

Why is Rundll32 called Rundll32 and not just Rundll?

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20140408-00

April 8, 2014



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There is an oft-abused program named `rundll32.exe`. Why does its name end in `32`? Why not just call it `rundll.exe`? (I will for the moment ignore the rude behavior of calling people stupid under the guise of asking a question.) Because there needed to be a way to distinguish the 16-bit version from the 32-bit version. Windows 95 had both `rundll.exe` (the 16-bit version) and `rundll32.exe` (the 32-bit version). Of course, with the gradual death of support for 16-bit Windows, the 16-bit `rundll.exe` is now just a footnote in history, leaving just the 32-bit version. But why did the two have to have different names? Why not just use the same name (`rundll.exe`) for both, putting the 16-bit version in the 16-bit system directory and the 32-bit version in the 32-bit system directory? Because Windows 95 didn't have separate 16-bit and 32-bit system directories. There was just one system directory called `SYSTEM` and everything hung out there, both 16-bit and 32-bit, like one big happy family. Well, maybe not a happy family.

At any rate, when 64-bit Windows was introduced, the plan was not to do things the crazy mishmash way and instead separate the 32-bit files into one directory and the 64-bit files into a different directory. That way, no files needed to be renamed, and your batch file that ran `rundll32.exe` with some goofy command line still worked, even on 64-bit Windows.

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