

UToronto: Users who have never logged in before can't start servers

Status: Draft

Overview

Azure and University of Toronto is using Azure File as home directory storage, and needs the chowning initcontainer. We had removed it earlier, causing new server startups for users who had never logged in before to fail. Restoring it just for utoronto fixed it.

What Happened

No comments added

Resolution

No comments added

Where we got lucky

1. We had an engineer in the US time who checked freshdesk accidentally (otherwise this would've persisted for at least 3 full days)

What Went Well?

1. We were able to restore service pretty quickly once the report was acknowledged

What Didn't Go So Well?

1. Our alerting didn't catch this, so we had to wait for the community to catch it and report it to us. This also slowed down our investigative work, because we don't know exactly where the 500 error was from
2. Our logs had no mention of this particular username, and it is unclear why

Action Items

- Understand why this didn't trigger our server startup failure alert <https://github.com/2i2c-org/infrastructure/issues/6888>

OWNER OF REVIEW PROCESS

[Yuvi Panda](#)

IMPACT TIME

Oct 3 at 09:11 to Oct 3 at 09:34

DURATION

23m 24s

*All times listed in this report are in Pacific Time (US & Canada).

Timeline

Oct 2, 2025

8:00 AM <https://github.com/2i2c-org/infrastructure/pull/6873> was merged, removing initContainers doing chown from our infrastructure following rollout of jupyterhub-home-nfs everywhere

Oct 3, 2025

7:00 AM <https://2i2c.freshdesk.com/a/tickets/4038> comes in, reporting that some users have trouble starting servers with '500 Internal Server' errors since the previous day

9:11 AM Acknowledged as an outage and created pagerduty P1 incident

Triggered by Yuvi Panda through Slack.
Description: UToronto: Users who have never logged in before can't start servers ([View Message](#))
[INCIDENT #1538](#)
UToronto: Users who have never logged in before can't start servers

9:15 AM Checking hub logs, both existing and in jupyterhub.log on the persistent dir for the username of the user who had issues turns up nothing. Issue with login service is considered - it is an 'internal server error', but without clear idea of which service it's coming from.

9:20 AM An engineer is able to recreate the issue by deleting their own home directory and trying to start a server (details in <https://github.com/2i2c-org/infrastructure/issues/6888>). This was attempted because of intuition + remembering that there were recent changes in initContainers.

9:30 AM <https://github.com/2i2c-org/infrastructure/pull/6887> was deployed locally, restoring service. This was communicated to the community

9:34 AM **Resolved by Yuvi Panda through the website.**
[INCIDENT #1538](#)
UToronto: Users who have never logged in before can't start servers
