

Windows Administrators Meeting

July 11, 2003

Minutes (taken by Steve Kunz)

Meeting Started (9:05)

Announcements

Kunz brought up a couple items announced in the last CCSG meeting that warrant repeating.

First, AIT is soliciting comments on how turning off Windows NETBIOS file sharing across the campus boundary would affect people. In technical terms, this means blocking ports 135-139 and 445 at the campus border routers. One implication of this would be that Windows file sharing would not function between and off-campus and on-campus systems. The reason for doing this is to close an account-hacking/system-attack vector heavily used to penetrate systems from the outside. Even if the decision is made to close these ports, a secure alternative (probably VPN) would be provided to allow the service. VPN allows an authenticated/encrypted connection from an off-campus system, allowing it to appear “on-campus” (with an on-campus IP). Normal Windows file-sharing would still work via VPN connections. From lack of concern or comments in both the CCSG and WinAdmin meeting it appears this change would not affect many people.

Second, AIT is soliciting comments on how restricting “outbound email systems” (which transmit outbound SMTP traffic on port 25 to other mail systems) would affect people. A current idea is to block all outbound mail except from “mailhub.iastate.edu”. The purpose of this block would be to eliminate the number of mail-spammers, proxies, forwarder, etc. that exist due to compromised (or deliberate use) systems. From lack of concern or comments in both the CCSG and WinAdmin meeting it appears this change would not affect many people.

Last month’s WinAdmin announcement of plans to change the Kerberos authentication service provided by AIT was restated. There are two versions of the Kerberos protocol – version 4 and version 5. Deliberations by the OASIS committee and other security needs indicate we should shut down the version 4 authentication mechanism and only provide Kerberos 5 authentication. A preliminary target date for this change has been self-imposed by AIT for January, 2004 (no formal plans have been set by OASIS or any other administrative body as of yet). This requires a new version of Kerberos to be provided on client systems (which will be distributed by a new release of Scout – version 6.0). Many unexpected problems have delayed the release of this package. We still hope to have it out by early August.

Open Discussion

Jim Wellman (AE EM) expressed frustration that most of the software distribution seems centered around Scout and the construction of the Solution Center CD-ROM during the summer months. He indicated this timeline is not good for departmental administrators that must rebuild lab-images (or other large-scale deployment of software to multiple systems) that must occur during the summer months. It would be much better to have the software “tested and stable” by early summer. A rather long and involved discussion followed about perceptions of software deadlines self-imposed by AIT, wider testing of “alpha” and “beta” software by departments outside AIT, and support of issues such as “summer image builds for the next academic school year”. Kunz acknowledged that more should probably be done to offer a repository (with software and documentation for manual installation) of software products we support. People should be aware that for most site-licensed products we are under auditing restrictions (meaning we cannot distribute the software without recording who we give it to). This requirement is met by Scout and the [ftp.sitelicensed](#) server (since they keep logs on authenticated transfers). This is NOT met by an “AFS locker” since no audit is performed on who transfers what (even though it is authenticated). A better central FTP repository of standalone installers with documentation may be in order. Since this is an additional staff support burden, it will be taken up in AIT management meetings for further action.

Meeting Adjourned (about 10:00)

Next meeting is August 8.