



Quest Software Achieves Compliance and Improves Efficiency with Quest® ActiveRoles Server

The Challenge

Creating and terminating user accounts in a timely and consistent manner is an incredible challenge for global organizations. Every time a new employee is hired, a current employee leaves the company or simply changes departments, there are a multitude of IS tasks that must be performed. Accounts are created or terminated, mailboxes are created or reassigned, SMTP aliases are generated, distribution list memberships are updated, directory information is updated, access to applications is granted or revoked and so on. In addition to the simple economics of how much time it can take IS staff to perform these tasks, manual processes are susceptible to break down and cause security concerns. Anything from user error to poor communication, a lack of training or inappropriate access rights can derail a manual process. With the advent of Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (SOX) and the intense scrutiny it places on access to business sensitive applications, organizations can no longer rely on a myriad of manual provisioning processes to maintain compliance.

The Quest Solution

"ActiveRoles Server, in conjunction with the Quick Connect integration technology, has allowed us to completely automate user account provisioning and remove the threat of human error, while improving IS efficiency by integrating with our proprietary Human Resource (HR) system," Carol Fawcett, CIO, Quest Software.

Quest® ActiveRoles Server has immensely improved the provisioning process at Quest. For example, when a new "hire" is created in the HR system, Quick Connect parses the Comma Separated Value output record from the HR system and maps the data to Active Directory (AD) attributes and ActiveRoles Server virtual attributes. Finally, ActiveRoles Server creates the user account mailbox, adds to distribution lists, grants file shares, printer locations, application access and so on. When a user is terminated, the same process is used to disable the user account and related permissions immediately and automatically.

Quest utilizes ActiveRoles Server to assist with additional business processes related to the hire, termination or transfer of employees. For example, when a new hire is processed, an e-mail is sent to the helpdesk, initiating hardware deployment (i.e. PCs, monitors, mobile phones, PDAs, etc.). Another e-mail is sent to the hiring manager, confirming the start date and prompting them to follow through a number of approval workflow processes. Finally, a third e-mail is sent to the new hire, welcoming them to Quest and providing them with useful new hire information. All of these e-mail notifications are created and sent automatically.

Quest also utilizes the Dynamic Group functionality of ActiveRoles Server. Quick Connect has been configured to synchronize over 14 additional data fields (i.e. cost centers, department codes, geographic regions, etc.), including some that do not map directly to AD attributes. Attributes that do not map directly onto AD attributes are held in ActiveRoles Server virtual attributes, eliminating the need to extend the AD schema or introduce yet another directory such as Active Directory Application Mode (ADAM). Dynamic Groups are groups whose membership is based on queries of AD attributes or ActiveRoles Server virtual attributes (i.e. 'Office.US.AlisoViejo' is a dynamic group based on the user's office field being equal to 'Aliso Viejo'). If the attribute in the Dynamic Group membership query changes, users are automatically added or removed.

Since this data is updated from HR, as often as every 10 minutes, membership in Dynamic Groups is always accurate. "Dynamic Groups keeps groups accurate without IS doing anything," Thomas Wismer, supervisor IS operations, Quest Software.

Overview

"Maintaining SOX compliance with ActiveRoles Server has been vastly simplified. Automating the rights required for each provisioning task through ActiveRoles Server, has lead to fewer explicit rights being required by IS staff - further simplifying SOX reporting and increasing general security."

- Carol Fawcett,
Chief Information Officer (CIO),
Quest Software

Headquarters

Aliso Viejo, California

Critical Needs

A solution to help achieve SOX compliance to maximize the efficiency of IS staff and to automate the provisioning process

Solution

Quest® ActiveRoles Server and Quick Connect

Results

- Decreased help desk calls
- Increased productivity and efficiency of IS staff
- Decreased provisioning time from days to minutes
- Simplified compliance related to regulating and reporting on user access to company resources

Lastly, Quest uses the ActiveRoles Server Web Interface self-service function, which allows users to control certain data. For example, Quest allows their users to login to the Web site and change mobile phone numbers, home numbers and notes fields so they can stay in touch with other Quest users when needed. Quest can allow this, while enforcing users to conform to consistent standards and policies.

“With the use of the Web interface, the number of help desk calls we get have decreased. Now, users can change their own data anytime they want, within the parameters we set,” Wayne Smiley, manager IS operations, Quest Software.

The Bottom Line

“ActiveRoles Server and Quick Connect has freed up headcount that used to be dedicated to managing account provisioning. The time taken to process a new hire ticket has gone from hours, or even days, to within a 10 minute cycle of ActiveRoles Server processing,” said Fawcett.

ActiveRoles Server has made the hire, termination and transfer process repeatable rules-based and self-documenting. It also informs management of critical information, such as new hires and terminations, so they know exactly what has been done. ActiveRoles Server and Quick Connect have liberated directory data that was previously locked away in a proprietary system and automated the synchronization of this data into AD. Now, when a reporting structure or title change is initiated by HR, the updated data is fed directly into AD and the Exchange Global Address List (GAL) through ActiveRoles Server. The updated information is then made visible, usable and actionable to employees within an hour of its origination. An HR change also kicks-off a re-provisioning process that automatically changes the access rights of that user within minutes. Overall, ActiveRoles Server has improved productivity and efficiency for Quest.

About Quest Software, Inc.

Quest Software, Inc. delivers innovative products that help organizations get more performance and productivity from their applications, databases and Windows infrastructure. Through a deep expertise in IT operations and a continued focus on what works best, Quest helps more than 18,000 customers worldwide meet higher expectations for enterprise IT. Quest Software can be found in offices around the globe and at www.quest.com

Benefits

- Improves Service Level Agreements (SLAs), by creating accounts within minutes of being added to an HR system.
- Automates terminations to occur in, or near, real-time. The access denial for terminated employees occurs without IS involvement and is automatic.
- Allows data in the Exchange GAL to be 100 percent synchronized with the data in a custom built proprietary HR system that is not Active Directory aware. Eliminates inconsistencies and costly confusion over which data source is authoritative.
- Automates the creation and removal of accounts from other enterprise applications (i.e. ERP, CRM, e-Mail, etc.). This reduces the amount of time spent in the “move/add/change” process, making the Quest IS staff more efficient with less people.
- Eliminates human error in entering critical data into IT systems. IS staff no longer have to “know” what and where, in order to correctly provision users. This also makes users more productive.
- Allows end users to “self administer” data IS allows (i.e. mobile numbers, home addresses, etc.); therefore reducing helpdesk calls, but user data is still controlled by IS via rules and policies.
- Relies on a familiar MS Microsoft infrastructure, such as Internet Information Services (IIS) and SQL, and is administered through the Microsoft Management Console (MMC) interface. This means less training time, quicker deployment and faster adoption among existing IS staff.