

Discussion: rmgrou comp.software.year-2000

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/General/comp.programming/2004-02/2398.html>

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Date: 02/26/04

Date: 26 Feb 2004 18:53:55 GMT

This is a discussion concerning the removal (rmgrouping) of the newsgroup "comp.software.year-2000". This is not a formal call for votes, nor is it a threat of rmgrouping the newsgroup without a vote.

I begin with some history, followed by a discussion of the newsgroup topics today and the people posting articles to the newsgroup today. I end with some conclusions. An appendix contains a listing and classification of some recent threads in the newsgroup.

This article is intended to provoke discussion, in the hope that someone with more time on their hands than I have will be moved to hold an actual vote on rmgrouping the newsgroup. I will not formally propose or administer such a vote, however.

History

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The newsgroup "comp.software.year-2000" ("csy2k" in this article) was created in 1996 in order to discuss the "Year 2000 problem". This was the problem, thought to be widespread at the time, of the "Year 2000 bug" in software. The "Year 2000 bug" or "Y2K bug" was a generic term for any fault in software that would cause inappropriate software behaviour on or around Jan. 1, 2000. It was thought that many software systems might have such faults because many software systems stored dates (e.g. 20 Sept. 1987) with only two digits for the year (e.g. 20-09-87), a strategy that would no longer work as soon as the year 2000 arrived.

The first posts archived on Google Groups from csy2k appear to be from 6 Nov 1996. Over the next few years, until 1 Jan 2000, many software systems were revised or replaced due to the threat posed by the Y2K bug. During that period of time, csy2k was a forum in which people were able to express their thoughts and opinions on this important topic. Now, over four years

since 1 Jan 2000, the newsgroup is no longer necessary to the same degree, and some would say it is almost completely unnecessary.

In the first years of the newsgroup's existence, discussion about the Y2K problem evolved into sometimes-vehement debate between the so-called "doomsayers" or "doomers", characterized as having an overly-pessimistic attitude to what might happen, and the "Pollyannas" or "pollies", characterized as having an overly-optimistic attitude. Some of the di