

# Inconsistant log on/log off lock up

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I have done extensive searching and have not found a thread on this yet. I'm not sure if this is the appropriate group for this question but I will start here with it...

I am a IT technician for a university that is in desperate need of assistance. I've been battling a problem that has plagued our network since the beginning of the academic school year. I created and deployed the image that is currently on 80% of the campus lab computers. It was deployed a week prior to the beginning of the semester with no problems reported at all. The first week of class was a different story. We received a large number of reports that many students were having trouble logging on or logging off computers. Specifically, for those that could not log on, after inputting their username and password they saw only the desktop; no taskbar and no desktop icons. For those that were logging off, again they would see the only the desktop but the log off would not complete (I believe they could see the log off dialog box as well but it would never disappear and never return to the "press alt-ctrl-del to log on" dialog box). Here's the kicker, this does not happen to every user and not on the same PCs. One user may have a problem logging on to a particular computer but the next person who tries to log into the same computer gets in with no problems. Incidentally the first user who had trouble logging into said computer can usually jump to another computer and log in fine (rules out account issues). Sometimes a reboot will fix this problem but it doesn't always.

Our initial feeling was that it might be something on my image that could be causing the lock up, i.e. driver conflict, incorrect permissions, etc... I have rebuilt the image at least 4 times with the same problem occurring roughly 2 weeks after each deployment. Then we caught wind of a possible cause for this problem. It was recently made known to us that the current number of domain controllers on our network may not be sufficient to handle the recent changes made by our systems group. Specifically, they have migrated several services from aging systems to our current DCs. After doing so they noticed high hardware utilization on our 2 DCs which may cause the DCs to become so busy that they cannot fullfil a log on or log off request. They have recently set up a third DC and started distributing the work load to it

## inconsistent log on/log off lock up

(although I do not know if this has been completed). I thought that our log on/log off issues had cleared up. This morning I was informed that we are starting to get reports of "lock ups". We are unsure just how this DC issue figures into our problems, if at all.

We have been exploring the event logs to find some clue as to what's going on. We sometimes see warnings concerning: user environments, insufficient resources, and inability to contact a domain controller. The user environment errors were occurring on the previous build of the image last year, so we have ruled that event as being insignificant. The insufficient resources error baffles us because it's just not the case with these machines. Everytime we get a report of trouble we check to see if the harddrive is full of user profiles. None of our machines have ever been filled to capacity due to profiles. These machines come with 2 gigs of ram and a 160GB harddrive so we have no idea why this error is popping up (the bulk of the campus machines are Dell Optiplex GX620 with the rest being different Optiplex models). We are still looking into this as a possible source of our problem. It may be worth noting that we do not use roaming profiles. As for the domain controller error we really don't have anything for this. As we do not have direct access to the DCs we can't really explore this error. Our systems group is aware of this (seen it with their own eyes) but we have yet to hear what could be causing this and how significant this error is.

Some of the things we have done to try to rectify this problem are as follows:

- installed a profile cleaner (UPHcleaner) that will assist with the computer releasing the registry after a user logs out as it should.
- manipulated group policy several times in an attempt to locate/fix the problem.
- created images specific to each type of machine to rule out driver conflicts

It's six weeks into the semester and we are no closer to isolating and fixing this problem. With the problem being as inconsistent as it is extreme frustration is setting in. Any help will be appreciated. If more information is needed ask for it. I will be more than happy to provide it.

Thanks

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