

ADManager Plus Solutions to Active Directory Challenges Document Objective: This document attempts to showcase the common problems that plague Active Directory Data management today and how ADManager Plus, a web-based Active Directory management software from ManageEngine, offers solutions to them.

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Active Directory Data Management Today:

Today, Active Directory Content (or Data) management is a science in itself. And User Account Management is an important branch of that science. Changing times and business trends have put forth new challenges, and there is an enormous emphasis on finding quicker and efficient solutions to those challenges.

Almost all IT administrators search for solutions and shortcuts for the following categories of Active Directory Data Management:

- Active Directory Provisioning/ De-provisioning (esp. user account management)
- User account Re-provisioning
- Shortcuts to Everyday Tasks
- Active Directory Delegation
- Active Directory Automation
- Active Directory Reports (for AD Data Management)

A QUICK LOOK AT WHAT ADMANAGER PLUS HAS TO OFFER			
Sections of Active Directory Data Management	nent ADManager Plus Solutions		
User Account Re-provisioning	Who said re-provisioning can have no shortcuts?		
	Check out our Situation-and-Data Driven Account Re-provisioning!		
	 Pull out a report matching your situation, and, 		
	Modify user account properties right from the report on the fly!		
User Account Provisioning/ De-provisioning	Solves all your Provisioning and De-provisioning needs		
	 One-Stop Provisioning: Provision right from Exchange to LCS/ OCS properties from one single window! 		
	 One-Stop De-provisioning: Delete everything from home folders to mailboxes when a user leaves – all from a single form! 		
	Turn HR into AD Admin!!! Use "Templates" and "Provisioning Roles" to		
	enable even technically-naïve to perform tasks such as User Provisioning!		
	Workflow: Stay in control over user provisioning even after delegating them!		
Shortcuts to Routine AD Data Management	Report-and-CSV aided Bulk Administrative Operations:		
Tasks	Covers all the admin tasks you usually carry out.		
	 In ADManager Plus, there's a shortcut to almost all the AD administrative tasks you'd ever do 		
Workflow	Stay in control even after delegating a task!		
	 Inbuilt workflow engine to implement a review-approval process over crucial administrative tasks! 		
AD Automation	Automate those oft-repeated AD tasks		
	A controlled automation procedure with pit-stops for a review.		

User Account Re-provisioning, the most-performed AD task!

ADManager Plus' Data- and Need-Driven AD Management Approach

What do you suppose will top the list of Major Active Directory Data Management tasks?

Well, it is *User Account Re-provisioning* that tops that list! Worldwide, IT administrators are spending roughly about one-third of their IT time on modifying user accounts according to a survey by META Group. That's the reason, ADManager Plus provides a shortcut to this administrative task: "On-the-fly AD Management", a data- and need-driven Active Directory management approach, which answers all the challenges posed by user re-provisioning.

Before you could give it a thought, consider these situations:

• Need to find out users who do not have logon script and assign them one.

Track users who have not filled their telephone numbers and email ID and update their records accordingly.

Representing 29% of total IT time, the IT organization will be required to modify user information for around 15% of employees annually.

(Courtesy: META Group Research)

- Locate users whose passwords would expire soon, reset them, and force the users to change password at next logon.
- Find all the inactive users and also users who have not logged on so far, and disable them.
- There's a complaint from a department that ten of new comers have no access to certain files and applications (whose access is administered through Group XYZ).
- Terminal Service Access policy has changed for a set of users whose logon hours is between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Need to update it.
- Mail backup policy for an OU has changed. Need to update it.
- Certain users from a department are not able to send mails larger than 2 MB. Need to upgrade their sending size.

In all the scenarios given above, you need to query the user accounts (described by the situation) and then modify the necessary user account attributes.

The Challenge involved in User Account Re-provisioning:

- To write queries whenever a need arises.
- To identify oft-repeated searches and save the queries for repeated use.

