

# First, try reading the error message, episode 2: Even programmers see error messages without reading them

[devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20090625-00](http://devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20090625-00)

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I will occasionally note that users don't read error messages; they just click Cancel. And the phenomenon isn't just restricted to naïve users. Even programmers ignore error messages. All they see is "Blah blah blah an error occurred."

For example, there's this message that appeared on a peer-to-peer discussion group:

I tried to submit an update to our database and I got this error. What does it mean? Is the error on the client or the server?

```
Opening transaction 34508.  
Locking record 14 for update.  
Updating record 14 in table BLUECHEESE.  
Operation failed.  
write: The file or directory is corrupted and unreadable.
```

When I try to view the record to see whether my update made it, I get this error:

```
The database may be corrupt; it requires administrator attention.  
To protect the database, it has been taken offline.
```

I'm no expert here, but it looks like a write operation failed because the file or directory is corrupted and unreadable. Since you're updating a record on the server, it's probably a corruption problem on the server. (After all, there's no change taking place on the client. The client is just asking the server to do the work.)

And the second error message seems to suggest that the database may be corrupt and requires administrator attention. As a precautionary measure, the database took itself offline so the corruption can't spread. I'm pretty sure that's a server-side thing, since the database is on the server.



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