The Lepide Active Directory Management & Reporting (LADMR)

A mechanism to effectively manage the Active Directory

This white paper article is a compendium encompassing the key features of The Lepide Active Directory Management & Reporting (LADMR)

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1. Abstract

We all do remember the time when a Network consisted of a meagre number of Users and Computers. As the network sizes around the world started to get bigger, a need rose for a model to maintain the Networks in a cleaner, easier and efficient manner. This gave birth to something called Active Directory by Microsoft. Microsoft AD is a centralized platform from where the administrator can manage the entire Network (Computers, Users etc.) with a structured tree of information, authenticate, authorize, access, manage Windows based systems and set organizational computer policies. Now it has become integral and crucial part of all the IT operations in any organization. Gradually, AD has turned out to be a humongous subject whose utilization hovers in various directions. Working on AD is no less than a monster to deal with as there are innumerable options and several things to do with it. In that case, an Active Directory Management & Reporting tool can be referred which simplifies the AD complexities.

The purpose of this White paper is to let the readers know the importance of maintaining Active Directory efficiently and as to why many IT Admins opt for a third party tool to perform any AD functions and why Lepide's ADMR would make a better choice. With a certified & genuine AD management tool the user can effectively maneuver all the attributes of Active Directory. Also, a network Administrator can overcome the herculean AD challenges like user management, computer management, OU management, AD reporting, group management etc. which is almost close to impossible to do with the help of MMC Snap-ins on a large/bulk scale.

2. Business Case

Not many years ago, maintaining Active Directory simply needed the Admin to take care of the User accounts and Computers. Globalization, Network sizes, Data Risks, Stringent Corporate Policies has changed the above statement completely. With increasing demands for Compliance and Security of the data, the Admins over the time, have been forced to include various other activities such as managing Groups, Organizational Units(OUs), Shares, Password Policies, checking Performance, Audit Reports, Compliance checking, defining User Roles, Multiple Domain Controlling and so on. The AD Management tasks doesn't end with adding or deleting the user accounts and encompasses some complex & cumbersome activities like Active Directory auditing, enabling logs for deploying compliance regulations, safeguarding Active Directory and the user roles, assuring consistency while facilitating centralized configurations, user management, account de-provisioning, maximizing the reach of Active Directory to other

environments, making a move to the Active Directory, rectifying the issues, ensuring successful backups, reestablishing the AD after a data disaster, etc. And of course, Microsoft does provide tools for most of these tasks with various Snap-ins. But the only thing that was overlooked while doing this is that a Network Admin has to know and work on various Snap-Ins to maintain an Active Directory. Not to mention, continuously moving across these Snap-Ins according to the need. Imagine overseeing all the above mentioned tasks in detail and over a period of time and on a regular basis.

As the time winds down one can notice enormous changes in the structure of Active Directory. Because of increased AD size or options appeared new technical problems which are still inevitable & unforeseen. Some of the errors which baffle even the mightiest of Senior Network Administrator in an organization are the following:

- Network location cannot be reached.
- Active Directory Installation Failed.
- The wizard cannot gain access to the list of domains in the forest.
- DCPromo fails with an "invalid parameter" error.
- Error Message: The specified domain either does not exist or could not be contacted.
- The operation failed because: Failed to modify the necessary properties for the machine account %computername%$ Access Denied.
- Active Directory Installation Failed.
- Missing SYSVOL and NETLOGON shares.
- An LDAP read of operational attributes failed.

Such errors can prove out to be a stumbling block in the growth path of an organization. In the long run, these AD errors can further aggrandize the stress and degrade the organizational productivity. So, there should be a mechanism which relieves the Administrators from heavy duty AD operations for allowing them to pay attention towards other productive areas.

3. The Solution – A single Tool to manage all the Active Directory Functions

The need for a unified tool to maintain Active Directory grew exponentially over the time contributed mainly by the increasing work demands of all IT Admins around the world. This led to a plethora of multiple products to manage AD, to generate Reports and so on. Many a tools

are available in the market which provides a group of AD functions combined into a single product. Even now, AD tools are being developed with many more complex functionalities and not just simple AD management.

