

F1 Solutions May 2005



::REM

Hello All,

Spring is here, although you'd be hard pressed to call it so in upstate NY where it has been close to freezing at night with some very cold precipitation. Hopefully Spring is more pleasant wherever you are.



This issue has some announcements on some projects I've been working on. I hope you'll at least take a peek. I'd like to develop more training products so if there is something you think would make a great topic, please let me know.

My Tech Tutorial this month is on TAIL, which you'll find in the Resource Kit. This nifty command line utility will display the end of a file. Very useful for quickly getting to the bottom of a monster log file.

The Quick & Dirty script will find all disabled user accounts in your domain (NT, 2000 or 2003). The script generates a csv file you can use as part of a domain audit report. As always, you may want to add some error handling to the basic code.

Finally, I have sweet recommendation to make inside.

As always, I appreciate your continued support and welcome all comments, suggestions and feedback at jhicks@jdhitsolutions.com.

~Jeff

Training Video CDs—Coming Soon

I've recently completed developing and taping 3 new training videos for ScriptingAnswers.com that should be available later this month. The first one is on best practices for scripting in an enterprise environment. Although I have to say, many of the best practices are just as applicable for a 1 person shop as a 10,000 desktop multi-site corporation.

"Learn to make VBScripting a legitimate, respected part of any enterprise environment by learning to apply industry best practices for software development. You'll learn about in-code documentation and commenting, code modularization, leveraging Windows Script Files (WSFs) for standardization and easier deployment, scripting security, source change control, code review and testing, and more. Complete with plenty of samples and on-screen walkthroughs, this script will help you show the boss that you're serious about making scripting a safe, supportable part of the organization."

The second training video is on Windows Script Files (wsf). I'm sure you've seen and perhaps even worked with these types of scripts that have a .wsf extension and are

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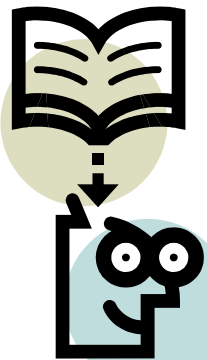
May 2005

Special points of interest:

- Training Videos
- The4thSign
- Tail.exe
- Disabled User Accounts

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“If we extrapolate based on the expected availability of 1.5-GHz processors in mid-2000, and if we assume that Moore's Law holds for at least three more 18-month cycles, we should see mainstream CPUs running in excess of 3 GHz by 2002, 6 GHz by mid-2003, and 12 GHz by 2005”

—PC Magazine
(September 2000)

Has anybody seen my 12Ghz box?



Training Videos- cont'd.

formatted in an XML format. I know when I first encountered them, I avoided them thinking they would be too difficult to figure out or write. Well they are not, and the training video takes you through everything you need to know to understand and create your own wsf scripts.

The last training video will cover managing Exchange 2003 with VBScript. I demonstrate the ExchangeMonPlus hta and use it as a teaching tool in explaining how to script for Exchange 2003.

This session is very demo intensive. There will probably be almost 90 minutes of narrated video demonstrations.

The videos ship on CD and include tools, links and video demonstrations. They have been a very popular training tool for scripting administrators of all levels.

You can read more, see some video samples and eventually order at <http://www.scriptinganswers.com/Default.aspx?tabid=164>.



Web Crawling—TheFourthSign.com

I enjoy a good mystery, especially one that “otherworldly” or alien. I came across this site and was intrigued. I’m still not sure what it’s all about. It’s a month late to be an April Fool’s prank which was my first thought. Then I wondered if it’s a promo site for a new movie. It looks like a blog of some sort and I figure there might be more coming since there is an archive section with nothing in it yet. There’s a login section, but no place that I can find to create a new account.



Take a peek at <http://www.thefourthsign.com> and let me know what you think might be going on.

The Official Chocolate

“Now for something completely different...”

Those of you who know me, know I appreciate fine food and beverages, and chocolate definitely falls into this group. I’ve decided to announce the official chocolate of JDH Information Technology Solutions: Vosge Chocolate. Trust me, this is world-class chocolate like nothing you’ve ever tasted. Master chocolatier Katrina Markoff has fused the flavors of incredibly rich chocolates with spices and flavors from around the world such as wasabi, curry, paprika and ancho chile. My personal favorite is the Black Pearl (dark chocolate and wasabi topped with black sesame seeds). Vosge is based in Chicago but has stores or retail outlets in NYC, Las Vegas, San Francisco, Honolulu, Ann Arbor, and London. You can request a catalog, signup for their mailing list, or order online at <http://www.vosgeschocolate.com/>

If you are a truly chocolate connoisseur, you won’t be disappointed. (This is an honest, unpaid recommendation. I have no relationship with Vosge, other than being a very happy customer.)

Tech Tutor — Tails it is

Monitoring and reviewing log files is a major task for more system administrators. If you keep on top of things, all you really want to see is the last few entries in a given log file. Given that some log files can be 10MB or more, opening them in Notepad can be a little time consuming. That's where this month's highlighted tool comes in handy.