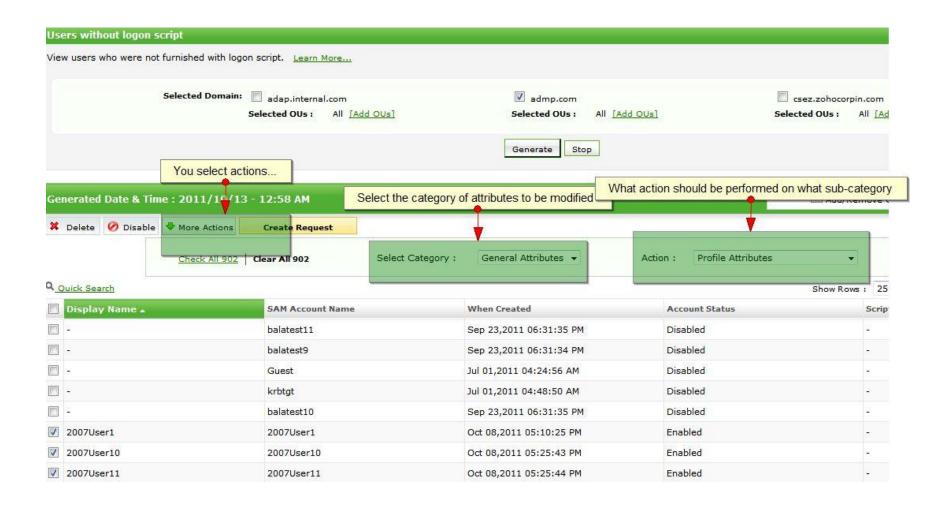
How ADManager Plus offers a solution to User Account Re-Provisioning needs:

ADManager Plus adopts a situation-driven approach...

- Quite often you do not know the user accounts you have to modify: a need arises and you find yourself querying the Active Directory to track a set of user accounts. So, ADManager Plus prepackages all the reports that you'd probably need! Almost all the scenarios are covered!
- Equips every report with "ACCOUNT MODIFICATION" capability!

Example: See how you could solve the following issue using ADManager Plus:

- Find out the user accounts that do not have logon script associated and associate a logon script.
 - o First, pull out the report matching your situation: Here, it is "Users without Logon Script" available under User Reports section.
 - o In the report, there are options to change the user account attributes. Make use of them. Provide logon script path!
 - O Not just logon script path, almost every user account property could be modified right from the report!





AD User Provisioning & De-provisioning

How even HR personnel can provision user accounts using ADManager Plus!

User Account Provisioning/ De-provisioning Challenges:

- Running from pillar to post...
 - One needs to scuttle from a console to another console in order to provision or de-provision a user account completely.
 - When you need to carry out provisioning/de-provisioning in bulk, the problems compound further.
- Error-prone Entitlement Provisioning...
 - o With different users having different access requirements, it's certainly not easy to provision user accounts.
 - o This method is error-prone.
- Need for standards and regulation
 - Since you are dealing with access requirements of a user account, this task should be regulated in order to comply with the new
 IT regulatory laws.
- Provisioning somehow seems like an HR task...
 - HR department is the one in constant touch with new hire. The teams hiring staff know their requirement better than IT helpdesk or AD admin
 - Provisioning is one area, which can be handed over to HR or individual teams, thereby freeing up AD administration team for more vital AD Service management tasks.
 - But provisioning is also a crucial AD administrative task, which provides users the access to company resources. Can it be given to non-technical staff? Is there any safe mechanism to do that?

ADManager Plus Solutions to Provisioning/ De-provisioning Needs:

ADManager Plus offers convenient solutions for all your provisioning and de-provisioning needs. It provides:

- One-Stop Provisioning: Provision right from Exchange to LCS/ OCS properties from one single window!
- One-Stop De-provisioning: Delete everything from home folders to mailboxes when a user leaves all from a single form!
- ADManager Plus can turn HR personnel into AD administrators!!! Use "Templates" and "Provisioning Roles" to enable even technically-naïve to perform tasks such as User Provisioning!
- Workflow: Stay in control over user provisioning even after delegating them! Implement a review-approval process.

Template-based User Provisioning

ADManager Plus decreases the burden involved in Active Directory provisioning by offering a unique shortcut. It introduces a new style of user provisioning – Template-Based User Provisioning – with the help of its "User Account Provisioning Templates". These templates make user provisioning a rather easy point-n-click activity unlike the painstaking manual configuration process. Additionally, they also standardize the user provisioning process in an organization.

Understand the situation...

