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Operating Systems

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Computer System Administrators

In the article, “*Field Studies of Computer System Administrators: Analysis of System management Tools and practices*” the authors Rob Barrett, Eser Kandogan and Paul P. Maglio talk about Computer system administrators what task they perform through conducting field studies. The authors state that Computer system administrators are “the unsung heroes of the information age, working behind the scenes to configure, maintain, and troubleshoot the computer infrastructure that underlies much of modern life.” But little is known about what they do, as there is little information in the literature regarding the practices and problems that they face. Since System Administrators work within large scale complex operations that require social and technical knowledge, the article describes the tools used in their work through surveys, interviews, etc.

As the article states, system administrators design, configure, troubleshoot, and maintain complex computer systems. The article goes over the methods they used to find out what System Administrators do. The methods used are surveys, diary study, interviews, and naturalistic observations. Through naturalistic observation of 12 system administrators the authors found out that task that they complete everyday. The task include: meeting, planning, testing, maintenance, troubleshooting, and installation. The tools that are used is any and every electronic device such as laptop/desktops, cell-phones, etc. The environment that the sysadmins worked in where places of high risk, complexity, and large scale, thus this requires that they are good at collaboration and communication, planning and rehearsal, situation awareness, tools and tool building, multitasking and diversions. In conclusions the authors stated that sysadmins are people that work in high risk a complex places that require their full attention as they require skills such as collaboration, communication, etc.

Work Cited

Barrett, Rob, et al. “Field Studies of Computer System Administrators.” *Proceedings of the 2004*

*ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work - CSCW '04*, 2004, doi:10.1145/1031607.1031672.