

Windows 2000 Administrators Meeting

December 14, 2001

Minutes (taken by Steve Kunz)

Agenda

- Exchange 2000 Project Status (Kevin DeRoos - ADP)
- Open discussion (as time allows)

Meeting Started (9:05 AM)

Brief Announcements

There are two "special working group" tasks are being taken on by others in the community.

First, a group of people is working on "possible best practices" for placing systems behind firewalls and authenticating through our main Windows 2000 domain. This group will present their finding to AIT/ADP technical groups for consideration and recommendation. Contact Greg Wilson (ISU Foundation, gwilson@foundation.iastate.edu) if you have any questions about (or input into) this effort.

Second, a group of AIT staff and OU admins from other departments are starting work (again) on solving the problem of auto-mounting AFS home directories and performing roaming profile storage/retrieval at logon from the AFS space. We'll keep you posted on developments. If you already have significant accomplishments in this area in our Windows 2000 domain, contact Steve Kunz (skunz@iastate.edu) to share your findings.

Exchange 2000 Project Status

We interviewed Exchange 5.5 admins from nine Exchange organizations on campus. We then reviewed the current Active Directory structure, administration and management. Next looked at moving to Exchange 2000 from the current environment

With Exchange 5.5 each organization has own directory and Global Address List (GAL). Windows 2000 Active Directory is the single Exchange directory in Exchange 2000. We need to move toward a single Exchange organization.

Process first involves merging Exchange 5.5 orgs to single Exchange 5.5 org. Next step is to introduce Exchange 2000 into the organization and begin upgrading Exchange 5.5 server. Final step is to migrate users mailboxes to the Exchange 2000 servers.

Important to note that in merging Exchange orgs we are merging "directories" not "administrative rights".

After design phase, we moved into the "lab work" phase. This involved Microsoft's "Move Server Wizard" for Exchange 5.5 orgs. We set up three test orgs in lab and moved them to a single Exchange org. Next we introduced Exchange 2000 and worked through moving mailboxes.

It is important to note you need a unique Net-ID across campus (the single username is Active Directory to attach the mailbox to). Departments need to clean up NT4 domain users who do not have a matching Acropolis Net-ID (or whose NT4 domain username does not match their Acropolis Net-ID).

Session was opened for questions on Exchange 2000 status

Question: How do you tell users they need to change their username? How simple is it?

Answer: Discussion centered on concern that someone has had a username/email-address for a long period of time (business cards, friends directories, etc) and now they have to change it. The "single directory" nature of Active Directory was reemphasized. ADP has already addressed this problem in their department (about 2000 NT 4 users). In most cases the Acropolis net-id could be created to match the NT 4 username. In some cases (where there was an Acropolis name already owned by someone else with that username) the user had to change NT 4 usernames. In ADP's case, out of approximately 2000 user, they encountered about 150 people needing to change NT 4 usernames.

Question: How much time (per user) does it take to do this?

Answer: For the whole "username synch" (checking lists, getting people to register Acropolis Net-Ids, resolving conflicts) it has taken ADP a couple months (for their 2000 users).

Question: What procedure is being looked at to allow other existing Exchange 2000 servers to join the main Exchange organization later?

Answer: It was pointed out that if there existing Exchange 2000 servers right now, they are in a different forest (and are doing things "on their own"). We are not aware of any such installations (they did not step forward during the "existing environment exploration phase"). Our focus is currently on moving the existing Exchange 5.5 servers forward.

Question: Do you intend to bring in other mail systems in future? In other words, integrate other non-Exchange mail systems into the master directory (possibly similar to Exchange 5.5 "Custom Recipient" lists)?

Answer: ADP currently adds Custom Recipients for mail users outside their current Exchange 5.5 org. An important distinction in Windows 2000 Active Directory is that you have "mail enabled" users and "mail box enabled" users. Entering in such external mail systems address books is a manual process. It was pointed out that other vendors provide software products that will do such synchronization. It was pointed out that we really need to work on such campus wide directory one level higher (outside of Active Directory, and up at the "data source" level).

Question: What will you be looking at next?

Answer: We have a few more steps to evaluate in the lab process (and document). We hope to meet with the Exchange techs and MCS to resolve some final issues.

Question: If I (as a user) want to join (and start using Exchange as my mail system) where is my mailbox?

Answer: It depends on "who you join". Your mailbox lives on a departmental Exchange server. If your department runs one, then your mailbox is on that server. If your department does not run one you can contract with ADP for an Exchange mailbox. It was pointed out that message routing can function as now (via mailhub). This will important because central virus scanning will be done at that point.

Question: What is the "timeline" on all of this?

Answer: We have one additional week of MCS consulting time at beginning of next year. Hope to move quickly after that to get Exchange 2000 introduced. ADP would like to be converted "soon". ADP likes to think "less than six months".

Question: When are we moving departmental users into their OUs?

Answer: It turns out this issue is related to the Exchange 2000 migration process in that you can do it two ways. Move the users into their OUs and then move mailboxes, or move mailboxes and then move users into their OUs. The Exchange team has not made a decision on this yet.

Question: What is the status of the 2-way password synch? [This is where a change in your password on Windows is reflected at Acropolis]

Answer: Other "higher priority" projects within AIT pre-empted critical staff time. However, this project is directly linked to the movement of users into OUs for Exchange migration purposes. As a result, we will see what we can do with the priority of this project.

During the conversations a couple other issues came up.

First, a reminder was given that the Acropolis data (based on master data from university records sources) is authoritative. So, for those few Active Directory fields (such as proper name, department, address, phone, etc) that are university-records-based, the NT 4 departmental data will not be honored. However, the remainder of the fields are "departmental authoritative" (for users in your OU).

Second, the importance of account match-up (Acropolis/NT4) was restated. This process can be started now within your department. Movement to Exchange 2000 cannot begin without that beginning step.

Adjournment (9:55 AM)

Next meeting is Friday, January 11, 2002.