To better appreciate ADManager Plus's Template-based User Creation

While it requires long man-hours to create user accounts in Active Directory manually, it would definitely take "man-years" provisioning them with required entitlements and properties. Why? Check out the situation at hand:

1. One user but too many applications and entitlements to be configured. Consumes a lot of time.

In conventional AD administration, you need to scamper between Active Directory and...

Exchange Management Console/Shell: To configure mailboxes for users.

File Server: To configure home folders and roaming profiles.

LCS/OCS: To configure general properties of user's LCS accounts.

2. Not all user accounts are alike and that makes bulk user provisioning even more time-consuming and painstaking.

In an organization, depending on their job responsibilities...

some users might be given mailboxes, some might not.

some might require terminal access, some might not.

some might be required to use OCS, some might not, etc.

Technically, even if you decide to use bulk user provisioning script, you would be required to have 5 different scripts for 5 different user needs! That would be confusing. If done manually, it could be a very painstaking process.

3. Need for standardization.

One can't afford to make mistakes in user provisioning process, esp., in this age of IT regulations. There should be some means to make it foolproof and implement organizational user provisioning policy.

User Provisioning Templates: The ADManager Plus's answer

ADManager Plus offers a simple yet precise solution -- "User Provisioning Templates". In a nutshell, you can store all the property configuration and entitlement details of a user account as a template.

With all the configurations you need to set up for a user account already prepackaged and ready to be assigned, you save a great deal of time when creating a user account. You only provide minimum required data such as name and logon name, and apply the configuration details via a template! That's it!

Bulk User Provisioning Simplified with User Provisioning Templates:

Allow us to explain with a scenario. Say, there are 20 different job entitlements in a company and assume it amounts to 20 different types of user account configuration settings in Active Directory.

In ADManager Plus...

- Create a user provisioning template for every set of account configuration. Give them descriptive names. (Example, "Mailbox-enabled User Template" for users entitled to mailboxes.)
- Whenever a need arises to create certain group of user accounts, apply respective provisioning template.
- Import CSV file that contains name and logon name of user accounts to be created.
- Push the button "Create Users"

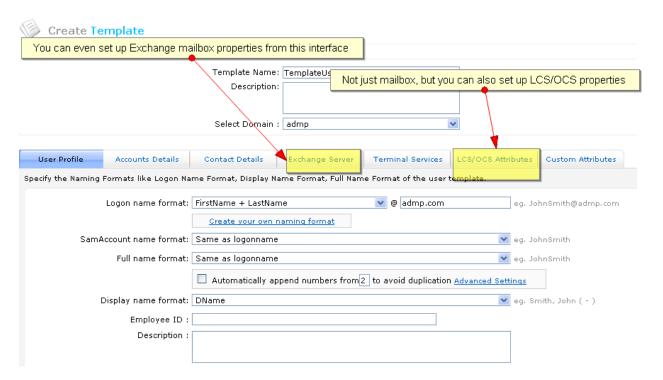
A bulk of user accounts, with properties as specified in the template, would be spewed out in no time.

Did you notice the clarity in the process...the segregation and standards?

User Provisioning Templates to build Organizational User Provisioning Policy:

Since "User Provisioning Templates" allow you to determine how a user account should be configured, you can build and implement user provisioning policies with them – standardize the entire process.

This is how a user creation template looks like:



AD Delegation: Delegate Tasks...Not the Control or Authority!

How ADManager Plus "Role Based Delegation Model" makes an AD admin even out of a 12-year-old!

Today's AD Delegation Needs...

In today's fast-paced world, AD experts look for options to delegate tasks such as user provisioning to HR personnel or non-technical team members. While such an idea looked far-fetched a few years ago, it is very much possible today, especially with software products such as ADManager Plus.

ADManager Plus offers a safe and effective delegation model with which you can make a technician – whether technical or technically naïve – work like an AD administrator! Yet, you retain the full control of the task and the delegated technician. What's more, all the access privileges a delegated agent needs are bypassed through the product; so there is no question of elevating rights for him in Active Directory!

Challenges in AD Delegation:

A distributed Active Directory environment is always a challenge to maintain. Often, in such environments, it becomes necessary to apportion the administrative responsibilities to several Active Directory administrators or dedicated helpdesk.

