Windows Administrators Meeting
July 10, 2009
Notes (taken by Steve Kunz)

Meeting Started (9:00)

Announcements

- Microsoft has announced they will release IE8 to WSUS servers on August 25, 2009. See: http://redmondmag.com/articles/2009/07/01/internet-explorer-8-coming-next-month-via-wsus.aspx

Windows Server 2008 DC Rollout – Steve Kunz [ITSYS]

The upgrade of the Windows Enterprise domain controllers to new hardware running Windows Server 2008 continues this summer. The current upgrade rollout schedule is available here:
http://www.tech.ait.iastate.edu/win2000/admin/rollout.status.2009.pdf

Kunz indicated he has heard of no problems relating to the upgrade. Nobody in the meeting was aware of any, either.

WINDC1A (windc1a.iastate.edu) will be removed from service July 14, 2009. WINDC1A is a TEMPORARY new domain controller that allows IT admins to test third party products on a Windows Server 2008 domain controller prior to the current production domain controllers being upgraded. The hardware for WINDC1A will be used to upgrade WINDC1. IT admins that have processes manually pointed to WINDC1A for testing should make sure they shift them to point to WINDC2-4 before July 14.

WINDC1 will be upgraded on Tuesday, July 21, 2009. There will be an outage for WINDC1 starting at 8:00 AM for 3-4 hours. The domain will be available. The only systems this outage will affect will be those systems that are "hard configured" to point to this specific domain controller for LDAP lookups, etc. This could be Samba, Moodle, or other 3rd party products that cannot automatically fail-over to a list of LDAP servers. Normal Microsoft domain member servers/clients will not be affected.

There is no planned date for the final step of moving the domain to "Windows Server 2008 Functional Mode". When this final step is done advanced features (such as granular password policies) will become available.

Open Discussion

Chris Thach [CIRAS] said he had a critical web server attacked by outside hackers which caused it to be blocked by the IDS system. He was concerned on the amount of time it took to get his system unblocked. Wayne Hauber [ITSEC] will address that

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problem with Chris. A long general discussion on auto-blocking and steps that could be taken to minimize the attack surface of member systems followed. Steve Heideman [CHEM] commented that many others could benefit from some of the techniques discussed for Windows systems. In the end Wayne Hauber [ITSEC] felt this was a good topic for a Security SIG meeting. Wayne will proceed with setting up a future agenda item.

Wayne Hauber [ITSEC] commented that we are seeing a large number of phishing emails for passwords. Many users are still responding to these emails and providing their passwords (some even after a Solution Center consultation session on safe password practices!). Part of the problem is that the phishers are getting better at writing convincing emails and lowering their SPAM/phishing scores.

Steve Kunz [ITSYS] talked about a "direction" the ITS MicroNet Group is moving in relation to the Scout system. ITS is planning to phase out the Scout system over the coming months. Several factors were involved in making this decision.
1) The advent of Windows 7 (later this year) caused the MicroNet Group to ask whether Scout (and all existing software kits) should be modified to work on the new operating system.
2) The Solution Center has indicated it no longer wishes to support Scout.
3) Scout was invented at a time when no software packages updated themselves – now many do.
4) Scout was invented at a time when several software packages required complicated configuration. Configuration is generally not a problem now.

Movement of the software kits to a web-based distribution (similar to the Macintosh products on the ITS web page at http://www.it.iastate.edu/downloads) is the current plan. Kunz talked about some history of the Scout system. It was developed and introduced by the MicroNet Group in 1997. Since that time it has installed and configured over 650,000 software packages. Peak years were 1997-2001 when about 75,000-100,000 packages were installed per year. Currently Scout installs are less than 15,000 per year (and dropping).

Meeting Adjourned (9:50)

Next meeting is scheduled for August 14.