

ITS Technical Notes

Windows Enterprise Announcement

October 14, 2008 – User Container Renaming Starting Oct 20

ITS will begin "regularizing" the user container names in the Windows Enterprise domain starting Monday, October 20, 2008. This means any user container names that have container names like:

CN=User\, Joe A,CN=Users,DC=iastate,DC=edu

will be renamed to become:

CN=joeuser,CN=Users,DC=iastate,DC=edu

In a nutshell, if the leftmost part (the user container) is named based on the "proper name" (or "display name") it will be renamed to the "NetID". This is how user container names are originally created (see "Background/Details" below).

Should I Worry About This?

This change should have no impact on existing scripts and processes UNLESS you have hardcoded distinguished names with the "proper name" format (hardcoding distinguished names is never a good idea).

This procedure has been done on several college and departmental OUs since 2005 with no ill effects and no changes needed. User container name changes can happen at any time when users rename their NetID, so processes should not be dependant on the container name. A container name change is not important in searching for or manipulating users since the given name, surname, display name, login, etc. are the important fields (and these will NOT change).

Background/Details

Requests have been made (both recently and in the past) to regularize the user container names (which are used in fully qualified distinguished names) in the Windows Enterprise Domain. The user container name is the leftmost term of the distinguished name and it generally looks like the following(assume "joeuser" is the NetID for these examples):

CN=joeuser,CN=Users,DC=iastate,DC=edu

or

CN=joeuser,OU=Users,OU=<whatever>,DC=iastate,DC=edu

The above format (using the NetID as the container name) is how all user accounts are created by the account-sync process. However, in the past (in 2003) a process required by Exchange converted many of the user container names existing at that time to a format based on the proper name of the user. As a result some usernames look like:

ITS Technical Notes

CN=User\, Joe A,CN=Users,DC=iastate,DC=edu

or

CN=User\, Joe A,OU=Users,OU=<whatever>,DC=iastate,DC=edu

Having a container name with escaped punctuation, spaces, etc. is problematic for many automated processes. Several people would like this "fixed". Since we do not anticipate the need for running the Exchange process that caused this problem, once the user container names are fixed (renamed) they should stay that way.

What Will Be Done Starting October 20, 2008

A script will be used to fix the user container names and put them back to the original "NetID" format. Only "NetID-based" container names will be renamed (not "!" accounts created by OU admins).

Renaming containers will begin October 20, 2008. The process will proceed in stages, starting with the general "Users" container, then the "Students" containers, and finally the college/departmental OUs. A follow-up email to this post will announce when the process starts with an additional follow-up when it is completed (within a day or two).

Hearing About This For The First Time?

This change was discussed in the WinAdmin meetings on September 12 and October 10. See the sections "User Container Renames" in:

<http://tech.ait.iastate.edu/win2000/admin/WinAdmin.2008.09.12.pdf>

<http://tech.ait.iastate.edu/win2000/admin/WinAdmin.2008.10.10.pdf>

The proposal was also posted to the WinAdmin, CCSG, and Mac OS X Admins mailing lists on October 6 (Subject "Windows Domain User Container Names"). Discussion was positive and the decision was made to go ahead at the October 10 WinAdmin meeting.

Feedback

If you have any questions you can send email to skunz@iastate.edu