However, there are several deterrent factors that make you think twice before you delegate an AD task:

- 1. Time consuming & Painstaking: You have to work with ACL editor, painstakingly assigning permissions, so as to not overprovide someone.
- 2. Losing your bearings: It's easy to get lost in the maze of ACLs. You might not have a clue as to which right /permission applies to which administrator or helpdesk personnel. You wouldn't want to have a bunch of user accounts in AD with access permission more than what their position requires.
- 3. Unintended Elevation of Access Privilege: It's a rarity, but might happen, mainly with User Account Control attribute.
 - Consider this: You want to allow a technician create user accounts but never the ability to enable/ disable them. Since, user account control attribute bestows both the capabilities, it is difficult to achieve the demarcation of duties that you wish for.
- 4. Fear of losing control/ things going wrong: All of us have this innate quality of "not trusting others". Well, we are right most of the times! It's not easy to get a task done just like you would want it.

What we all wish for?

- 1. **Quick and Easy Delegation Model:** An interface which is easy to work with while delegating right or supervising them, and most importantly, make the delegated technician's life easier.
- 2. **Noninvasive:** A delegation model where we do not have to elevate user rights/permissions in Active Directory.
- 3. **Control:** A provision to stay in control of the delegated task. The intention is to share the administrative burden, not to lose control over the delegated task. A delegated task should be completed the way you would want it.
- 4. **Ability to make AD administrators out of technically uninitiated!** Don't we all crave for a mechanism that would allow individual teams or HR personnel to take care of user provisioning?
- 5. **Bespoke Administrative Roles:** When one is pushed to make the best out of available resources, a customizable administrative role definition becomes very important. You need to create technicians who could play different roles in different domains.
- 6. **Audit Trail:** A neat and clear auditing trail of what the delegated technician does needs to be maintained; accountability plays an important role in security compliance.

ADManager Plus Solutions to Delegation Challenges:

Challenge	Solution
Fear of Elevating AD Rights While Delegating	ADManager Plus Delegation is confined only to the product.
	 In order to allow delegation and user right elevation, the user access is proxied via the ADManager Plus service account.
	 There is no need to elevate user rights in AD.
Making a Technician Do What is Intended of Him	ADManager Plus allows you to define "Roles".
	 Using "Role Based Task Control Templates", you can allow a technician access only to those product sections that he needs to carry out the delegated tasks.
	 This offers supreme control over what a technician can do and what he cannot.
Staying in Control of the Delegated Task	ADManager Plus offers Workflow Engine.
	 Through this simple review-approve process, one can ensure the delegated task is carried out without any hiccups.
	Up to four levels of review can be set up.

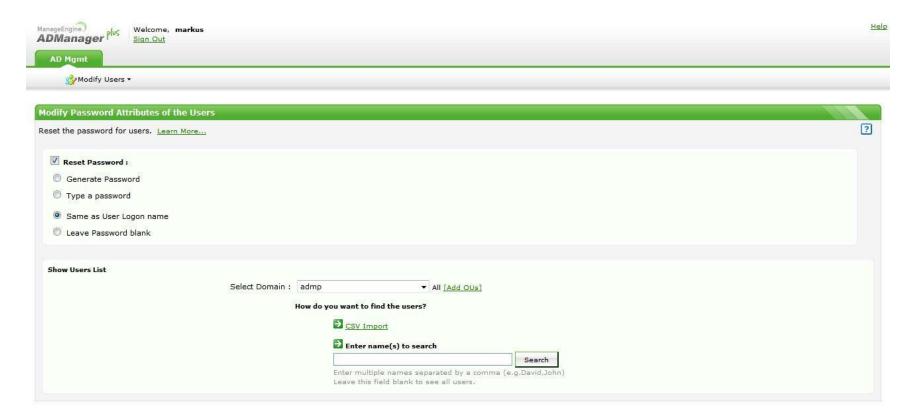
Granularity in Delegation	
	ADManager Plus allows OU-Based AD Delegation
	 One helpdesk technician can play different roles in different domains.
	 Example: A technician can provision user accounts in one domain; reset passwords for an OU of another domain; and generate reports in another domain.
Turning an HR member into a User Account Provisioning Manager!	 Combine "User Provisioning Templates" and "Role Based Task Control Templates" in order to make even technically-naïve employee completely provision user accounts, including mailboxes and LCS/ OCS attributes!

