

ACTIVE DIRECTORY, ADAM AND WHY USE ADAM FOR IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

Many enterprises are using Active Directory as their enterprise directory. This isn't a good idea for directory architecture, maintenance and cost. Why?

Active Directory is an excellent network operating system directory. It's at the heart of the Windows operating system and requires "deep tree" directory architecture to store nodes for printers, users, etc. How does this affect you?

Often, enterprises create an enterprise directory that mirrors their org chart. This is fine until the org chart changes. Then the directory architecture has to change and all apps pointing to the directory must also change their directory search base.

Today's best practice is to avoid all the work and confusion when org charts change and build a "flat" enterprise directory. It is common to put all workers or customers in one "bucket" called "people" and to differentiate them as to what part of the enterprise they belong to by using attributes like "department". This means that only the attribute changes during a re-org and nothing else. It eliminates the need to change application pointers to the director and significantly reduces directory maintenance.

Then there is the issue of cost. For all employees who use Window's having them use AD is fine. However, in most enterprises, they use enterprise directories to store customers, business partners, third parties, contractors, consultants, etc. Many of these identity types don't use the enterprise Windows. Putting them into AD significantly increases licensing costs with Microsoft.

MICROSOFT'S ADAM (ACTIVE DIRECTORY APPLICATION MODE)

Several years ago, Microsoft responded to these needs and created a product called Active Directory Application Mode or "ADAM". It offers the following features to an enterprise:

- Create standalone flat enterprise directory
- Automatically synchronize users between AD and ADAM
- Doesn't require additional license fees for non-Window's users

This addresses the aforementioned problems. Enterprises can use AD for all their Windows users and have it automatically sync with ADAM. The enterprise directory can be built flat to avoid the problems that come with re-orgs. No licensing costs have to be borne by the enterprise for non-Window's users.

I CAN HELP YOU ARCHITECT AND IMPLEMENT ADAM

My name is Guy Huntington. I have extensive experience integrating AD and ADAM. I have led architected and overseen implementation of ADAM. I can bring in inexpensive off-shore resources to keep your conversion costs down. Avoid the usual pitfalls of only using AD. If you're interested in learning more, call me at 604-861-6804 or email me at guy@hvl.net.