Featured Products

Vantus Bank Accelerates Help Desk Turnaround and Cuts Compliance Costs Using DSRAZOR and DSMETER

Incident Handling Times Cut by 60-70%; Reporting Time Reduced from Days to Minutes

Background:

Vantus Bank, which is based in Sioux City, Iowa, needed a solution that would enhance the effectiveness of its Help Desk staff and address demanding compliance issues that were consuming a lot of time and money. The company's investments in Visual Click Software's DSRAZOR and DSMETER products have enabled it to meet these objectives in a compelling fashion.

"Invaluable" is how the company's IT leaders describe Visual Click Software's solutions. By reducing Help Desk call time by 60-70%, the company has enhanced productivity, employee satisfaction and customer service. Moreover, it has cut the time spent on vital reporting activities from days to minutes. Considering the high demands of ongoing Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) and Sarbanes-Oxley (Sarbox) audits, the bank has significantly reduced its overall cost of compliance.

Situation: Seeking Help for the Help Desk and Answers for the Auditors

Terry Christensen, Systems Analyst and Network Administrator for Vantus Bank, was seeking a three-pronged solution. He sought a way to delegate Help Desk activities to enhance the Operations team's effectiveness; software to address the onerous compliance requirements created by Sarbanes-Oxley; and a system that would enable the IT team to monitor access to network files.

First, the bank wanted a Help Desk solution that would enable its Operations team to manage password issues and printing functions without involving senior IT Administrators. This would increase the department's productivity and allow senior team members to focus on tasks that represented higher value to the bank.

VANTUS
BANK

"The service team was very helpful and made it a good experience"
Terry Christensen of Vantus Bank.

Featured Products

DS METER
for NetWare

DS RAZOR
for Windows

DS RAZOR
for eDirectory

DS RAZOR
for GroupWise

To protect network security, the IT team needed to restrict administrator-level access to as few people as possible. While it wasn't necessary for Help Desk staff to become Server Administrators, they required administrator-level access to perform their operational duties. "We wanted them to change passwords and unlock locked IDs," says Christensen. "We needed to distribute the work."

The bank's blended environment of Novell, Microsoft and Citrix servers further complicated matters. The seemingly simple task of changing a password necessitated running through a series of screens and drop-down menus associated with these distinct platforms. As a result, it took from six to seven minutes to change a password. This lengthy process created frustration among customer-facing employees, such as tellers and loan officers, and their customers – not to mention the Help Desk professionals who were pulled away from higher-level tasks to handle these issues.

Second, the bank needed more efficient ways of handling audits. As a publicly traded banking institution, Vantus is required to undergo quarterly Sarbox audits, an annual Sarbox audit and an annual FFIEC audit. Vantus needed a fast yet effective way to generate the reports and analyses required by its auditors.

The problem? The process of gathering information for the auditor took days to complete. Vantus needed key reporting functionality. The bank needed to quickly determine IDs that had or had not been used in recent months. The auditors wanted to view reports on ID enablement and disablement. The bank also needed to document group membership, password length and bad password attempts. Unfortunately, such reporting was exceedingly difficult. The IT group even had to conduct screen prints for all of the individual users on the network.

"It was primarily a compliance issue," says Karl Rasmussen, Information and Controls Specialist for the bank. "In the past, for Sarbox, we had to provide information on the status of certain IDs, but we couldn't do that very quickly. It was an extremely time consuming and costly effort."

Third, the IT team was responsible for monitoring access to certain network files. Some of these files were related to Sarbox, but others were merely used by executive management. Since spreadsheets interfaced with financial systems, IT had no way of knowing who was accessing and updating these files. Therefore, file monitoring became a final key objective.

VANTUS BANK

> "This has dramatically increased the speed of getting users back online and working," says Derek Anderson, Operations Coordinator. "We are very pleased with it. It's a great improvement over what we were doing in the past."

Action: Choosing DSRAZOR and DSMETER

Recognizing the challenges ahead, Vantus Bank conducted a search of various types of Help Desk software. The IT team needed to manage 14 bank branches, including the corporate office, supporting approximately 250 users. While Vantus found plenty of incident-tracking software on the market, only one company also offered strong capabilities to address a mix of Novell and Microsoft servers. That company was Visual Click Software.

In February of 2006, Vantus chose DSRAZOR for eDirectory, DSRAZOR for GroupWise and DSRAZOR for Windows for its IT solutions. "Nothing compared to the functionality of DSRAZOR in terms of working in a blended environment," says Christensen. "That's where our problem lied."