4. What are the capabilities of Lepide's ADMR?

We, in this White paper (below) have given a brief introduction to the difficulties faced by IT Admins and how they can be overcome with the help of Lepide's ADMR tool

4.1 User Management

This is a familiar and often heard phrase for IT Admins. Creating and managing these, forms the core of all Network functions. A smaller network would mean lesser Users, lesser issues which in turn is less work on the Admin. Many Admins would be comfortable using the MMC snap-ins to maintain their AD. Imagine a network with hundreds of Users and Users being added/modified/deleted often, authorize certificates and remove or migrate some accounts to another domain. Anyone would really wish to have a Tool to do this in bulk or on a large scale. Keeping this in mind, the LADMR tool can be really an advantage for the IT Administrator. This nimble & agile tool eases the operations like authorizing user accounts, setting or resetting passwords, enabling/ disabling the users, moving the users from one OU, etc.

Unlike the console snap-ins this Lepide design is far more efficient and effective. With this highly sophisticated mechanism, a user won't have to refer different snap-ins for every different operation.

There is no doubt, that a good IT Manager can flawlessly perform the user management roles but only after dedicating a lot of time. The Active Directory User Manager module of LADMR eases this role of Administrator to an unprecedented extent.

On LADMR, the Administrator can handle bulk user management operations like unlocking multiple users, reassigning passwords, migrating multiple users to another OU, removing multiple active directory users, adding groups, providing special status to a group, sending messages to users, etc.

4.2 Computer/ Server Management

Computer or server management stands as a mountain to cross for before many network administrators. And managing these in bulk is the most time consuming and redundant part. After installing it, an Administrator can manage multiple computers at the same time. It facilitates bulk computer operations like migrating systems to another container, enabling remote management of systems & servers, disabling the computers, modifying the attributes, evolving a list of inactive computers, querying Active Directory for multiple computers, formulating & implementing account policies, performing directory functions, looking after printer management, framing audit policy, handling network & event management, executing the WMI queries, managing the remote computers, feeding remote computers, etc.

4.3 Organizational Unit Management

OUs is another basic part of any Active Directory. It is through Organizational Units (OU) only through which all the AD domains are clubbed. The OU simplifies all the AD tasks by holding the domains. The OU otherwise known as container also holds the other domains of external OUs. Through OU a user can delegate or deploy administrative & group policies.

The LADMR tool has got the key for simplified Organizational Unit or container management operations. The OUs regardless of their size & domain can be controlled with the help of this tool.

Monitoring & viewing the directory attributes, getting a report on installed software's, viewing system information & environment or network variables and many other such operations are possible with this AD manager tool.

4.4 Group Management

Groups were deployed in AD to make the management of AD much simpler just by grouping similar Objects under one section. They can be based on their User Rights, Access and anything else. Proper group management system ensures efficient and effective administration of AD elements. But evolving groups, delegating attributes to the groups and managing the groups is no less than placing ones nose to the grinding stone.

With LADMR the Group Management process becomes simply effortless and elementary. Hence, the operations like creating groups, naming groups, authorizing the groups and removing the groups becomes very easy.

4.5 AD Reporting

Active Directory report creation is a very hectic and time taking task. It is a gargantuan job to write complex scripts on query active directory or WMI.

Separate Interface for Reports
In-built & Custom Reports
Save & Print Reports
WMI Query Reports
Custom Report on any AD Object
Report Filters

The LADMR tool has been made to make the AD reporting extremely simple. It has been embedded with Active Directory query, WMI query and an inbuilt AD reporting tool. With these options it successfully generates reports on users, computers, groups, security, OUs and other network objects. It can even instantly transform the reports in HTML, CSV, PDF, RTF and TXT formats.

