

# The Admin Zen

Keep it up and running

## Know your tools

- ☐ Evaluate tools before using them.
- ☐ Read the documentation.
- ☐ Know how to get the best out of your daily tools.
- ☐ Use version control. Everywhere.
- ☐ If it's repetitive, it needs automation.
- ☐ Prefer Open Source.
- ☐ Do not use tools you can't handle.
- ☐ Don't use a tool just because everyone does so.
- ☐ Constantly invest in your know-how.
- ☐ Be interested. Study. Learn. Forever.
- ☐ Have a testbed.
- ☐ Use the right tool for the right job.

## Anticipate

- ☐ Foresight instead of reaction.
- ☐ Fix it before it gets broken.
- ☐ But don't fix what won't break.
- ☐ Monitor your infrastructure.
- ☐ Monitor your business.
- ☐ Use metrics.
- ☐ Have formulated disaster scenarios.
- ☐ Know what you don't anticipate.

## Expect problems

- ☐ Don't ignore flukes.
- ☐ Murphy is out there to get you.
- ☐ Software breaks. Hardware breaks.
- ☐ Know what facts you can trust.
- ☐ People leave.
- ☐ Errors happen once. Everything else is failure.
- ☐ Know how to deal with problems.
- ☐ A symptom is not a cause.
- ☐ Fix causes, not symptoms.
- ☐ Be a debugging artist.
- ☐ Bugs don't exist unless there is a test for them.

## Design it

- ☐ Focus on simplicity, clarity, and frugality.
- ☐ Security, maintainability and extensibility is the foundation, not a feature.
- ☐ Take benchmarks with a grain of salt.
- ☐ Avoid bloat.
- ☐ Explicit is better than implicit.
- ☐ Simple is better than complex.
- ☐ Complex is better than complicated.
- ☐ Now is better than never.
- ☐ Although never is often better than \*right\* now.
- ☐ Buying cheap might cost you in the long run.
- ☐ Don't deploy what you can't maintain.
- ☐ Testing happens in staging, not in production.



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## Scale

- ☐ Setup is cheap. Maintenance is expensive.
- ☐ Know what is going to hit you.
- ☐ Virtualise when sensible.
- ☐ Don't virtualise just because you can.
- ☐ Scale horizontally and vertically.
- ☐ Have a testbed.
- ☐ Use configuration management.
- ☐ Use change management.
- ☐ Use patch management.

## Backup

- ☐ Nobody wants backup, everybody wants restore.
- ☐ To restore, you need a backup.
- ☐ Have a backup.
- ☐ RAID is not a backup.
- ☐ There's more to save than just the files.
- ☐ Devices need backup too.
- ☐ Even expensive hardware can fail catastrophically.
- ☐ Do not hit the enter key before thinking about it.
- ☐ Consistent against corruption.
- ☐ Secure from disasters.
- ☐ Protected from prying eyes.

## Communicate

- ☐ Talk with your clients.
- ☐ Hear what they want, understand what they need.
- ☐ Learn the art of presentation.
- ☐ Know how to convince.
- ☐ Know what is important for someone.
- ☐ Use the appropriate communication media.
- ☐ Have experts for everything that's relevant to your business.
- ☐ Visit events related to your business.
- ☐ Maintain your social network.
- ☐ Try to get on a first-name-basis, when appropriate.
- ☐ Have meetings on a regular basis.
- ☐ Mistakes shouldn't be used for blame but educate.
- ☐ Learn to love communicating.

## Document

- ☐ Write documentation.
- ☐ Make writing comfortable.
- ☐ Keep documentation up to date.
- ☐ Collect documentation.
- ☐ Publish your documents.
- ☐ Use a todo list.
- ☐ Use a ticket system if a todo list does not scale.