

AD360 HELPS INTERSTATES CONTROL SYSTEMS MANAGE ITS ACTIVE DIRECTORY

Organization: Interstates Control Systems

Industry: Engineering/Information Technology & Services

Location: Sioux Center, Iowa, USA.

About Interstates Control Systems

Interstates Control Systems Inc. is a leader in control systems engineering and is part of the Interstates group, along with two other strategic business units. Its award winning team of engineers are experts at implementing integrated control system solutions for any facility. The company extends its services to clients across the United States.

IT Challenges in Interstates

Meeting IT Compliance Norms: Interstates Control Systems had to conform to various IT regulations put forth by the SOX Act, PCI DSS Standard, and more. IT administrators had to generate reports containing specific information, in a prescribed structure. Active Directory (AD) reporting is already a complex task, and when those reports have to follow a specific structure it becomes even more tedious for the IT administrators to generate them. Moreover, each separate compliance norm followed a different format of reporting and using native Active Directory tools or scripting for every format was a painstakingly slow task for the IT administrators.

AD Change Management: Changes to the company's Active Directory had to follow the company's IT policy. It is the administrators' duty to track and ensure that all requested changes are properly scrutinized before execution. Because changes to Active Directory are very common and frequent, careful analysis is essential before approval. This is to avoid any erroneous change that might affect their Active Directory and jeopardize the company's security.

OU-based Delegation: Administrators wanted granularity in delegating permissions to help desk technicians and in defining the scope of those permissions. This had to be done carefully to avoid granting any unnecessary permissions to the help desk technicians. In many cases, help desk technicians faced difficulties when executing Active Directory tasks because they had to work with native Active Directory tools, which are not intuitive.

The company's IT team depended on complex PowerShell scripts and multiple native Active Directory tools to accomplish various IT tasks. Both of these options are complex, time-consuming, and laborious. Interstates was forced to look for an easier and a simpler alternative.



Enter AD360: The Ideal Solution for Interstates

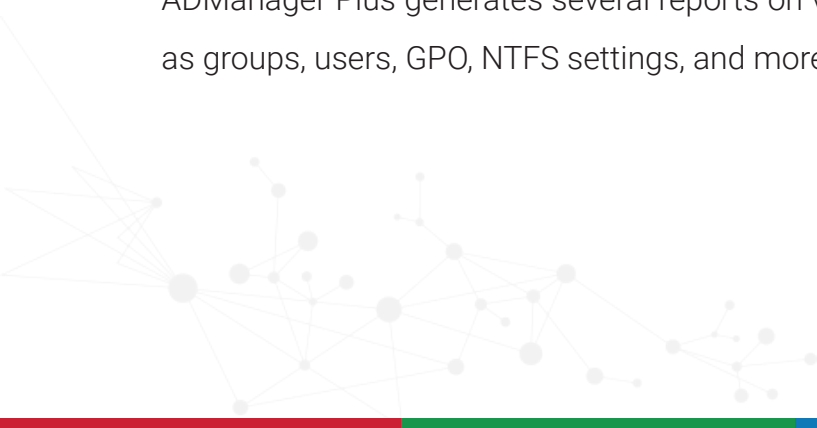
Interstates Control Systems needed a tool that would save time for administrators, and enable the help desk technicians to manage their Active Directory easily. The solution has to be easy to configure, simple to use, and should eliminate an administrator's dependency on native Active Directory tools and PowerShell scripts.

The ideal solution would help them extract compliance-related data, manage Active Directory-related changes, and be flexible and secure while delegating permissions in Active Directory. The IT team evaluated many products, including one from Dell, before deciding on ManageEngine AD360.

AD360 Works Its Magic

AD360 is a platform that integrates various Active Directory solutions from ManageEngine such as ADManager Plus, ADAudit Plus, ADSelfService Plus, and Exchange Reporter Plus. However, in the case of Interstates, just two of the four solutions, ADManager Plus and ADSelfService Plus, were necessary to tackle the challenges. "ManageEngine AD360 has streamlined our report generating process. Meeting IT security norms has never been easier," says Ricardo Romero, IT analyst for Interstates Control Systems.

Using the out-of-the-box compliance reports from ADManager Plus, administrators can instantly extract reports that are designed to meet specific IT compliance norms. These reports provide information such as folder permissions, server permissions, inactive users, users who have never logged on, and more. The reports are crucial for meeting compliance regulations such as SOX, PCI DSS, and others. Through appropriate configuration, these reports can also be generated automatically and emailed. Besides compliance reports, ADManager Plus generates several reports on various aspects of the Active Directory such as groups, users, GPO, NTFS settings, and more.



Ricardo further adds, "The Workflow feature from ADManager Plus is quite amazing and has proved to be very useful for us, as tracking changes and ensuring proper approval is really a very crucial task here at Interstates"

ADManager Plus' Workflow feature allows administrators to build a customized approval-based workflow for executing Active Directory changes or tasks. For instance, even a small change to an Active Directory object, such as an employee being transferred to a different OU, can be set up as a workflow that facilitates scrutiny and approval before execution. Workflow is an indispensable feature for Interstates Control Systems, helping the team track, scrutinize, approve, and execute all changes to their Active Directory.

Talking about the difference AD360 made to the help desk technicians, Ricardo Romero says, "Our help desk technicians were facing a lot of difficulties while working with native AD tools, but with AD360 they don't need to worry about which domain controller they need to connect to!"

ADManager Plus allows administrators a lot of granularity and flexibility, while delegating roles to help desk technicians. That is, the same help desk technician can be assigned different tasks for different OUs. Administrators can now easily assign, to the same help desk technician, a read permission for one OU, and a read/write permission for another OU. ADManager Plus' delegation is also secure because help desk technicians make changes to the Active Directory through AD360's user interface, and do not need direct access to the Active Directory or a domain controller. ADManager Plus' user interface also allows help desk technicians to perform only the roles that have been delegated to them.

ADSelfService Plus facilitates an easy mechanism for end user password reset. This functionality greatly reduces the workload of the company's help desk technicians by drastically reducing the number of requests for resetting passwords



Life with AD360

After the swift and successful deployment of AD360 at Interstates Control Systems, life has become a lot easier for its administrators. They no longer require complex PowerShell scripts and native Active Directory tools to manage their Active Directory.

Though AD360 integrates four solutions, only two solutions – namely ADManager Plus and ADSelfService Plus – were sufficient to tackle Interstates Control Systems's immediate requirements. AD360 also offers ADAudit Plus and Exchange Reporter Plus, which can later be added-on by the company if they face any AD auditing or Exchange reporting requirements in the future. Thus, AD360 is truly a solution that gives Interstates Control Systems complete control over its Active Directory.