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Redspin, Inc. Releases New Security Auditing Tool: WinCAT-AD – Active Directory Group Policy Analysis

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Carpinteria, CA, July 15, 2008 — Redspin, Inc. has released a new security auditing tool. WinCAT-AD (Windows Configuration Analysis Tools — Active Directory) is a powerful program that allows administrators to see how their Group Policy decisions are applied throughout Microsoft's Active Directory environment.

Microsoft's Active Directory is a central component of most network environments, and offers a rich array of security choices for protecting networks. Group Policies are a key component of Active Directory; however, while very granular, they are often underutilized or worse, misconfigured.

"Do you remember that room in your house when you were growing up where there were two light switches that controlled the same light?" asked Redspin CEO John Abraham. "One of the switches was always down and the other one was up, and it always felt weird to push the one that was up back down to turn the light on, or maybe you even had a quick moment of panic that the light was burnt out. Group Policy settings in Active Directory are just like that, only there are hundreds, sometimes even thousands of possible switches. How do you know if the light is on?"

Because multiple Group Policies can be applied to the same person — at a bank, for instance, an employee in the teller group may have the default domain policy, a department policy, and a user policy all applied at the same time — there are a lot of opportunities for conflicting levels of access to be created. Do employees have the appropriate password rules? Have guest access restrictions been set correctly on all the networked machines? Are the different User Groups creating countermanding or incompatible rules?

In order to solve this problem, Network Administrators need to be able to see the results of the Group Policy decisions that they've made. Since existing tools on the market looked at only one user/machine at a time, Redspin decided to develop software themselves that quickly provides an overall snapshot of all Group Policies applied to all users/machines in the domain.

"We spent a lot of time and money developing this so that we could save a lot of time and money," said Redspin's CTO Brian Hayes. "This will help us do our security audits more quickly and efficiently, and to dig deeper into our clients' networks to see exactly what's going on. Instead of going machine by machine, we can look at all the machines on a network, and easily aggregate the results."

The Redspin Active Directory Group Policy Security Analyzer takes a picture of all the settings as they currently are, and then outputs it into an easy-to-understand, browser-based report. This comprehensive review of Active Directory settings is an invaluable resource — and can be downloaded for free for a limited time only at www.redspin.com/tools.

"We're excited to be able to offer this tool to all of our customers, and for now, even other security auditors," said Abraham. "It's one of the first things we use when we do a security audit."

Redspin has offered limited-time security auditing tools for free before, including its FirewallCAT, a tool that creates a similar, aggregated picture of a network's firewall rules. This tool has been downloaded and used by big four accounting firms, federal and defense agencies, global financial firms, universities, and major tech companies.

Abraham continued, "We like to get these tools out there, because it makes our job as security auditors easier. And to answer my own question — 'How do you know if the light is on?' — all you have to do is look. And WinCAT-AD is the only tool out there that let's you see the whole picture."

About Redspin, Inc.

Redspin is an independent auditor specializing in network security and compliance, providing objective IT security auditing services to financial institutions, casinos, e-commerce, ATM providers, Automated Clearing Houses (ACHs), utilities, and defense contractors. Redspin has performed penetration tests, FFIEC IT audits and other services for more than 100 banks and credit unions nationwide. For more information visit www.redspin.com.

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