The implementation was as straightforward as the training. "The service team was very helpful and made it a good experience," adds Christensen. "I spent 45 minutes on the phone with them. They took me through a quick training course on how to customize their software – what to look for and so forth. Everything is very dynamic. It is a point and-click tool that is easily customized. Once I went through the course and had a few questions answered, I was on my way. They even offered to customize the program for me, though I decided to do it myself."

Later in the year, the bank purchased DSMETER for NetWare. Given the heavy compliance requirements the company faced, this product would help address its file monitoring challenges in a fast and effective way.

Results: Payoffs Across the Board

Vantus Bank saw an immediate payoff on its investments in Visual Click Software products. In the Help Desk area, the Operations team can now manage passwords with one easy-to-use application instead of three difficult ones. Team members who, in the past, spent six to seven minutes on the phone addressing a password problem or printer administration issue can now handle such an issue in two minutes or less. Because DSRAZOR provides a single, consistent means of navigating the relevant directories, a support person no longer has to change or reset passwords in multiple applications. "They are not jumping all over the place anymore," says Christensen. "You've got customizable options. We have been able to make that work for operations so they have only one screen they deal with."

Featured Products

DSMETER for NetWare

DSRAZOR for Windows

DSRAZOR for eDirectory

DSRAZOR for GroupWise

Considering that the bank typically fields dozens of password and ID issues per week, lowering incident handling time from six or seven minutes to two minutes represents a significant benefit.

"We consider internal users to be our customers," says Derek Anderson, Operations Coordinator for the bank. "This has dramatically increased the speed of getting users back online and working. We are very pleased with it. It's a great improvement over what we were doing in the past."

DSRAZOR also allows Vantus smarter work distribution. Having a fast and secure means of handling their issues without upsetting network security protocols enables senior IT professionals to focus on their own key challenges and hand off password management to the Operations team. At the same time, the Operations team is freed up to handle other important matters because it is spending far less time dealing with these problems.

In addition to those time-saving benefits, the bank discovered that its support people can now work remotely, which was impossible prior to investing in DSRAZOR. For example, DSRAZOR enables a support technician to be on-call from home and handle problems remotely through the bank's virtual private network. This newfound flexibility has clear implications in terms of customer and job satisfaction. Off-hours support capabilities have been improved while reducing the impact to the support staff. "If we tried to take away DSRAZOR, we would have an uprising," says Christensen.

The third set of benefits the bank realized revolved around reporting. Typically, one of the bank's auditors either picks a set of users and requests particular information on them or requests a list of all users who have had their passwords enabled or disabled. Before Vantus used DSRAZOR, gathering and printing out information on each user would take three to four hours. Now, this process takes only 15 minutes, through the production of a single report.

Clearly, there are payoffs associated with being in control and in compliance. "Having DSRAZOR reduces the likelihood that we are going to be out of compliance with user administration," adds Rasmussen. "It is very unlikely we will have IDs that shouldn't be there. Now, we do a quick self-audit every quarter. We use DSRAZOR to print out reports from those self-audits and make sure everything looks good. The more self-auditing we do, the more quickly we can get through the standard auditing process. This reduces the cost of compliance."

"If we tried to take away DSRAZOR, we would have an uprising," says Christensen. "I guarantee that."

Featured Products

DS**METER**
for NetWare

DS**RAZOR**
for Windows

DS**RAZOR**
for eDirectory

DS**RAZOR**
for GroupWise

VANTUS BANK

"It enables operations people to do their jobs better and faster while allowing us to stay focused on higher level issues."

Finally, the bank has benefited from the file-monitoring functionality it gained through Visual Click's DSMETER for NetWare. Prior to having this product, the IT team had no way to monitor every file that needed to be monitored for compliance purposes (which included Sarbox files as well as other files important to executive management).

"Before DSMETER, we just couldn't do it," says Rasmussen. "We were out of compliance with Sarbox because we had no way to monitor. Now, we monitor certain files on the network on a weekly and, sometimes, quarterly basis to prove inappropriate changes aren't being made. Again, it is saving us money associated with compliance and ensuring that we are in compliance."

"'Invaluable' is a word that comes to mind," says Christensen when asked about how he would describe the importance of Visual Click Software's products to his company's operations. "It enables operations people to do their jobs better and faster while allowing us to stay focused on higher level issues. On that one factor alone, it pays for itself many times over. But it has also been critical in terms of reporting, turning two days of work into 15 minutes. That was huge. We were ecstatic."

Featured Products

DSMETER for NetWare
DSRAZOR for Windows
DSRAZOR for eDirectory
DSRAZOR for GroupWise

Featured Products

DSMETER
for NetWare

DSRAZOR
for Windows

DSRAZOR
for eDirectory

DSRAZOR
for GroupWise

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.