



Addressing the Password Authentication and Management Issues of Top Global Pharmaceutical Companies

Case Study

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Industry Case Study: Top Global Pharmaceutical Companies

The Situation (Typical Problems and Environments)

Several global and top ten pharmaceutical companies use Lotus Notes, and for many of them it is the most important application in their organization. For that reason, when their Notes administration managers are experiencing password issues, they eventually find their way to PistolStar.

Password issues among PistolStar's pharmaceutical customers vary and cover the spectrum from achieving reduced sign-on to recovery of the Notes ID password to integration with third-party systems. Nevertheless, customers in this industry agree on their password-related needs — simplifying access to critical applications and reducing Help Desk calls to recover forgotten passwords and perform password changes.

Top Ten Pharmaceutical Company A

This pharmaceutical industry customer, one of the largest worldwide, had implemented a self-service password management system, however it was not fitting the bill. Because Lotus Notes is this customer's largest application, they originally needed to find a compatible, client-side solution that provided integration with the Lotus Notes ID file, achieving single sign-on to Notes and Notes ID synchronization. Users had two different passwords to manage — their Windows password and their Notes ID password — and the customer wanted them to have only one to remember.

Top Ten Pharmaceutical Company A also wanted their 95,000 users to be able to change their Windows password from either Ctrl-Alt-Del or the password management system and obtain the same results. They also wanted to be able to update Notes ID files that were on the network for roaming purposes. According to the customer, "Our biggest need was to find a way to provide the Notes ID SSO experience for our end-users in a way that is compatible with the other tools we have implemented."

Top Ten Pharmaceutical Company B

With this pharmaceutical industry customer, a U.S. leader in pharmaceutical products, many among its 3500 users work on the road or at home. Most of them had Blackberry Desktop Manager to synchronize their Blackberry devices with their Notes email. To access the network and use Lotus Notes, these road warriors authenticated with locally cached Windows credentials and then authenticated with the network via VPN credentials, which were separate from their Microsoft Active Directory credentials. In general, Top Ten Pharmaceutical Company B was not using the HTTP password and connecting to the Web via single sign-on or password synchronization. They also had issues with the Notes ID and they wanted to integrate with Active Directory.

In addition, a major security issue presented itself when the customer discovered that the users were not changing their Active Directory password, which they were required to do every 90 days. Typically, users' Active Directory accounts were locked when the password was not changed, but the users would not realize this because the VPN still allowed them access to the network and they did not need any other resources on the network other than Notes.

The Solution

Top Ten Pharmaceutical Company A

This customer selected PistolStar's Password Power Lotus Notes ID Plug-In for several

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reasons: its integration with Active Directory to do password changes in Windows through Ctrl-Alt-Del, elimination of the Notes ID password, and single sign-on to third-party machines and the Web. “We looked at the native Notes product, but we didn’t like how it required Notes to be the master password,” the customer states. “PistolStar enables Windows to be the master password. We saw they had the solution to fulfill our needs.”

The customer installed 95,000 seats of the Notes ID Plug-In in mode 1, which synchronizes end-users’ Windows password with the local Notes ID file, enabling the integration necessary to change passwords using Ctrl-Alt-Del. The customer later moved to mode 2, which provides the authentication against Active Directory as well as password recovery capabilities. Password Power’s tight integration with the customer’s password management system allows users to recover a forgotten Notes ID password using the system’s password recovery steps

As the customer was preparing to conduct a pilot of the Notes ID Plug-In, PistolStar sent a consultant team to the customer’s main U.S. site to assist with implementing a project titled “Notes ID File Password Management Removal” and to strategize with the customer’s project management team.

Working with the customer’s team, PistolStar discovered an issue — roaming users were not backing up the Notes ID file password after changing it so it would be available when they used a different machine. As a result, PistolStar added an enhancement feature to Password Power 7 that ensures that a copy of each users’ Notes ID file is automatically backed up to the file server in real-time after a password change, enabling no end-user involvement.

“PistolStar came up with the solution to resolve this issue,” states the customer.

Top Ten Pharmaceutical Company B

This customer also purchased the Notes ID Plug-In, selecting PistolStar for its knowledge of Notes and its expertise with providing single sign-on to Notes by integrating Active Directory. They had considered the OS password sync capability built into the Notes client, however, PistolStar offered functionality that is more robust. With the Notes ID Plug-In, the customer eliminated use of the Notes ID password and resolved the issues with password expiration and Active Directory integration by tying the mobile users’ use of Notes to Active Directory when they are on the VPN. Users could then connect to the Domain Controller then change their password and it will be synched.

“Password Power seamlessly changes users’ passwords when they change their Active Directory password,” states the customer. “There was no need to train users to use the password change facility in Notes.”

The Benefits

For all customers in the pharmaceutical industry, facilitating seamless single sign-on to Lotus Notes and Domino applications using Active Directory credentials has significantly improved the users’ experience, even when working remotely. More importantly, Help Desk calls have been sharply reduced. Top Ten Pharmaceutical Company A has experienced a 20% reduction in Help Desk calls because of the automatic, real-time back up of the Notes ID file password every time there is a change, which allows users to always have access with their most recent password when logging into a different machine. For Top Ten Pharmaceutical Company B, there are no longer calls regarding forgotten Notes ID passwords.

Enabling customers to integrate tightly with Active Directory as well as other LDAP

“Our experience has been great,” reports Top Ten Pharmaceutical Company A. “The implementation and management of Password Power has been very smooth and we’ve never had problems because the product consistently does what it’s supposed to.”

directories also allows them to leverage LDAP completely. Company B resolved issues with password expiration and Active Directory integration for mobile users by tying Notes to Active Directory on the organization's VPN.

Company A has further found that the multiple layers of functionality provided by Password Power have made a noticeable difference, as the product fulfills the outstanding needs for their password management system.

“Our experience has been great,” reports Company A. “The implementation and management of Password Power has been very smooth and we've never had problems because the product consistently does what it's supposed to. Also, PistolStar understands the technology and is very helpful whenever we have a question.”

Company B echoes Company A's comments. “Implementation of the product was positive and our experience using it has been very good,” they state. “We look forward to continuing use as we upgrade to Notes 8.”

Since implementing its products, PistolStar's pharmaceutical industry customers have achieved the password management objectives that were specified prior to engagement. Each has reported tremendous satisfaction as a result of simplified access to critical applications — namely, Lotus Notes — and streamlined password management, including management of the Notes ID password.

Also, as Company B notes, “We've achieved password security compliance through the use of Password Power.”

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