Helpdesk Roles and Task Controller Template:

			ciated with this role can reset for users in AD using	
D Management	AD Reports	✓ Administration		
	User Management	Bulk User Management		
Com	nputer Management	Create Users User Attribute Privileges	Modify Users ?	User Templates
	Contact Management Group Management ecurity Management	Create Single User Create Bulk Users	Modify Single User Modify Bulk Users	Create Templates Modify Templates Delete Templates
		Bulk User Modification		Deny Bulk Modification Deny CS
		▼ General Attributes	Exchange Attributes	Terminal Services
		▼ Reset Password □ □ Group Attributes □ □ Unlock Users □ Move Users □ □ Delete Users □ □ Account Attributes □ □ Address/Organization Attributes □ □ Naming Attributes □ □ Profile Attributes □ □ Move HomeFolders □ Dial-in □ Contact Attributes □ □ Modify CustomAttributes □ □ Modify User WorkStation	Create MailBox Modify SMTP Address Set MailBox Rights Delivery Options Naming Attributes Exchange Features Delivery Restrictions Storage limits Exchange Offline Address Book	Profile Attributes Remote Control Attributes Session Attributes Environment Attributes

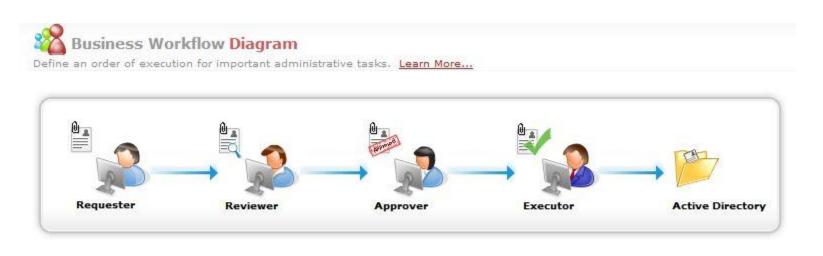
Save Role Cancel

From the picture above, you might have guessed that we are creating a "helpdesk role", which allows an agent to do nothing more than resetting password. Now, the agent's UI would bear only the elements that allow him to carry the password reset task. Following is the delegated agent's perspective:



Workflow Engine for Task Regulation:

In case, you are hesitant to delegate mission-critical AD administrative tasks, you can implement a review-approval process for them; ADManager Plus comes with an inbuilt workflow engine, which can define the execution path for crucial administrative tasks.



Edit Workflow

In the workflow define above, every time a "requester" raises an administrative task ticket, it would be reviewed by a "reviewer", who would then pass on his recommendations to the next level, the approver. Once approve, the last level in the task workflow, the executor, completes the requested action.

While supervision reduces margin for errors, this method also provides you another advantage: ticket-based task management. A repository maintains all the requests and approval tickets for a given task, making way for accountability and security compliance.

Active Directory Automation

In everyday AD management, there are several tasks that you'd want to automate. In fact, tasks such as Inactive Account Management, is perfect case for automation. Accounts that have been inactive in AD, especially user accounts, are like chinks in the armor. They can serve as safe passage for disgruntled ex-employees. So, it would do good to periodically scan for such accounts and disable them.

While all this sounds so good, there are certain setbacks. AD Automation too has a few challenges, which need to be addressed well.

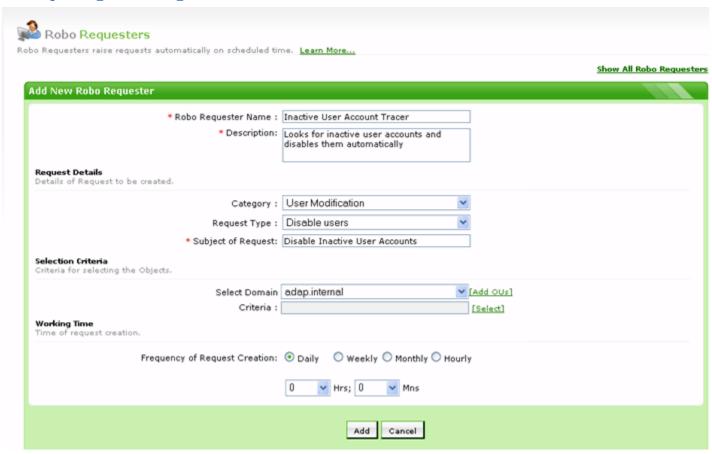
Challenges involved:

