Windows Administrators Meeting
September 10, 2010
Notes (taken by Steve Kunz [ITSYS])

Meeting Started (9:00)

Announcements

- WINDC LDAPS certificates (now and in the future). Steve Kunz [ITSYS] said the Thawte LDAPS certificates on the domain controllers are being renewed for one more year – but this will be the LAST year they will be renewed. During the coming year ITS will install InCommon certificates and begin telling people who use LDAPS to convert to InCommon public certificates on their client end of LDAPS connections. More information on getting InCommon certificates and getting the new "public key" certificates for clients will be coming out in the future as InCommon services become available.
- NetReg Inspector change for students. On 8/10/10 the rules changed slightly for students using NetReg to register systems on the campus network. In the past student registered systems only needed to pass Inspector tests if they were registering in a residence hall. Effective August 10, 2010 any student-NetReg-registered system registered anywhere on campus needs to pass Inspector to remain on the campus network.
- A new wave of better crafted phishing attacks are being mailed to campus users. Many forms incorporate ISU URLs, copyright notices, and terminology. Remind your user community be very careful about where there usernames and passwords are supplied.

Stock GPO Design Interest [Steve Kunz - ITSYS]

Steve Kunz [ITSYS] brought up an old topic on behalf of Mike Lohrback [ITSYS] relating to the creating and documenting of a set of "stock Group Policy Objects". There are many thousands of GPOs in existence on the Enterprise domain, many doing the same thing. IT OU managers constantly re-invent the same policy, where a core set could be linked to by many, avoiding duplicate work. A core set of stock GPOs could probably be built from existing GPOs, named with a good naming convention, and documented. Contact Mike Lohrbach (mlbach@iastate.edu) if you have ideas or would like to participate in this project. GPOs relating to security, Office applications, drive mappings, etc. are good candidates.

Technical Info: Program Compatibility Assistant Demo [Steve Kunz - ITSYS]

Steve Kunz [ITSYS] provided information and a demo on the Microsoft "Program Compatibility Assistant" ("PCA") found on Windows Vista and Windows 7 systems. According to Microsoft the PCA is intended to "make older programs that have compatibility problems work better in an automated manner" (from the "MSDN" URL below).

The PCA is a service that runs on a Windows Vista or Windows 7 OS that watches the behavior of programs as they run. In a common case they watch a program that appears to be an installer (in that it unwraps components and deposits them on somewhere on the client system). If the PCA thinks it appears to be an installer but does not deposit any "uninstall entries" in the "Add/Remove Programs" registry it assumes something may have gone wrong with the installation. The PCA then tries to help by offering a pop-up window with the text "This program may not have installed correctly". It offers three options.

- "Reinstall using recommended settings"
- "This program installed correctly"
- "Cancel"

How the program behaves after that depends on the option the user selects. If they pick "Reinstall using recommended settings" the system will remember (via registry settings) that they picked that option and will begin to"lie" about the version of Windows the product is being run under when the product asks for the OS version in the future. Windows 7 will now report that it is it is "Windows Vista", for example. If they pick "This program installed correctly" the system will remember they responded to the PCA and not "lie" about the OS. If they pick "Cancel" nothing about the program is remembered (and the PCA pop-up will continue to appear each time it is launched).

The only way to stop the "helpful lie" is to 1) run the program from a different location (since the remembered program includes the full path or 2) delete the PCA memory of the program (via registry edits).

The registry entries related to the PCA on Windows Vista and Windows 7 are as follows:

    HKCU\Software\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion
        \AppCompatFlags\Compatibility Assistant\Persisted

    HKLM\Software\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion
        \AppCompatFlags\Layers

In each registry key there will be entries with the full path of the remembered program. Deleting the entries for a single program (don't delete the whole key above!) in both locations will result in the PCA pop-up appearing again for that program launched from that location.

More information on the "Program Compatibility Assistant" can be found at the following locations.

MSDN:
http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb756937.aspx

How to Disable:
http://www.howtogeek.com/howto/4161/disable-program-compatibility-assistant-in-windows-7-and-vista/

TechNet Blog:
http://blogs.technet.com/b/askperf/archive/2007/10/05/the-program-compatibility-assistant-part-one.aspx
http://blogs.technet.com/b/askperf/archive/2007/10/05/the-program-compatibility-assistant-part-two.aspx

Open Discussion

The question was raised about users asking for "Dropbox" to be installed on their systems. Dropbox is a file-transfer/synchronization system allowing users to configure groups of people who can exchange and collaborate on files using Dropbox accounts (http://www.dropbox.com/features). Questions arise about the security and privacy of university data when used on ISU systems. One comment made during the discussion was it has been noticed that Dropbox will cache every Dropbox object a user touches in profile storage, resulting in copies of the data being deposited on various systems. ITS staff commented that ASW WebScratch is an alternative for file transfers outside the university, but the limited lifetime of the store and low feature set makes it not to usable for long-term collaboration. In the end it was suggested that this topic could be raised at a future CCSG or SecSIG meeting for more discussion.

Jim Wellman [AER E] asked where the CyFiles project was in regards to roaming profile storage for Windows users. This topic was presented in the July 2010 WinAdmin meeting by Mike Lohrbach [ITSYS] (see "Roaming Profile Support" in http://www.tech.its.iastate.edu/win2000/admin/WinAdmin.2010.07.09.pdf). Steve Kunz indicated that from a technical standpoint, what is currently being implemented in the first rollout of this service is not "roaming profiles" but a "home directory". The ITS Storage Committee is discussing the CyFiles project (with participants from various colleges/departments). Questions/concerns should be raised in that meeting. If you have any input into the roaming-profile/home-folders/redirected-folders discussion currently going on, send it to Mike Lohrbach [ITSYS] at mlbach@iastate.edu .

Beata Pruski [ITSYS] commented that the AFS file servers now have credentials from the Windows Kerberos domain (on the Windows domain controllers) allowing AFS to obtain tokens using on the Windows KDCs. Documentation on how to leverage this is being finalized and an announcement will be published soon.

Meeting Adjourned (10:00)

Next meeting is scheduled for October 8 (provided a sufficient agenda exists).