

Lab Exercise: Creating and Testing a Mandatory Profile Locally on a Windows Machine

Objective

Learn how to create and test a mandatory user profile on a local Windows machine without using Active Directory.

Prerequisites

- A Windows 10 or 11 machine with administrative access.
- Basic understanding of using Notepad and navigating Windows File Explorer.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Create a Local User Account for the Profile

1. Open Settings:
 - Press Windows + I to open the Settings app.
2. Navigate to Accounts:
 - Click on Accounts and then go to Family & other users.
3. Add a New Local User:
 - Click Add someone else to this PC.
 - Choose I don't have this person's sign-in information, then select Add a user without a Microsoft account.
 - Create a new user with the username TestUser (or another name you prefer).

Step 2: Customize the Profile

1. Log In as TestUser:
 - Log out of your current account and log in as TestUser.
2. Customize the Environment:
 - Change the desktop background, arrange icons, create shortcuts, or set up applications as needed.
 - These settings will form the default environment for the mandatory profile.
3. Log Out of TestUser:
 - Once you have finished customizing, log out of TestUser.

Step 3: Copy the User Profile

1. Log in as an Administrator:
 - Log back in using an account with administrative privileges.
2. Open File Explorer:
 - Navigate to C:\Users.

3. Copy the Profile Folder:

- Find the TestUser folder, right-click it, and select Copy.
- Paste the folder into another location on your computer, such as

C:\MandatoryProfiles\TestUser.

Step 4: Convert the Profile to a Mandatory Profile

1. Navigate to the Copied Profile:

- Go to C:\MandatoryProfiles\TestUser.

2. Rename the Profile's Registry File:

- Locate the file named NTUSER.DAT inside the copied profile folder.
- Right-click NTUSER.DAT and rename it to NTUSER.MAN.
- Note: Ensure file extensions are visible by enabling them under View > File name extensions in File Explorer.

Step 5: Assign the Profile to TestUser Locally

1. Open the Registry Editor:

- Press Windows + R, type regedit, and press Enter.

2. Navigate to the Profile List:

- Go to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows

NT\CurrentVersion\ProfileList.

3. Find the Profile Key:

- Scroll through the subkeys to find the one associated with TestUser. Check the ProfileImagePath value to ensure it points to C:\Users\TestUser.

4. Edit the Profile Path:

- Double-click on ProfileImagePath and change the value to point to the new mandatory profile path: C:\MandatoryProfiles\TestUser.

Step 6: Test the Mandatory Profile

1. Log in as TestUser:

- Log out of the administrator account and log in as TestUser.

2. Verify the Mandatory Profile Behavior:

- Try making changes like adding files to the desktop or altering settings.
- Log out and log back in as TestUser to confirm that all changes are discarded, verifying the profile is functioning as a mandatory profile.

Conclusion

Congratulations! You have successfully created and tested a mandatory profile on a Windows machine without Active Directory. This profile ensures that user changes are not saved, providing a consistent environment for each session.

Questions

1. What other settings could you configure in a mandatory profile to enhance security or user experience?
2. How would you troubleshoot if the mandatory profile does not work as expected?