

Windows Vista has more extended options on the context menu

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20070822-00

August 22, 2007



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As we saw when we discussed context menus, holding down the shift key when opening a context menu adds so-called extended verbs to the menu. These are verbs that are less frequently used whose presence would clutter up the menu or pose an attractive nuisance. For example, the “Command Prompt Here” command is an extended command since your typical non-technical user has no use for it,¹ and selecting it creates a baffling command prompt that screams “You are not smart enough to use this computer! Return it to the store and get a Mac instead!” In reaction to this, one person wrote, “I’ve not seen anyone even attempt to justify why this should be hidden like this. Shift+RightClick is not a standard move so no one is going to find this by accident.” And indeed, that’s precisely why it’s hidden²—so that nobody finds it by accident! The only³ people that find it are the people who are smart enough to go looking for it. **Nitpicker’s Corner** ¹Although this statement is written as if it were a fact, all facts presented here are really just my personal interpretation of the world. That interpretation is not the official position of Microsoft Corporation, and it may ultimately prove incorrect. ²The use of the word “precisely” here is rhetorical, emphasizing that the argument against hiding them works equally well as an argument *for* hiding them. The statement is not an establishment of the official Microsoft position on why the menu items are on the extended menu. It is merely my interpretation of the situation.

³The use of the term “only” here is not meant in an absolute sense, as if there were some physical barrier preventing people from using it inadvertently. It is possible that somebody might hold the shift key by mistake when calling up the context menu, in which case my statement that “The only people that find it are the people who are smart enough to go looking for it” becomes incorrect.

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