This tool formulates more than 62 customizable reports for ready perusal of the administrator on users accounts, accounts password, accounts lockout, GPOs, etc.
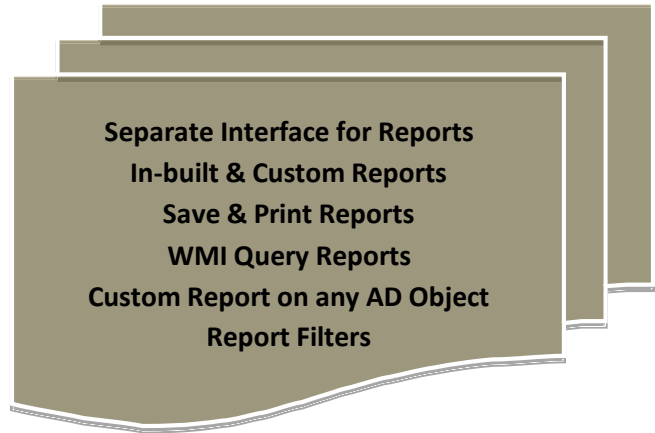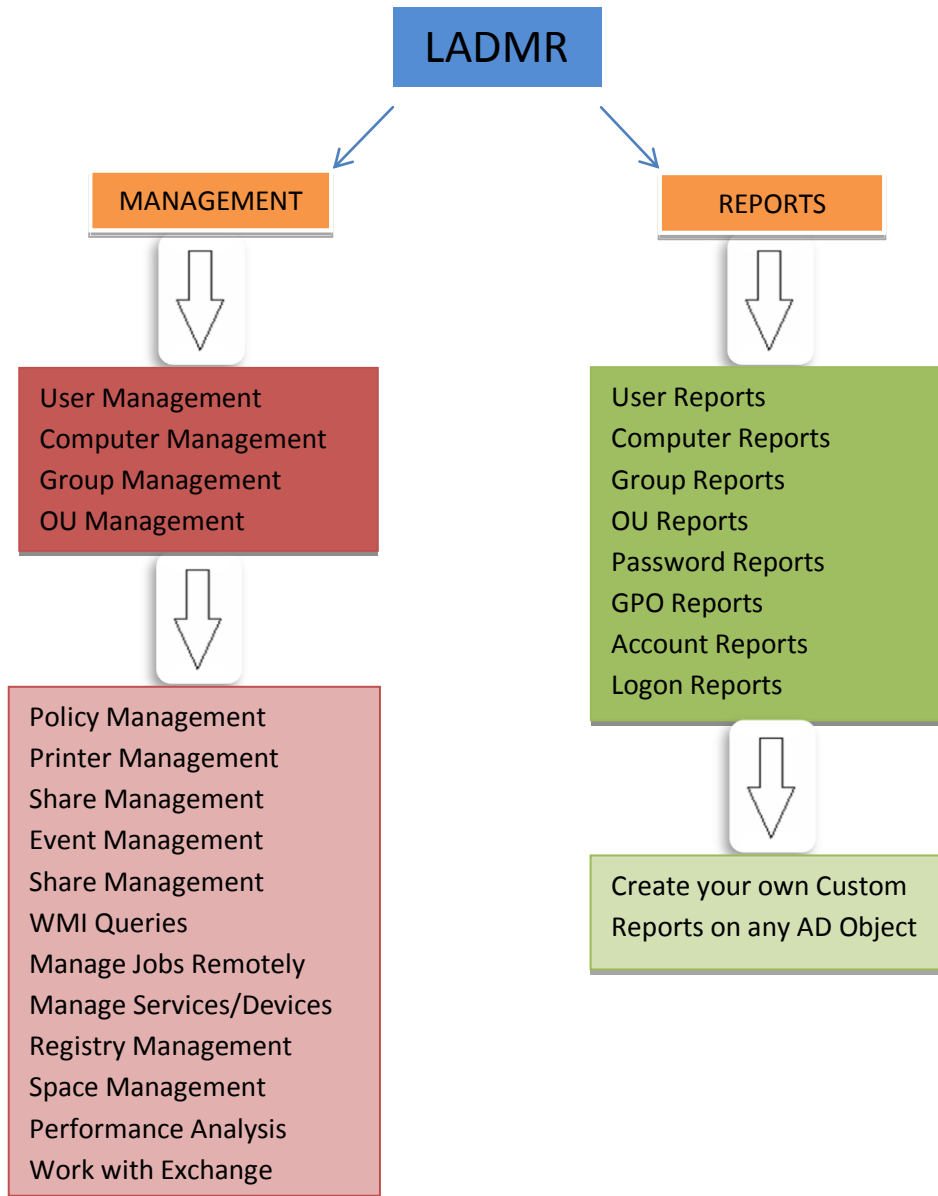
4.6 Other Complex AD functions

If you have been maintaining an AD for a while, you would definitely know that there is much more to an AD management than the features mentioned above. To name a few: DFS Management, Policy Management, Event/Tasks Management, manage Shares, Printers and so on. And you would definitely not prefer to have another tool to manage these apart from AD management. We have decided to incorporate all these features in the same AD management tool which lets you do anything related to AD on a single tool with ease. Have a look at the list of other complimenting features below besides simple AD management that LADMR offers:

5. Unique selling point of LADMR
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The Lepide Active Directory Management & Reporting tool is a unified console which allows the Administrators in executing diversified AD management & AD Custom reporting operations.

