How ONTAP uses local users and groups

ONTAP 9

NetApp
January 31, 2023

Table of Contents

How ONTAP uses local users and groups

Local users and groups concepts

You should know what local users and groups are, and some basic information about them, before determining whether to configure and use local users and groups in your environment.

- **Local user**

  A user account with a unique security identifier (SID) that has visibility only on the storage virtual machine (SVM) on which it is created. Local user accounts have a set of attributes, including user name and SID. A local user account authenticates locally on the CIFS server using NTLM authentication.

  User accounts have several uses:

  - Used to grant *User Rights Management* privileges to a user.
  - Used to control share-level and file-level access to file and folder resources that the SVM owns.

- **Local group**

  A group with a unique SID has visibility only on the SVM on which it is created. Groups contain a set of members. Members can be local users, domain users, domain groups, and domain machine accounts. Groups can be created, modified, or deleted.

  Groups have several uses:

  - Used to grant *User Rights Management* privileges to its members.
  - Used to control share-level and file-level access to file and folder resources that the SVM owns.

- **Local domain**

  A domain that has local scope, which is bounded by the SVM. The local domain's name is the CIFS server name. Local users and groups are contained within the local domain.

- **Security identifier (SID)**

  A SID is a variable-length numeric value that identifies Windows-style security principals. For example, a typical SID takes the following form: S-1-5-21-3139654847-1303905135-2517279418-123456.

- **NTLM authentication**

  A Microsoft Windows security method used to authenticate users on a CIFS server.

- **Cluster replicated database (RDB)**

  A replicated database with an instance on each node in a cluster. Local user and group objects are stored in the RDB.

Reasons for creating local users and local groups

There are several reasons for creating local users and local groups on your storage

virtual machine (SVM). For example, you can access an SMB server by using a local user account if the domain controllers (DCs) are unavailable, you might want to use local groups to assign privileges, or your SMB server is in a workgroup.

You can create one or more local user accounts for the following reasons:

- Your SMB server is in a workgroup, and domain users are not available.

  Local users are required in workgroup configurations.

- You want the ability to authenticate and log in to the SMB server if the domain controllers are unavailable.

  Local users can authenticate with the SMB server by using NTLM authentication when the domain controller is down, or when network problems prevent your SMB server from contacting the domain controller.

- You want to assign *User Rights Management* privileges to a local user.

  User Rights Management is the ability for an SMB server administrator to control what rights the users and groups have on the SVM. You can assign privileges to a user by assigning the privileges to the user's account, or by making the user a member of a local group that has those privileges.

You can create one or more local groups for the following reasons:

- Your SMB server is in a workgroup, and domain groups are not available.

  Local groups are not required in workgroup configurations, but they can be useful for managing access privileges for local workgroup users.

- You want to control access to file and folder resources by using local groups for share and file-access control.
- You want to create local groups with customized *User Rights Management* privileges.

  Some built-in user groups have predefined privileges. To assign a customized set of privileges, you can create a local group and assign the necessary privileges to that group. You can then add local users, domain users, and domain groups to the local group.

Related information

How local user authentication works

List of supported privileges

How local user authentication works

Before a local user can access data on a CIFS server, the user must create an authenticated session.

Because SMB is session-based, the identity of the user can be determined just once, when the session is first set up. The CIFS server uses NTLM-based authentication when authenticating local users. Both NTLMv1 and NTLMv2 are supported.

ONTAP uses local authentication under three use cases. Each use case depends on whether the domain

portion of the user name (with the DOMAIN\user format) matches the CIFS server's local domain name (the CIFS server name):

- The domain portion matches

  Users who provide local user credentials when requesting access to data are authenticated locally on the CIFS server.

- The domain portion does not match

  ONTAP attempts to use NTLM authentication with a domain controller in the domain to which the CIFS server belongs. If authentication succeeds, the login is complete. If it does not succeed, what happens next depends on why authentication did not succeed.

