

# NEXT GEN IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

## Normalizing the Whole Environment

CENTRIFY'S GREG CRANLEY AND DAVID MCNEELEY DISCUSS THE BENEFITS OF A SINGLE IDENTITY TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

If multi-factor authentication is going to be successful preventing cyber threats, there needs to be consistent enforcement across systems and applications.

"While we have a diverse, heterogeneous set of operating systems throughout the environment, if it's not normalized to some degree where you can leverage a single identity with that multi-factor authentication, it's going to be hard to implement," said Greg Cranley, vice president of federal and public sector sales for Centrify. "If you have multi-factor authentication but have multiple identities, that won't work. If we're going to go to this very secure place, the users also need to have a good experience."

"If you really want things to happen the way you want to from your organizational standpoint, implement security procedures and authentication capabilities in a way that is easy for the user."

Cranley said if the environment can be normalized where users only have one identity and one way to use multi-factor authentication, then both the organization and user will benefit.

"This is something that Centrify has been doing for the last 13 years, and it all started with trying to help organizations, specifically the information technology staff, get a better handle on how to control who gains access to systems and applications," said David McNeely, vice president of product strategy for Centrify. "It's extremely important to centralize the administrative management of user accounts into one place, as well as the access controls for systems and applications into one place. That way it becomes a lot easier for IT to figure out which users have accounts and what are they allowed to access. It's also a way to normalize access controls for all the computers so they all operate based on the same set of policies."

McNeely also addressed the technical challenges of normalizing an environment and how Centrify can simplify the process.

"For Centrify, as the creator of the software that goes on the operating systems, our challenge was to develop a solution that worked the same across a heterogeneous

environment," he said. "So we support over 450 different versions of operating systems and we've designed the solution from a single code base for a consistent experience on all those operating systems. We keep up with every release that comes out and update the software every time a new operating system release comes out.

"For an IT person that is actually using the software, it works exactly the same across all the systems. So once they understand all they need to do is install the agent and have it join Active Directory as the central master repository, it's very simple to use beyond that point."

The ease-of-use concept is something Cranley prioritizes when helping customers.

"That's the number one priority – to get people to acquiesce to what you want them to do," he said. "If you make it difficult for

them to do, they'll just avoid it. That's just human nature. If you really want things to happen the way you want to from your organizational standpoint, implement security procedures and authentication capabilities in a way that is easy for the user."

Ultimately, Cranley said normalizing an environment will be determined by a company's culture.

"It's a way to breed that culture of being a secure organization, and it's not just certain people or groups, it's all of us," he said. "It breeds a normalization of all being on the same team and we all have to act this way. So it creates that culture, and I think the culture part is one of the more difficult things you have to do. Technologically, we have figured it out, but the culture part is tough." ●