

DSADD

One of the great things about Microsoft technologies is that there is usually more than one way to accomplish a given task. I'm a firm believer in the right tool for the right job, and Microsoft provides plenty of tools. User account management in Active Directory can be a time-consuming process, especially if you are in an environment where there is constant turnover, or (hopefully) a growing company with many new employees. In addition to using Active Directory Users & Computers, there are other ways to add new user accounts such as CSVDE, LDIFDE and custom VBScripts. One of the many new command-line utilities with Windows 2003 is DSADD. You can use this tool to create Active Directory objects such as users, computers, and organizational units. I'll just take a look at using the tool to create user accounts.

Open a command prompt and type DSADD /? and you will see a great deal of information about using the tool. However, to create a new user you don't need anything more than a few parameters. The container you will be creating the user object in must already exist. The following example creates a new user object in the Gryffindor OU, which is a child OU of Students in the Hogwarts.local domain. Type it all on one line.

```
dsadd user "CN=Neville Longbottom, OU=Gryffindor, OU=students, DC=hogwarts, dc=local" -samid nlongbottom -pwd P@ssw0rd -fn neville -ln longbottom
```

If you don't specify a password the user account is created but disabled. If you don't want to have the password displayed on the screen, use -pwd * and you will be prompted to enter and confirm a password. Use "-mustchpwd yes" if you want to force the user to change their password the next time they logon. You should put the distinguished name of the user in quotes, especially if there are any spaces.

Even though that is the least amount of information you need, I would take advantage of the parameters for description (-desc), User Principal name (-upn), and display name (-display). You can also specify group membership by using the -memberof switch. You follow it with the distinguished names of all the groups the user should belong to:

```
-memberof "CN=All Gryffindor",OU=StudentGroups,dc=hogwarts,dc=local"
```

If you want to specify multiple groups, add them one after the other separated by spaces. The group must already exist or you will get an error.

You can specify a home drive (-hmdrv) and home directory (-hmdir). You can substitute the username as a variable by using \$username\$ like this:

```
-hmdrv U: -hmdir "\\file01\users\$username$"
```

Finally, I realize this may be a lot of typing, although you enjoy doing work "by hand". I used Excel to help me build a text file of command parameters, essentially everything that you would have to type after dsadd user. I then used the FOR command at a prompt to process the file and very quickly add new users.

```
For /f "tokens=*" %i in (newusers.txt) do @dsadd user %i
```

DSAdd may not change the way you manage new user accounts on a daily basis, but it could be a useful tool if you have delegated account creation. You can hand the text file to a junior admin to process and you won't have to worry about data entry mistakes. There is much, much more to this command, and related commands like, DSMod and DSRM. Try it out, test for yourself and see if this can make your life easier.