storing files temporarily. For example, if you want to send somebody a crash dump, you can copy it to the scratch server and send the person a link. The file server is never backed up and is not designed to be used as a permanent solution for anything. The Windows team likes to use the server to test various file server features. For example, the scratch server uses hierarchical storage management and migrates files to tape relatively aggressively, so that the HSM development team can get real-world usage of their feature. The file system team will occasionally wipe the hard drives on the server and reformat them with a new version of NTFS, so that they can put the new file system driver through its paces in a situation where it is under heavy load. When these sort of "mass extinction events" takes place, you can count on somebody sending out email saying, "Hey, what happened to the sprocket degreaser? It was on `\\scratch\temp\sprocket_degreaser`, but now I can't find it. I have an automated test that relies on the sprocket degreaser as well as some data files on `\\scratch\temp\foobar_test_data`, and they're all gone!" — *Um, that's a scratch machine. Why would you put important stuff on it?* "Um, well..." (scratches forehead) — *Okay, well before we reformatted the hard drive, we copied the data to* `\\scratch2\save`, *so try looking there. But remember, the scratch server is for temporary file storage and comes with no service level agreement.* "Oh, phew, thanks." You'd think that with the name `scratch`, people wouldn't expect it to be around for a long time. Maybe they could call it `can_be_reformatted_at_any_time`.

[Raymond is currently on his way to sunny Hawaii; this message was pre-recorded. Mahalo.]

Raymond Chen

Follow