LADMR

MANAGEMENT

User Management
Computer Management
Group Management
OU Management

Policy Management
Printer Management
Share Management
Event Management
Share Management
WMI Queries
Manage Jobs Remotely
Manage Services/Devices
Registry Management
Space Management
Performance Analysis
Work with Exchange

REPORTS

User Reports
Computer Reports
Group Reports
OU Reports
Password Reports
GPO Reports
Account Reports
Logon Reports

Create your own Custom
Reports on any AD Object

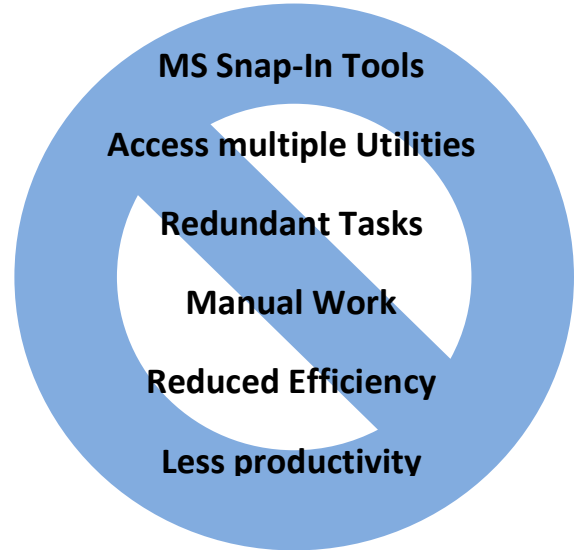## 6. Advantages of Lepide Active Directory Management and Reporting tool?

6.1 Simplified and Centralized Management

The LADMR tool completely assumes the role of an ever active pivot around which all AD elements can be managed. It has got potential to handle diversified operations like directory searching or user, computer, group, server, OU and schema management.

MS Snap-In Tools

Access multiple Utilities

Redundant Tasks

Manual Work

Reduced Efficiency

Less productivity

6.2 Interactive GUI

It has been embedded with an apprehensible GUI on which a person with little technical knowhow can also execute the admin tasks. After this, the first line of management can pay attention to other productive areas in the organization. Not only this, there is ready availability of interface guides which helps a user in perambulating the tool.

6.3 A Software with innumerable benefits

Using a different snap-in tool for every different AD operation can be really torturous. But with LADMR a user don't have to use any further snap-ins or consoles. It has got innumerable options which accelerate the productivity & enhance and optimize the business model.

6.4 A time & cost effective solution

LADMR is a time & cost effective solution which allows the Administrators to pay attention towards other critical areas. The makers of this tool have assured a qualitative 24x7 support service along with it.

7. Not just a normal AD Manager?

Its interior holds a robust object filtering mechanism which can help the Administrators in spearheading and supervising all the Organizational Units and Sub Organizational Units i.e. modified OUs, Recently OUs, user OUs, system OUs, GPO linked OUs and GPO blocked inheritance OUs, etc.

The Group Manager is another weapon in the arsenal of LADMR which eases in generating groups (at root domain or any other domain, etc.). After switching on to the Resultant Set of Policy (RSoP) planning mode, a user can conduct tests on the Group Policy objects (GPOs) and other policy settings. By sitting at a clairvoyant distance the Administrator can induce changes in any AD attribute residing in the schema.

After LADMR installation setting queries, modifying existing queries for every element becomes just a piece of cake. An administrator can also specify need based queries for monitoring the Directory Attributes and Schema Attributes pertaining to OUs, computers, Users and groups including global, local and universal groups. Moreover, an administrator can establish mailbox in exchange server or delete and edit the user mailbox.

8. A tool for staying updated with the technology

Whenever a major technological change happens it takes too much of time for the organization to get used to it. For example, After a Windows upgrade the Administrator would also have to upgrade the AD Management tool – which again would need delicate calibrations and adjustments. But the LADMR tool eliminates the requirement for making such adjustments as it supports all Windows 2000 and above versions.

9. About Lepide

Lepide Software offers state-of-the-art software Tools to enhance businesses of the customers. Lepide's client list includes a number of global organizations which have been using its product to their utmost satisfaction. Lepide offers a range of efficient Software Tools which have been designed by the skilled resources based on years of in-house research and innovation. The company aims to be globally recognized as a provider of some of the best acknowledged business enhancement software Tools.

For more information visit our website:

http://www.lepide.com

For trying our Software visit:

http://www.lepide.com/active-directory-management-and-reporting.html