

# If you work at a company, it's not your computer any more

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My posting a while back on [solving one problem by creating a bigger problem](#) was written from the standpoint of an IT department doing something like tweaking a logon script. I even mentioned that context partway through but clearly didn't highlight it clearly enough. So say you're an IT department and somebody says, "Oh, just install this other program and learn a new programming language and convert your existing batch file to it, and then your problem will be easy to solve." You might not be too excited about that type of "solution". And even if you decide, "Okay, I can justify to my boss taking a week away from my other responsibilities to convert our existing logon script (and all the helper scripts that assumed that the root logon script was written in batch, say, because they shared environment variables with it) to this new language and debug the result," you still have the problem of getting that new script interpreter onto all your company's computers so that when people log on, your new fancy logon script can run at all. And since you're a corporation, you have a whole new set of problems. What are the licensing terms for that new script interpreter? (A home user may just click "Next" through the license agreement without reading it; a corporation doesn't have that luxury.) How are you going to deploy this new script interpreter to all your computers? (Will it require a reboot since the installer may want to do things like modify the global `PATH` ?) If you have a problem with the script interpreter, who provides the support? Will you have to pay extra to have it covered by your existing support contract? If somebody finds that the script interpreter is in violation of a patent, is your company liable for infringement since you are using that script interpreter as part of your regular business activities? Maybe these questions are easy to answer, but you still have to ask them. Now, let's suppose you are, say, just a regular employee at a company rather than part of the IT department. Can you just take a program that you bought or downloaded and run it on a company computer? Odds are that if your company has an IT department, it also has a policy on running "unauthorized" software on company computers. (They probably don't care how legal it is, IT departments will almost certainly get very upset if you start running a peer-to-peer file sharing program on your corporate network.)

For the home user, the activation energy is much lower. You just have to convince one person to learn this new language and translate their batch file into it. The batch files of home users are probably not hundreds of lines long, so the translation will probably be manageable. But you may have a harder time of selling your proposal if the batch file is 800 lines long.

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