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Windows Administrators Meeting
February 11, 2005
Notes (taken by Steve Kunz)

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Meeting Started (9:00)

Announcements

- NAI (VirusScan) has announced that it will begin daily antivirus DAT file updates on Feb 25. You should make sure your VirusScan client packages are looking for updates on a daily basis after that time.

- AutoIt 3.1 has been released. The new version has the ability to integrate most GUI Windows controls into AutoIt scripts (buttons, sliders, pull down lists, etc). AutoIt 3.1 is available at http://www.hiddensoft.com/autoit3.

X-Win 32

Dan Carlile (AIT) gave a status report on the X-Win 32 site license issue. Our current license expires April 1. Apparently the current license code stopped working last Saturday, but a new code is available to extend our current product until April 1. See http://www.ait.iastate.edu/faq/view.php?id=171 or the contact the Solution Center if you are having problems with the current license code.

Dan indicated about 11-12 groups have contacted him expressing interest in renewing X-Win 32 beyond this April 1. The current annual cost is $3500 for a site license. In the past many departments contributed a fair share to the fee, with AIT picking up the rest. Dan is still soliciting interest/participation in this product. Other products suggested have been Cygwin-X.   Please contact Dan Carlile (dcarlile@iastate.edu) for further information or to provide feedback. The clock is ticking!

ISU Computer Inspector Demo

Wayne Hauber (AIT) demonstrated the "ISU Computer Inspector", and locally written product that scans Windows systems for security issues. This product launched at NetReg time for residence hall systems to make sure they are secure and "clean" in for network connections. Items checked are automatic updates, service packs, critical hotfixes, weak passwords, and spyware and anti-virus software. A soon to be released version will also check for open file shares. The product runs "stand alone" (with no installation) and does not modify the client system in any way. It simply reports problems it sees and offers instructions on how the user can fix them. New in the latest version of Inspector are updated "result web-pages" with icons and a much friendlier formatting of information.

Anyone (anywhere) can try the Inspector at the following URL:

    https://asw.iastate.edu/cgi-bin/acropolis/inspect

AIT encourages new incoming students to use the Inspector before coming on

campus to prepare their systems for network connection. Currently a Windows system does not need to pass all the tests to be allowed to NetReg onto the system (although that policy may change). The Inspector is only "enabled" during NetReg for residence Hall subnets, although any department can request it be enabled for their subnet (if you have a good number of "visiting" or transient systems coming on to your subnet, for example). Contact the AIT Solution Center if you are interested in this NetReg addition.

The ISU Computer Inspector is under continual review. Suggestions are welcome on how it could be improved. Contact Wayne Hauber (wjhauber@iastate.edu) if you need further information or have comments/suggestions.

Microsoft Presentation Ideas

Kunz indicated the Microsoft has offered to bring people in to give regular presentations on topics of our choice. These presentations would be about an hour in length. Topics could be any product that Microsoft produces. Kunz asked for ideas on the first such presentation and a unanimous choice was "Windows Server 2003 Service Pack 1". A tentative date for this Microsoft presentation is February 25, 9:00-10:00 AM, Durham 144. Watch for further announcements as we get this finalized.

Open Discussion

Kunz mentioned techniques that should be used when diagnosing problems after installing VirusScan 8.0i on servers (or any other system, for that matter). The "Script Scan delay" issue (where all scripts take 20-30 secs to complete) has been mentioned in the past. There are other issues that arise in the "Access Protection" area of VirusScan 8.0i. By default, for example, only a small list of "exempted" programs is allowed to send email outbound on port 25 (SMTP). Programs such as "eudora.exe" and "outlook.exe" are exempted by default, but if you have other applications that need to send mail they will have to be added to the exemption list (or the feature disabled). The same thing applies to the "File, Share, and Folder Protection" that is installed by default. The easiest way to diagnose problems is to use the logging feature (right-click "Access Protection" on the VirusScan console and select "View Log") to see what is being blocked/detected on your system.

Chris Thach (CIRAS) asked if anyone else had seen a problem using redirected folders for "My Documents". What Chris is seeing is that accessing items in "My Documents" works fine (quickly) the first time, but has long delays (20 secs) when accessing the same items on subsequent times during the same login). Nobody else in the room has experienced the problem.

Meeting Adjourned (about 10:05)

Next meeting is scheduled March 11.