  For example, if the user exists in Active Directory but the password is invalid or expired, ONTAP does not attempt to use the corresponding local user account on the CIFS server. Instead, authentication fails. There are other cases where ONTAP uses the corresponding local account on the CIFS server, if it exists, for authentication—even though the NetBIOS domain names do not match. For example, if a matching domain account exists but it is disabled, ONTAP uses the corresponding local account on the CIFS server for authentication.

- The domain portion is not specified

  ONTAP first attempts authentication as a local user. If authentication as a local user fails, then ONTAP authenticates the user with a domain controller in the domain to which the CIFS server belongs.

After local or domain user authentication is completed successfully, ONTAP constructs a complete user access token, which takes into account local group membership and privileges.

For more information about NTLM authentication for local users, see the Microsoft Windows documentation.

Related information

Enabling or disabling local user authentication

How user access tokens are constructed

When a user maps a share, an authenticated SMB session is established and a user access token is constructed that contains information about the user, the user's group membership and cumulative privileges, and the mapped UNIX user.

Unless the functionality is disabled, local user and group information is also added to the user access token. The way access tokens are constructed depends on whether the login is for a local user or an Active Directory domain user:

- Local user login

  Although local users can be members of different local groups, local groups cannot be members of other local groups. The local user access token is composed of a union of all privileges assigned to groups to which a particular local user is a member.

- Domain user login

  When a domain user logs in, ONTAP obtains a user access token that contains the user SID and SIDs for all the domain groups to which the user is a member. ONTAP uses the union of the domain user access

token with the access token provided by local memberships of the user's domain groups (if any), as well as any direct privileges assigned to the domain user or any of its domain group memberships.

For both local and domain user login, the Primary Group RID is also set for the user access token. The default RID is `Domain Users` (RID 513). You cannot change the default.

The Windows-to-UNIX and UNIX-to-Windows name mapping process follows the same rules for both local and domain accounts.

There is no implied, automatic mapping from a UNIX user to a local account. If this is required, an explicit mapping rule must be specified using the existing name mapping commands.

Guidelines for using SnapMirror on SVMs that contain local groups

You should be aware of the guidelines when you configure SnapMirror on volumes owned by SVMs that contain local groups.

You cannot use local groups in ACEs applied to files, directories, or shares that are replicated by SnapMirror to another SVM. If you use the SnapMirror feature to create a DR mirror to a volume on another SVM and the volume has an ACE for a local group, the ACE is not valid on the mirror. If data is replicated to a different SVM, the data is effectively crossing into a different local domain. The permissions granted to local users and groups are valid only within the scope of the SVM on which they were originally created.

What happens to local users and groups when deleting CIFS servers

The default set of local users and groups is created when a CIFS server is created, and they are associated with the storage virtual machine (SVM) hosting the CIFS server. SVM administrators can create local users and groups at any time. You need to be aware of what happens to local users and groups when you delete the CIFS server.

Local users and groups are associated with SVMs; therefore, they are not deleted when CIFS servers are deleted due to security considerations. Although local users and groups are not deleted when the CIFS server is deleted, they are hidden. You cannot view or manage local users and groups until you re-create a CIFS server on the SVM.

The CIFS server administrative status does not affect visibility of local users or groups.

How you can use Microsoft Management Console with local users and groups

You can view information about local users and groups from the Microsoft Management Console. With this release of ONTAP, you cannot perform other management tasks for local users and groups from the Microsoft Management Console.

Guidelines for reverting

If you plan to revert the cluster to an ONTAP release that does not support local users and groups and local users and groups are being used to manage file access or user rights, you must be aware of certain considerations.

- Due to security reasons, information about configured local users, groups, and privileges are not deleted when ONTAP is reverted to a version that does not support local users and groups functionality.
- Upon a revert to a prior major version of ONTAP, ONTAP does not use local users and groups during authentication and credential creation.
- Local users and groups are not removed from file and folder ACLs.
- File access requests that depend on access being granted because of permissions granted to local users or groups are denied.

  To allow access, you must reconfigure file permissions to allow access based on domain objects instead of local user and group objects.

Copyright information

Trademark information