



Christian Outreach College Brisbane Uses DSMETER and DSRAZOR to Improve Network Control and Account Creation Processes

COCB Attains Greater Control of Network and Drastically Accelerates Student Account Creation Time

Background:

Christian Outreach College Brisbane (COCB) is an independent day school in Queensland, Australia whose students range from grades K-12 (aka preparatory to matriculation). Recently, COCB's Network Administrators began researching ways to safeguard the school's network environment. The IT team needed to eliminate inappropriate server usage and block certain threats to the network. Additional day to day operations that required attention included assigning permissions to staff files and automating the account creation process.

Visual Click Software's DSMETER for NetWare and DSRAZOR for eDirectory enabled this organization to meet all of its network security and storage objectives and reduce its account creation time from days to mere hours.

Challenge: Gaining Network Control

With a student population of more than 1,500, COCB recognized that insufficient control over its network assets could cause numerous problems. The Network Administrators required capabilities for easily identifying potentially harmful files. "We didn't know what was going on with students on the network," says Ben Davis, Computer Systems Manager for the college. "We didn't know what files they were opening."

The IT team also sought a surefire solution for blocking downloads (for example, MP3 and video files) with content that is inappropriate for school-age children as well as files that are storage intensive that could slow down the network and render it vulnerable to viruses.

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In addition, Davis's team was fully aware that the network's health would remain compromised if they couldn't track software executables. "We want to know what the students are trying to execute," says Davis. His department recognized the licensing issues and virus concerns associated with certain types of software executables.

The network team also realized the need to effectively monitor for users without appropriate permissions who might attempt to access and modify staff files. "We wanted to know who was opening files," says Davis. "If someone outside the office opens a staff file, we want to know. If a student tries to open a directory where exams are stored, we want to know."

The final challenge the school faced revolved around student account creation. In the past, the IT team used a variety of free utilities to create eDirectory accounts for the entire student body. This manual, labor-intensive approach proved "quite difficult" and prevented the team from "creating accounts on the fly," explains Davis. This process needed to be performed for all levels in the K-12 school on an annual basis. And so, for several days at the beginning of each school year, the network team dedicated all of its resources to the task of creating student accounts.

Action: Investing in DSMETER and DSRAZOR

A consultant specializing in Directory Services solutions advised COCB on product types that might address its challenges. Following an evaluation, the organization invested in both DSMETER and DSRAZOR in January 2005. The school purchased DSMETER for NetWare to track network security and activity and DSRAZOR for eDirectory to automatically create student accounts.

"Implementation was straightforward," says Davis. "The documentation was easy to follow, and there were no problems installing." The only challenges the group faced were in creating and configuring custom reports. However, Davis and his team worked with Visual Click's Customer Support team to rapidly address these issues. "Once or twice, we sent a request to Visual Click, asking how to modify student imports," he adds. "We have spoken with them a few times, and they are very helpful. They always solve the problem."

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Results: Tracking the Network and Accelerating Account Creation

Since investing in DSMETER and DSRAZOR software, Christian Outreach College Brisbane has met all of its original objectives. More importantly, the IT team at COCB achieved a newfound confidence that it has gained full control over the school's network assets and addressed all security and storage risks.

Asked to name the primary benefit of using DSMETER, Davis replies, "peace of mind". He adds: "We can run reports to see what files have been saved to the servers. We can check on a random basis. If we have a student that has done something inappropriate, we can run a report on that student and ensure the issue is addressed. We couldn't do that before."

Thanks to DSMETER, the COCB's Network Administrators are secure in the knowledge that their system storage is used appropriately and efficiently and that the IT team can address potential security issues immediately and effectively.

Fortunately, the school has never experienced any security problems involving staff files. Now, its Network Administrators can track network behavior related to these assets, thereby guarding against such breaches in the future. "The good thing is that I can look in the staff directory and run a report to see if anything has been accessed inappropriately or at a strange time," Davis says. "We now have greater control of the network."

Last, but hardly least, the network team has noticed a remarkable shift in departmental efficiency when it comes to the account creation process. According to Davis, "With DSRAZOR, we can automatically create the accounts. Because we have to do it every year in bulk, the time savings are enormous, and it works every time. There are no errors."

Davis remarks that automating the student account creation process has reduced the time necessary to perform the procedure from a matter of days to mere hours. DSRAZOR also provides the IT team with greater control over student accounts than was possible prior to investing in the software. "We can go in and search for things in eDirectory that we couldn't search for previously, such as who hasn't logged in to their account at all," he adds. With this, we can determine which accounts to disable or delete."

"It's probably the best software for eDirectory that I have seen," says Davis.

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Among the benefits of this newly automated student account creation process are the resources and time saved. With DSRAZOR as part of COCB's toolkit, the network team can concentrate on high-level projects (for instance, the annual, campus wide computer hardware rollout and configuration process). "Having that extra two days to reconfigure hardware is a better use of my time," notes Davis.

Ben Davis sums up his experience with the Visual Click product line thusly: "It's probably the best software for eDirectory that I have seen. I have tried out a few others, but Visual Click's products do the job better."

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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.

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