



Boston University Systems Support Enhances Visibility of Network Assets, Reporting Capabilities Using Visual Click

DSRAZOR Also Helps IT Group Manage Transition from eDirectory to Active Directory

Background:

In 2005, Boston University (BU), a private research and teaching institution with more than 30,000 students, was in the midst of migrating from a Novell NetWare to a Microsoft Active Directory (AD) environment. Systems Support for BU's Office of the Vice President for Financial Affairs and Treasurer saw this transition as an opportunity to improve their visibility of network assets, report creation processes, and establish a foundation for AD management. By first purchasing DSRAZOR for eDirectory, DSMETER for NetWare and DSRAZOR for Windows, this group found a solution that addressed all of their needs, including challenges faced in both environments. Now, this team enjoys clear visibility into network usage and access, enhanced reporting capabilities, and confidence in their AD management.

Challenge: Visibility, Reports and Migration

Ben DeGennaro knew that Systems Support needed better visibility into network access and usage. The Network Administrator for Boston University's Office of the Vice President for Financial Affairs and Treasurer, Ben explains, "We wanted to get a better grasp of our environment for planning, logistical and security purposes."

DeGennaro was also aware of his team's need to improve its approach to gathering management information and creating reports. "We wanted reports and statistics on what users had access to and what they were using. We had no way to effectively get reports or useful management information out of Novell eDirectory."

In addition to these issues, Systems Support was moving from a Novell to a Microsoft environment. Their ideal solution would include eDirectory products to meet some temporary—but still relevant—issues as well as a product for an Active Directory environment that would provide a permanent solution. It was critical that his team perform a smooth, sensible and effective migration.

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Ben DeGennaro,
Network Administrator for Boston University's Office of the Vice President for Financial Affairs and Treasurer.

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Action: Investing in DSRAZOR and DSMETER

Systems Support for BU's Office of the Vice President for Financial Affairs and Treasurer explored solutions from several vendors. After narrowing the field to a shortlist that included Visual Click Software and another vendor, DeGennaro's team decided that DSRAZOR for eDirectory and DSMETER for NetWare offered the most cost-effective solution.

In addition to Visual Click's reasonable pricing, this Systems Support was attracted to DSRAZOR's features and capabilities. Not only could DSRAZOR produce reports quickly; it could also execute changes based on the findings of the reports. Says DeGennaro, "It let me get the report but also make the change and send it back to the directory. Being able to effectively change the information as needed was a huge draw for us. We were able to click a few boxes and apply changes to all, as opposed to making each change individually and manually."

DeGennaro also credits Visual Click with a "very easy" implementation of both DSRAZOR and DSMETER. "We got our license token, downloaded the software from the web site, and then we implemented it. There were minimal issues, if any."

To address its shift to a Windows environment, DeGennaro's team implemented DSRAZOR for Windows. After "setting up an entirely new infrastructure", Systems Support simply stopped using DSRAZOR for eDirectory as well as DSMETER for NetWare and switched over to DSRAZOR for Windows—a move that was accomplished seamlessly.

During this major change in the departments' environment, the team's only requests of Visual Click's Tech Support pertained to creating custom reports. "Tech Support has been outstanding in getting back to me," DeGennaro adds. "Their response has been excellent."

With its Visual Click products in place, DeGennaro's team has significantly enhanced its network management capabilities. "It has been a lot easier for us to efficiently manage our network," he says.

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Results: Increased Visibility, Improved Reporting, and Effective AD Management

With its Visual Click products in place, Systems Support for the Office of the Vice President for Financial Affairs and Treasurer at BU has significantly enhanced its network management capabilities. “It has been a lot easier for us to efficiently manage our network,” he says. These days, they run management reports on network access and usage quickly and routinely. They can track network access, including logons, logouts and file/folder usage. “We now have a bird’s-eye view of our network,” says DeGennaro. “We have the ability to comprehensively and cohesively review it.”

DSRAZOR’s capabilities greatly improve Systems Support’s ability to plan for future investments, such as staffing, hardware, software and other services. “We know what resources are being used and which resources might be over-extended,” DeGennaro adds.

Such visibility into network access and usage also helps the group identify instances of human error. “We want to ensure [our team members] are setting up accounts according to best practices and our policies,” he says.

Systems Support’s investment in Visual Click solutions has saved their departments a great deal of time by automating activities that previously would have been performed manually. For instance, now the team can run a report of accounts that have not been logged in to for two months and then automatically disable any accounts that fit into that category.

Visual Click Software gives DeGennaro’s group much needed visibility into network assets, which translates into dramatically improved reporting capabilities, enhanced AD management, and a confidence boost. “Without DSRAZOR for Windows, I wouldn’t feel as comfortable with the overall status of the network,” DeGennaro adds.

“We now know the status of all accounts and servers; so, we can ensure we have plenty of disk space. We can ensure everything is running as well as we think and hope it is. DSRAZOR gives me an ‘in your face’ report—a to do list of what I need to look at to ensure the network is effectively managed.”

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About Visual Click Software, Inc

Envisioned in 1996 and incorporated in 1999, Visual Click is the leader and pioneer in visually customizable computer network security access management and reporting applications.

Network Security Access Management: Our patented Visual Designer Technology allows for customer- specific applications to be developed in minutes rather than days, weeks or months. This powerful technology creates a new paradigm in network security access management. Previous technology either required use of overly large and complex 'consoles' that performed slowly and required product-specific training or required customized programming.

Our technology allows customers to create exactly what they need to control their network security access management without burdening the Administrator or requiring custom computer programming costs.

Network Security Reporting: Our patented Visual Designer Technology allows for customer-defined reports to be developed in minutes with very little training. This powerful technology allows the Network Administrator to focus on the important matters of securing a network. With minor customizations, each Network Security Report can simultaneously be used for Network Security Access Management. Each Network Security Report can also be used to change the Network Security issues it uncovers. This important technology solves two problems at the same time, namely, reporting about Network Security non-compliance and enforcing corporate Network Security policy.

Customer Benefits: Exceeding customer expectations is our number one goal. We know time is a resource that most IT professionals have in short supply. For this reason, our software is designed to reduce errors and minimize training costs, thereby freeing up valuable time to focus on more mission-critical tasks. From simplifying user management and maintaining regulatory compliance, to preparing for migration and delegating helpdesk duties, our software empowers our customers by saving them time and money associated with managing their networked environments.

Visual Click's Tech Support team "has been outstanding," DeGennaro adds.

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