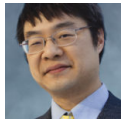


When your vice president tells you to stop replying to a mail thread, you probably should stop replying to the mail thread

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Some time in the early part of this century, somebody sent a message to the *Windows NT Development Announcements* mailing list at Microsoft. It went something like, “My car was parked in «location X» and somebody ran into it and didn’t leave a note. Does anybody have any information about this?” Now, one thing you need to know is that the *Windows NT Development Announcements* mailing list has the entire Windows division as members. We’re talking thousands of people. And the sort of announcements sent to the alias are not the “somebody dinged my car” type of announcements. They are announcements like “We will be reformatting the scratch server on Tuesday.” Important stuff that everybody on the team needs to know. And it’s most certainly not for discussions. Anyway, somebody replied to the message saying something like “Yeah, my car was parked in the same area and it got damaged, too.” And then somebody else decided to be silly and wrote, “I parked my car in Germany once and it got damaged. I wonder if that’s related.” Before things could spiral out of control, Jim Allchin, vice president of Windows, stepped in and sent a message to everybody. “Stop replying to this thread.” That shut the thread down really quickly. Nothing like your vice president telling you to shut up to get you to shut up. There was one reply that came through, though. It was a reply to Jim’s message saying to stop replying. The person wrote, “Yes sir, captain sir. Saluting as I type, sir.” I have no confirmation that anybody ever saw that person alive again.

Bonus history: Today is the 14th anniversary of the infamous Bedlam Incident.

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