

Lieberman Software Helps Tarrant County College Rapidly Resolve Windows Administration Issues

Managing the Windows infrastructure at Tarrant County College (TCC) has its challenges. With five main campuses, several satellite locations, 14,000 systems and more than 40,000 students who come and go from year to year, there are always IT administration tasks to resolve.

The Situation

Chad Harris, Manager of Networks and Hardware for Tarrant County College, has a demanding project list that requires constant attention. At any given time, he needs to be able to answer these questions:

- Have the local administrator passwords been updated on all systems?
- Are registry values and permissions correctly set on all systems?
- Are these changes documented and securely stored?
- Is the domain free of stale user accounts?

While these challenges might be common to IT staff in many industries, Harris faces a number of unusual requirements that many admins don't. For example, because he manages a college network, he must ensure that the accounts on most of the machines change every nine months.

"The churn in computer accounts comes from the frequent re-imaging and re-building of classroom and lab computers to prepare for the next semester," Harris said. "We're continually switching out machines. The numbers fluctuate all the time."

Customer Profile

The Tarrant County College district has five main campuses in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and approximately 40,000 students. www.tccd.edu

Situation

Thousands of user accounts are added and expired every nine months, increasing the potential for security vulnerabilities into the network. Access on the network needed to be controlled.

Solution

Lieberman Software's User Manager Pro Suite was deployed to systems throughout the enterprise.

Result

User accounts and administrator passwords are effectively managed - increasing productivity and preventing unauthorized access.

Thus, while most Windows administrators can expect to clean out a handful of expired machine accounts annually, Harris must handle thousands.

With so many accounts changing on such a frequent basis, Harris requires a tool that allows him to update local administrator passwords at regular intervals, ensure that his systems are only accessible by authorized users, and verify that all expired accounts are identified and deactivated.



The Solution

His research led to the choice of User Manager Pro Suite™ (UMPS) from Lieberman Software. UMPS is a Windows security management tool that allows IT administrators to report on and make global changes to credentials, groups, rights, registry settings, policies and more, simultaneously across managed servers and workstations in the Windows network.

Once UMPS was deployed, Harris' first task was to begin changing and managing the administrator passwords for Windows servers on the network. With Random Password Generator, a tool in the UMPS suite, each server at the college can have a unique and complex administrator password. Another UMPS tool, Password Recovery Console, lets delegated IT staff retrieve the current administrator passwords through a secure web interface whenever they need to make emergency fire call repairs or conduct routine administration tasks on the servers.

From there, Harris quickly expanded his use of UMPS to handle a variety of systems management tasks. Approximately 10 members of Harris' field IT staff depend on UMPS to push and run applications, remotely wake up or shut down computers, monitor event logs for certain occurrences, and check if particular software is installed in the proper places.

"We rely on User Manager Pro Suite largely for investigations," he said. "We may be interested in event logs on a variety of machines or to investigate the presence of tombstone computer accounts in our domain. Whatever the case, UMPS diligently pulls the information for us and makes the changes when and where applicable. UMPS is like a Swiss army knife. It has a lot of individual tools that are very handy."

"I've thought about what these past several years would have been like without UMPS. Needless to say, without this tool it would be very inconvenient to run reports and maintain an efficient IT auditing system."

UMPS is also a tool that can meet Harris' industry-specific challenges for managing an education IT network.

"As a school, we have labs and classrooms that may be used for a particular purpose," he said. "UMPS provides a convenient way to set permissions and accounts in a small subset, for just an hour or two. We may also put particular accounts in the local administrator group for a couple hours so that teachers are able to perform functions during that period and nothing more."

All of these benefits combine to provide significant time savings for Harris and his busy IT group.

"When we're doing investigations of problems associated with malware outbreaks or a suspected misconfiguration to a group of machines, UMPS saves hours," Harris said. "Otherwise we'd be visiting individual machines, either remotely or physically, and that's a slow process."



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About Lieberman Software Corporation

Lieberman Software provides privileged identity management and security management solutions to more than 1000 customers worldwide, including 40 percent of the Fortune 50. By automatically discovering and managing privileged accounts everywhere on the network, Lieberman Software helps secure access to sensitive systems and data, thereby reducing internal and external security vulnerabilities, improving IT productivity and helping ensure regulatory compliance. The company developed the first solution for the privileged identity management space, and its products continue to lead this market in features and functionality. Lieberman Software is headquartered in Los Angeles, CA with an office in Austin, TX and channel partners throughout the world. For more information, visit www.liebssoft.com.