Le Chatelier's principle in action: Announcements

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As I noted some time ago, one of the most important lessons I learned from *Systemantics* is Le Chatelier's Principle for complex systems which states, "Every complex system resists its proper functioning." At Microsoft, there are processes galore. For example, when a server is taken down for planned maintenance, you can expect a series of messages, perhaps following this pattern:

- Server X will be unavailable from time A to time B. (Sent a few days before the planned outage.)
- Server X will be unavailable today from time A to time B.
- Server X is going down now. It should be back at time B.
- Server X is back.

The problem with this is that you often receive notifications for servers you have no interest in, indeed whose mere existence you were previously entirely unaware of. The notification messages don't include instructions on how to stop receiving the notifications, or if they do, the instructions are incorrect (no points for guessing how I discovered this), so people set up email rules to auto-delete the notifications instead of trying to figure out how to unsubscribe.

The result is that we now have a system in place which generates large quantities of email which are automatically deleted.

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