TAIL.EXE is a part of the Windows Resource kit and it is designed to show the last 10 lines of a specified text log file:

```
usage: TAIL [switches] [filename]*
  switches: [-?] display this message
            [-n] display last n lines of each file (default 10)
            [-f filename] keep checking filename for new lines
```

Actually, you can specify as many lines as you want starting from the end. This makes looking at log files pretty easy or even generating your own summary. If you wanted to look at the last 3 lines of each .log file in a directory, you might run a command like this (from within the directory):

```
For /f %x in ('dir *.log /b') do @echo %x && tail -3 %x
```

Which would give you output like this:

```
ex040418.log
21:43:50 172.16.10.1 GET /images/image3531.jpg 304
21:43:50 172.16.10.1 GET /_derived/home_cmp_network010_vbtn.gif 304
21:44:47 172.16.10.1 GET /_themes/network/netbkgnd.gif 200
ex040419.log
00:19:38 127.0.0.1 GET /images/jdhitbtn.png 200
00:29:12 127.0.0.1 GET /images/jdhitbtn2.png 200
00:38:11 172.16.10.1 GET /images/jdhitsolutionsbtn.png 200
ex040420.log
15:57:48 172.16.10.1 GET /rssread.htm 200
15:58:20 172.16.10.1 GET /rssread.htm 200
16:00:54 172.16.10.1 GET /rssread.htm 200
```

If you wanted to save the summary to a text file :

```
For /f %x in ('dir *.log /b') do @echo %x >>summary.txt && tail -3 %x
>>summary.txt
```

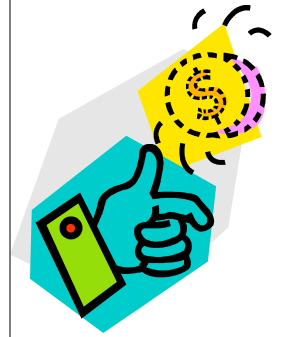
Make sure you use console redirection for both parts of the command, otherwise the log file name won't get included in summary.txt

But perhaps the best feature of the tool is the "live" display. If you run `tail -f logfile` at a command prompt, you will get the last 10 lines of the file, plus any new lines as they are written! The command window becomes a real-time monitor. You might want to increase the size of the window buffer so you can scroll up to see any recent activity that went by to quickly.

When you are finished, just use Ctrl-C to stop monitoring. You can't specify a number of lines and use the `-f` switch at the same time, but that seems pretty inconsequential. With the `-f` switch I can keep an eye on a log file in pretty much real time. Of course, depending on the log file, some information gets written pretty quickly and it could quickly scroll out of the command prompt window. But for log files with only occasional writes, this is an ideal technique.

I can even envision a vbscript that runs tail.exe using the Shell object's EXEC method. Then using StdOut from the command, check each new line for a particular string. If the string is found, then take some action like displaying a popup, sending an email, or running some other section of code.

So, flip things around and try out TAIL. I'd love to hear any solutions you come up with.



“Writing is an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you go along.”

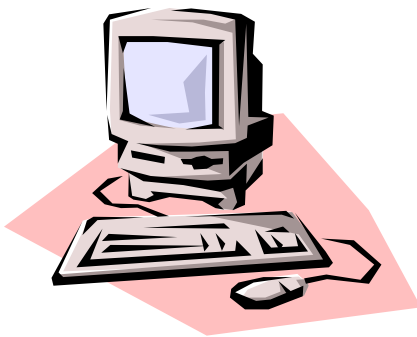
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Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide outstanding information technology consulting services and solutions to our clients utilizing a value-oriented approach. We recognize that most information technology projects are goal not hour driven. Our aim is to leverage technology to solve our clients' business challenges in the most cost-effective manner possible. We succeed when they succeed.

10 Minute Scripts

It's important to keep tabs on that status of your user accounts. Windows 2003 has a nice saved query feature that makes it easier to discover things like all the disabled user accounts in the domain. But if you wanted a report or something to run as a scheduled task, a quick script might fit the bill. This script will create a csv report of all disabled user accounts in the domain, showing the username, full name and any description for the user object. You could easily edit it to add additional information such as password age which might give you an idea of how old the account really is.

```
'SHOWDISABLED.VBS
'Summary: Show disabled user accounts and account description.
'Usage: cscript|wscript showdisabled.vbs
'Output is to a CSV file you can specify below. Any existing
'versions of the file will be overwritten.
```

```
On Error Resume Next
Dim objDomain,wshNetwork,fso,f
Set wshNetwork=CreateObject("wscript.network")
strLog=wshNetwork.UserDomain &"-DisabledAccounts.txt"
Set fso=CreateObject("Scripting.FileSystemObject")
Set f=fso.CreateTextFile(strLog,True)
set objdomain = GetObject("WinNT://" & wshNetwork.UserDomain)

objDomain.filter = array("user")
wscript.echo "BUILDING DISABLED USER ACCOUNTS FOR LIST FOR " &_
UCASE(wshNetwork.UserDomain)

f.writeline "USER,FULLNAME,DESCRIPTION"

for each x in objDomain
  if x.AccountDisabled then f.writeline x.name & "," &_
  CHR(34) & x.fullname & CHR(34) &"," & CHR(34) &_
  x.Description & CHR(34)
Next
f.Close

wscript.echo "Finished auditing. See " & strLog &_
" for details."

WScript.Quit
'EOF
```