

# The introduction of whimsical teasing in Comic Chat

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A few months after my post on [the sad demise of whimsical teasing in Comic Chat](#), I received a piece of email from none other than the author of Comic Chat, [DJ Kurlander](#):

I was the person that started the Comic Chat project in Microsoft Research and was responsible for that line, “This person is too lazy to create a profile entry.” Not a whole lot of thought went into the default profile. In maybe the 30 seconds that I put into it, I thought that the line was moderately humorous, fit with the quirky nature of Comic Chat, and might motivate more people to create profiles. When we released version 2, MSN got the following complaint. Yes, this is verbatim (and specifically in reference to the default profile):

I am very offended that this is type of code is allowed to leave microsoft. I am seriously considering dropping my subscription to MSN. I don't get this kind of crap from CompuServe, and I can get comparable Internet access from a local ISP. I can see that there is a serious lack of customer respect at microsoft and this is probably just the tip of the iceberg.

MSN was pretty conservative, at least at the time, and this caused a big headache for the team. How dare we insult our customers! Did the project not have enough management overhead? Can we make things any more difficult for the small team? Yes we can! As a result, we were required to remove the message from the 2.1 release. It became “This user has no profile.” at least in the version that was released on the MSN CD-ROM.

Meanwhile, we got some advanced notice about an upcoming PC World review of the 2.0 version that had included the original message. The summary (which was emailed to us), said: “She [the reviewer] praises Microsoft for finally having a sense of humor (loves the note about being ‘too lazy to have a bio’ message). She claims Comic Chat is an absolute delight.”

I love the part about MS finally having a sense of humor. Well at least we were allowed to add back the message for the 2.5 release!

Check out DJ's [history of Comic Chat](#), which includes links to videos and other time-wasty goodness.

**Bonus chatter:** DJ also has a page on Peedy the Parrot, a research project to develop a more natural user interface. Out in the product groups, we just called it *that stupid parrot demo* because it became tiresome from overexposure, having been used in a CES keynote and multiple company meetings.

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