

Re: how to remove taskbar ?

Source:

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- *From:* ecoulson <ecoulson@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 15 Mar 2006 11:10:30 -0800
-

steves,

Thanks for sharing your experience. I re-read Sean Liming's "Different Shells for Different Users" and this actually is easy to implement and it appears that I don't have to mess around with Group Policy which will be nice. I just started up `c:\windows\system32\cmd.exe` as an example and the system seems to behave as I would want. I don't think I need the Global Keyboard lockdown hooks. The problems at first glance it that there is no easy way to return the kiosk user to an Explorer shell, although I guess I could start a batch file that asks this question. I am wondering if there is a way to start more than one application if you want. I tried to put an extra application in group policy for startup but it did not start. Does group policy apply to this limited shell ?

Thanks, Eric

"steves" wrote:

ecoulson,

I haven't done the multiple user shells in a while, but your scenarios seem reasonable.

Basically the point of making users have a different shell is that ONLY your shell application runs, replacing internet explorer. This completely gets rid of the taskbar, and basically disables desktop interactions. This provides the most secure environment possible. (Also look into disabling the Task Manager).

We ended up not using this idea because some IDE components used in our system apparently require explorer to be running. (File browser windows maybe?). I didn't have time to fully explore or understand this. Be sure to test your application fully when logged in as a limited user. You can easily get surprised if you never login as the limited user.

ecoulson wrote:

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Hi Sean,

Are you referring to your article on changing 3 keys in the registry. I browsed that article and I am not sure if I understand it. I didn't have some of the keys it mentioned such as "shell". Am I supposed to create them if they are not there ?

As far as creating the 'shell' key if it doesn't exist, yes that is what you have to do.

Or are you suggesting creating the custom shell as

part of the XPE image, but then I don't understand how to implement it per user – or per non-admin user ?

It is important to understand the differences between HKCU (HKEY_CURRENT_USER) and HKLM (HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE) branches of the registry. The former settings applies only to the current user, and the latter applies to all users. Implementing the per-user shells requires a change to HKLM to enable it, and then a change for Every user to configure that.

If users are going to be created dynamically by the customers, then you also need a mechanism that will invoke those changes automatically on newly created users, perhaps a login script, or changes to the HKEY_USERS\DEFAULT branch of the registry.

How does the local GroupPolicy and software restrictions relate to a non explorer based shell ? Do I need them ? I think the tricky part is I need one behavior for admins and one for users. This complicates things.

That's a good question! I would guess that any policies that are implemented under keys such as HKLM\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer will not apply, since explorer is not running.

However, I do remember that we had successfully implemented a separate shell, including the disabled task manager (below) it is not under an Explorer branch of the registry.

The following .reg file will disable task manager:

```
**** BEGIN REG FILE ****
;Disable_Task_Mgr.Reg
;
;Requirements: Needs ADMIN logon.
;
; Prevents 'Ctrl-Alt-Delete' from bringing up task manager,
```

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```
; thereby completely locking down the sytem. The combination of
; setting the I3system user shell to a custom app and disabling
TaskMan
; prevents a user from starting explorer, or any other tasks.
;
; After this key is set the only way to get out of the I3SYstem user
; is to logoff, and then logon as administrator. Use the 'Enable_
; TaskMgr.reg' file to remove this restriction.
;
[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\System]
"DisableTaskMgr"=dword:00000001
**** END REG FILE ****
```

Let's say requirements are:

Administrators:
Full Explorer Shell

all other users:
start 2 .Net executables at startup
Allow all programs in c:\programs files\companya to run
Allow all programs in c:\windows\system32 to run

By default, all users are allowed to run programs. Some important ways that users are restricted are

- 1) they can't write into system folders, or program files folders
- 2) they can't install programs
- 3) They can't access other user's data under that exists under a different Docs and Settings\username branch

allow programmer to click desktop icon for webex like tool

since explorer is not running, you can't click on a desktop icon. You can put a button into your application that will launch any app...

I am envisioning that I create a xpe image with installer components, then install and configure base application installation, then clone this standard image, then put it on system and configure in the factory for specific site, then at specific site do a bit more configuration.
Is this a reasonable senario ?

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Yes

I am thinking Winows XPE is a good candidate

for the operating system because I can put only the compoents I need, and XPE will be supported for a longer period of time than normal operating systems. I am interfacing with embedded VxWorks system via TCP/IP and the applicaiton is .Net. I have an admin user that can do anything and a user that can run one or two applicatons.

So any help would be appreciated.

Thanks, Eric

"Sean Liming (eMVP)" wrote:

Do you want the non-Admin users to have a different shell?
i.e. different shells for different users.

You could replace the non-Admins to have a different shell instead of Explorer, and then set your custom Group Policy to exclude non-Admin from accessing Explorer.exe

Just a thought.

Regards,

Sean Liming
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"ecoulson" <ecoulson@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
wrote in message
news:73269637-D204-40E6-98B0-611E283B23B2@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Hi all,

Re: how to remove taskbar ?

I have an Explorer based shell that I am limiting with group policies – at least for those who are non-Administrators (limiting by deny read for Administrators on GroupPolicy dir). I need to remove the Taskbar for non-Administrators. I start up my applications at startup and can limit the capabilities of normal user with group policies and global keyboard hooks, but I still see the taskbar. I can manually set it to hide and not be front window, but I was wondering if there is any other way to not see it on a per user group basis (or at least on a non-Administrator basis).

Thanks, Eric