



Manufacturing: Lotus Notes ID Password Management

Case Study

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Summary

A venerable global manufacturer with over \$7 billion in annual revenue, this PistolStar customer wanted to reduce the glut of calls received by the Help Desk for password resets. The customer installed PistolStar's Password Power 8, which enables end-users to access Lotus Notes and Domino by authenticating with their password for LDAP (i.e. Microsoft Active Directory, Novell eDirectory), thus allowing self-service password resets via LDAP and eliminating the need to recover the Notes ID file password.

Problem

As a long-time user of Lotus Notes and Domino, the customer was very familiar with the challenges involved with resetting passwords for Notes and recovering the Notes ID. The company decided to conduct an analysis of its Help Desk, which was being outsourced, and saw clearly that Notes password resets and Notes ID password recovery were consistently the number one Help Desk expense. The customer had set up an elaborate password recovery system that employed native Notes ID recovery and included an added layer of security and automation, yet the process was still costly and time-consuming.

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"No matter how good you make your password recovery system, it is not effective if it still doesn't benefit the Help Desk," said Rob Axelrod, infrastructure analyst and consultant, Technotics, Inc., who worked with the customer on facilitating password management. "Help Desk personnel were still spending 5-10 minutes on every password-related call. The time required impacts the productivity of the user as well as the Help Desk as they're on the phone with each other walking through the recovery steps."

The customer also had a third-party password synchronization product that synched virtually every other application in the organization with the exception of Notes. "Because Notes has that physical token, the ID, it is hard to synch up," explained Axelrod.

Resolution

To resolve its Notes password reset and ID recovery issues, the customer installed PistolStar's Password Power 8, which overlays Notes authentication with LDAP (i.e. Microsoft Active Directory, Novell eDirectory). By allowing users to authenticate with Active Directory to access Notes, Password Power eliminates the need to perform password resets in Notes because resets can now be done through Active Directory.

"Notes administrators wonder how this can be done," relayed Axelrod. "It's quite a trick of technology that PistolStar pulls off to allow users to do these backend resets."

With Password Power, either the customer's users can reset by typing ctrl-alt-del at the workstation or the Help Desk can reset by right-clicking on the user and the user's computer and selecting password reset. Best of all, because the third party password synching product does the password reset for Active Directory on the backend, the next time the user logs in, the new password is propagated into Notes.

Project Execution — Pilot

PistolStar went to the customer's site to provide assistance and support during the Password Power installation. To ensure the client-side install went smoothly, PistolStar's team worked with Axelrod to develop a Microsoft installer package (SMS) that would work with the customer's specific workstation configurations. They also provided a tutorial on Password Power and what the customer could expect from a support perspective and a Help Desk perspective.

A pilot was kicked off to approximately 200 of the customer's users. Happily, there were almost no issues and all were surrounding the install. After tweaking the MST, the installer transfer file, the team resolved the install issues.

The initial users' feedback on Password Power was exceptionally positive. "Users were ecstatic, people really loved it," said Axelrod. "If we had to take it away from them after the pilot, there would have been an uprising."

Product Rollout

Password Power was then deployed to all 10,000 of the customer's users. Because the product was installed behind the scenes with SMS, the only action required of the users was to reboot after the install. The rollout began with 100 users per day, but as the deployment team got comfortable with the install, the rollout increased to 1000 users per day. Overall, only 1% of the installs generated support calls, which were deftly handled by one administrator. "As a result, we could rollout 1000 users per day no problem," said Axelrod.

Project Value and ROI

After the deployment was complete, the Help Desk experienced an immediate and dramatic decrease in both the number of password-related calls and the length of time required to resolve them. User satisfaction skyrocketed because their most critical application — email — now no longer required a password and authentication was easier. The audit and security teams were thrilled they now had a single password structure for Sarbanes-Oxley and policies around passwords that required they conform to Active Directory standards.

"This was one project that made people, especially the users, very happy," said Axelrod. "People came up to us in the hall afterward to thank us. Executives both in IT and outside of IT came up to our team because they were really delighted. They were happy as a result of rolling out Password Power."

References

Rob Axelrod, Infrastructure Analyst & Consultant
Technotics, Inc.

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