

Background

Case Study | State of Indiana - Active Administrator

The Indiana Office of Technology (IOT) is responsible for supporting and maintaining the enterprise technology services for all State of Indiana agencies. IOT's sole mission is to provide partner agencies with the most cost-effective IT services to help them secure and standardize their use of technology.

The IOT was created in a few years ago when the State of Indiana decided to consolidate all of their disparate agencies' staff, domains and technological purchasing into one centrally managed group, with fewer Active Directory Domains and less IT budgetary freedom for each group.

The IOT has standardized on Active Directory as its central identity store for the State of Indiana's agencies, and also uses it as the basis for its integrated billing system for charge-backs to their internal customers. It is essential for the State of Indiana's operations that their Active Directory infrastructure is secure, well-managed and continuously available.

"We can delegate administrative privileges, audit changes made to AD with advanced reporting and alerting, and recover AD objects and Group Policies — what more could you ask for?"

Brian Wuchner, Sr. Systems Administrator, Indiana Office of Technology



The Challenge

The State of Indiana's Active Directory is comprised of 13 domains and contains over 38,000 user accounts. This directory not only provides the identity store, but also controls user and computer security through their extensive use of Group Policy. With such a large number of users and domains, the IOT needed to find a safe, efficient and secure method for managing the growing number of Group Policies in each domain. With multiple administrators creating and editing Group Policies, there was an urgent need to track who made each change, when that change was made, the detailed of changes to each setting, and to predict the effect on the production environment before changes are pushed onto the network.

The Group Policy Management Console (GPMC) provided in Windows is an excellent tool, but insufficient to meet the IOT's demands. In addition they needed to delegate permissions so only selected administrators could manipulate Group Policies and to receive alerts

The Solution

Brian's team narrowed the selection process down to two products: NetIQ Change Guardian for Group Policy and ScriptLogic's Active Administrator. Brian and his administrative team of 15-20 technicians ultimately chose Active Administrator for many reasons: "Auditing, recovering, security and more ... I like the fact that I can manage the various aspects of AD from one centralized product."

Brian continued, "Having four independent tools in an organization as large as the State of Indiana would be a nightmare to maintain—support costs, maintenance,

when changes were made.

"We looked at a few different tools that could potentially help us get a grips on our management of Group Policy," said Brian Wuchner, Sr. Systems Administrator, "but when we started to investigate our options, we came to find we needed to manage a lot MORE than just Group Policy in order to secure our Active Directory." It became apparent to Brian and team that their AD management arsenal was not as robust as they previously had thought, and they needed a more comprehensive approach to managing ALL aspects of Active Directory. "After initially looking for Group Policy management, we looked at ScriptLogic's Active Administrator and began comparing its feature set to that of other vendors. It was evident that we could get the Group Policy features we were looking for and also be able to address *other* Active Directory concerns in one product."

patches, etc. With Active Administrator, we have one tool for our admins to learn and maintain, and that's it."

This "Swiss Army Knife" approach of consolidated Active Directory management has been a huge success for IOT thus far. "The auditing component has been the biggest surprise to us since it's so hard to test a tool like that in a pre-production environment where there are so few things to actually audit. With Active Administrator, we are able to see what changes have occurred, when and who made them, and with version 5.1 we can see the before and after values for each change to an attribute."

IOT has also seen the benefits of Active Administrator's robust recovery functionality, which has helped the State of Indiana avoid having to manually restore a deleted Organizational Unit on more than one occasion.

"When an OU with a bunch of groups was deleted, before Active Administrator we had no way to figure out what was deleted, or what users were in those specific groups. Now we can dedicate less resources and less time, and bring back that lost object without affecting the

Other Benefits of Active Administrator

Active Administrator is essentially four products in one — a comprehensive, integrated Active Directory management and auditing solution that has also helped the State of Indiana's agencies satisfy compliance requirements in areas such as HIPAA and PCI. Prevention of administrative errors, consistent delegation of permissions and centralization of the audit trail of Active Directory changes are all central to compliance with regulations on access control.

"Staying compliant is a fundamental concern to any state agency. Being able to audit changes and run Resultant Set of Policy on various Group Policies settings before pushing them to production are two HUGE benefits we have seen to help us achieve our compliance objectives since implementing Active Administrator."

Conclusion

The State of Indiana, while searching for a solution to help them manage the complexities of Group Policy, found much more in Active Administrator. Their purchase decision came down to the fact that Active Administrator could provide not only optimal Group Policy management, but also a means to delegate security, audit critical changes and recover lost objects in Active Directory. Four distinct management tools integrated into one console at an unbeatable price point made the decision to acquire Active Administrator an easy one for IOT.

"First, Active Administrator provided a much-needed alternative to the GPMC, so we could avoid system downtime due to unwanted GPO changes, or at least be notified if something *does* change." Brian explains, "But we found it to be so much more than that. Now we can delegate administrative privileges where we see fit,

About ScriptLogic

ScriptLogic Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Quest Software (Nasdaq: QSFT), is a recognized leader in Microsoft Windows systems and security management. Empowering more than 26,000 customers worldwide with the ability to manage the desktop lifecycle, streamline Active Directory management, secure and protect Windows servers, and ease the burden for Exchange administrators, ScriptLogic's award winning solution families can benefit small to enterprise-size organizations in any industry. For more information on how you can capitalize on your existing IT investments for **Desktop Management, Active Directory Management, Windows Server Management and Exchange Management**, please contact us. ScriptLogic is headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida, with offices around the world. You can also reach ScriptLogic at (561) 886-2400 or on the Web at <http://www.scriptlogic.com>.

end users OR the administrator's productivity levels." Brian continues, "Natively, we would have had to take the DC offline, and get our back-up team, server team and Active Directory team engaged in order to bring back one OU. With AA, one team takes control and we end up spending less time and ultimately, less money to fix the situation. What could have been hours of manual effort with many teams involved, turns out being less than an hour—for one person."

For State of Indiana, Active Administrator:

- *Provides a one-stop shop for Active Directory management needs*
- *Recovers AD objects and Group Policies without taking the DC offline*
- *Helps IOT achieve greater efficiency in performing everyday AD tasks*
- *Eases the complexities of Group Policy management*
- *Audits events and alerts on important changes to sensitive information*
- *Ensure compliance objectives are met*

easily audit changes made to AD with advanced reporting and alerting, and recover AD objects and Group Policies—what more could you ask for? And we got all of this advanced management capability with the original budget allotted to help us gain control of our Group Policy concerns."

Active Administrator has paid for itself many times over for the State of Indiana by increasing user productivity and network uptime, reducing administrative errors and reducing their exposure to security incidents."This product does it all and ScriptLogic, as a company, is a class-act. When I have a feature request, I know I am heard; when I have a support issue, they go above and beyond what is asked," Brian states, "I would recommend this product and this company to ANYONE looking for the most comprehensive approach for managing Active Directory on the market today."