• The Friendly Fire: An automated task might produce undesired results when configured wrongly and results could be devastating. For example, let us consider the inactive account management. Now, what if someone wrongly configured the scheduler to "delete" inactive user accounts rather than disable them? Well, for all you know, you might be spending time on restoring a user account that belonged to someone who had been on long leave!

ADManager Plus Approach to AD Automation

ADManager Plus offers automation for certain crucial tasks, but it never goes for complete automation. It employs its inbuilt workflow (configurable by you) to introduce "review pit-stops" for the automated task.

A screenshot depicting ADManager Plus's task automator



In the above setup, the scheduler runs once daily, sweeping the entire domain for inactive user accounts, disabling them whenever it comes across such accounts.

Active Directory Reports: The heart of data-centric AD Management

Information is vital in order to maintain an infrastructure and secure it, and Active Directory certainly is no exception in this regard. Active Directory Reporting is a discipline in itself. In order to increase the efficacy of your Active Directory implementation and manage it well, you need to first understand its infrastructure thoroughly, including each and every component involved in it.

Challenges involved in Active Directory Reporting:

- Queries Galore: Since there are no native and inbuilt tools to generate reports, one has to resort to queries and scripting to extract reports.
- Requires Sound Knowledge in Scripting: While writing simple queries can be fun, scripting might be dreaded when the reporting needs become complex. Example: To find out "Nested Group Membership", writing a script to follow all the nested group loops is like designing a labyrinth.
- Reporting Across Domains: Another sore point is extracting reports covering multiple domains involved in your organization.
- Hunt Never Ends! True! You never know what report you will need and when! So, either you have to be an expert at scripting or should have a clairvoyance to save the queries beforehand, which will save you a great deal of time!

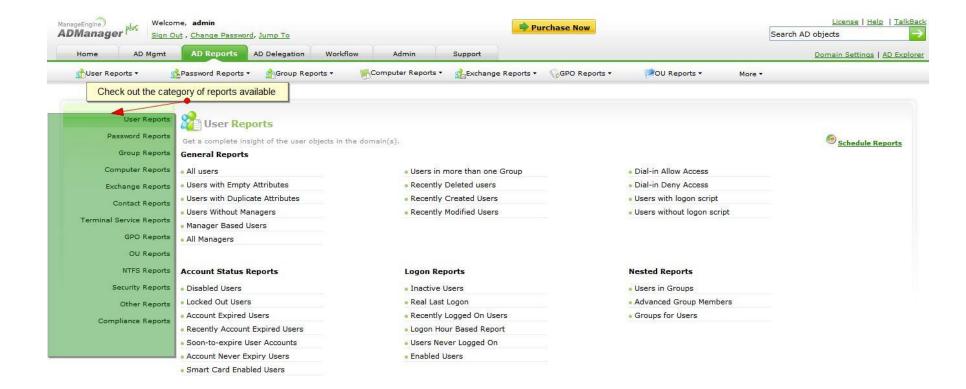
ADManager Plus Solutions to Active Directory Reporting:

• Simple! Thorough and detailed "Prepackaging" of most of the Active Directory reports you will ever need in your line of duty!

What's on offer?

ADManager Plus hosts a comprehensive list of Active Directory reports on all the crucial and business-critical objects in your Active Directory implementation. These reports are:

- Completely customizable: You can decide what rows should be added/removed.
- Instant: All you need to do is lift your finger to click the mouse!
- Schedulable & Email-Deliverable: Schedule report extraction time and have it generated to your email automatically.
- Exportable in multiple formats including CSV, Excel, PDF, HTML, CSVDE.



IMPORTANT LINKS

Download Fully Functional Trial Version of ADManager Plus:

http://www.manageengine.com/products/ad-manager/download.html

Watch the Online Demonstration of ADManager Plus:

http://demo.admanagerplus.com/home.do

Request a personalized product demo:

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