

IDLE MACHINES

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I agree with the Principles of 30 minute auto-logout and automatic cold-boot at the end of the session, with these comments:

1. Most importantly, think toward an informal, cooperative environment.
2. We do need a background monitoring process that gives timely reminders of what the machine is doing. Something like:

BACKGROUND MONITOR: No meaningful work for 15 minutes.

Information only, not policing. A Wizard can write this process.

3. During work hours it should never be necessary to logout someone. The procedure should be to ask around to find out what's happening.
4. To aid finding out if a machine is forgotten:

The BACKGROUND MONITOR has posted a timely message,
and
there is not a COMMENT written in the Listener.

The idea is, if you want the machine to stay idle for more than, say, 15 minutes, then you have to write a note.

5. Cold-boots can be at the discretion of the next user. Whenever I want a machine and they're all busy, I end up talking to some human. We come to an agreement verbally.
6. Often, I walk away from a machine without cleaning the environment, because I hope to use it again in the near future, and I'm willing to take the risk that no one will come and take it. A COMMENT should be sufficient to cover my bet.

So, again, the Meta-principle:

Make rules that depend on human communication and judgment.
Don't make communication and judgment depend on rules.