▶ AMAINSOLUTIONS USERMANAGER 3: SIMPLIFIED DOMINO USER MANAGEMENT

By Hans van der Burg, Delta Norge president and LOTUS ADVISOR MAGAZINE technical editor

Lotus Notes/Domino administrators spend a lot of time creating new Notes users, changing passwords, terminating Notes users, creating mail files, etc. Wouldn't it be great if users could control these tasks? Administrators would just have to set global messaging rules to define policies and standards and ensure Notes handles requests automatically. This timesaving process is possible with AmainSolutions UserManager.

AmainSolutions UserManager 3 offers a way to handle all user-related actions (figure 1). This Notes/Domino solution is easy to install and use. It's a solid, comprehensive user management environment in which users can perform complex actions with a few mouse clicks.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

UserManager relieves administrators of repetitive tasks by providing a set of logical modules that let users who request such actions fill in the request online. Using a workflow scheme you can adjust, UserManager routes requests to the appropriate people. When the recipient approves the request, the tool processes it and the actions execute automatically. UserManager notifies users involved in the workflow that the request has executed. It takes care of processes such as creating a new user account, including (but not limited to) creating the user ID, generating a password, sending a welcome letter to the user, and applying policies and standards.
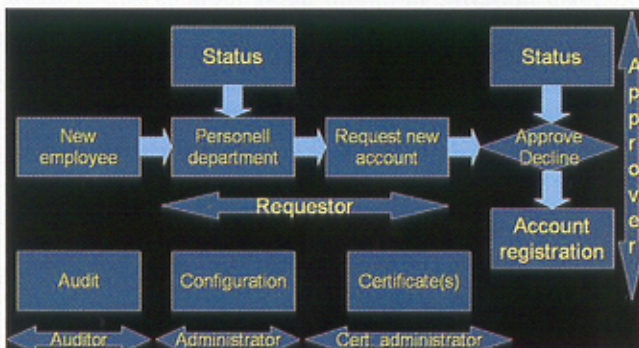
Notes/Domino administration can be complex. Each organization has its own naming rules, mail file names, quotas, domains, group memberships, organizer IDs, access levels, etc. So, with UserManager, you set up your company structure, including rules that determine what type of user gets what type of information, how to set up the mail files, and which user and department is linked to which domain, organizational unit, and location. You map your organizational structure with your Notes/Domino structure. I'll explain this process in more detail later.

I'll briefly walk you through the process to create a new user in Notes/Domino (figure 2).

When a company hires a person, the personnel department registers him as a new employee. Traditionally, the personnel department or the employee's manager initiates a request with the Help desk or Notes/Domino administrator to create a new user account. The person creating the user account must specify all the details for this user: which groups he must have access to, mail quota, etc. If the information in the request is incomplete, the Help desk staff or administrator has to track down the

Figure 1: UserManager—A glance at the UserManager front-end application.

Figure 2: Creating a new user—AmainSolutions UserManager drastically reduces the tasks of the administrator.

person initiating the request. The administrator creates the user's mail file, ID, and password and adjusts all groups to which he'll belong. Then the administrator can send the ID and password to the user.

UserManager greatly simplifies this process. For example, the personnel department fills in the request for the new user via the Web interface for the front-end application. Because the department staff has all the data for the new employee, they can easily include all the necessary information, such as personal details, department, role, and so on. UserManager uses those parameters to determine what kind of ID to make for the user, which groups to add him to, etc. This mapping from organization to technical values takes place in the background. The UserManager processes the request, and approves or declines it. The tool even lets you automate this process depending on the role of the user who enters the new requests. UserManager processes the request and creates the user ID, sets a password, adds the user to the appropriate groups, creates his mail file, etc. independent of the location of the user making the request. By letting UserManager take care of these tasks, administrators only have to be involved with configuring UserManager, administering certificates,

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and possibly auditing (where required). If you want to have more control over the process, you can determine approval sequences for each process and each step in a process.

Because UserManager is a Domino application, integration with your current service desk systems or other applications is easy, and there's a high level of security. The UserManager lets administrators perform batch input using simple text files to process large amount of requests. Because you set all rules and conventions in UserManager, which processes all requests for changes, you can enforce rules and conventions at all times. By using UserManager's workflow module, you can assign each step for each process to different persons, separating each function and assigning it to the appropriate people, without requiring them to have administration access to your Notes/Domino environment. UserManager offers more transparency in your Notes/Domino setup, a consistent Domino directory, and better service levels.

NUTS AND BOLTS

You can choose from 16 profiles to map organization levels to your Notes/Domino environment, rules, and conventions (figure 3). UserManager combines and maps all profiles to a location document. The user selects a location document in each request for an action and defines the parameters, such as to which domain the user belongs, to what groups he should belong, and so on.
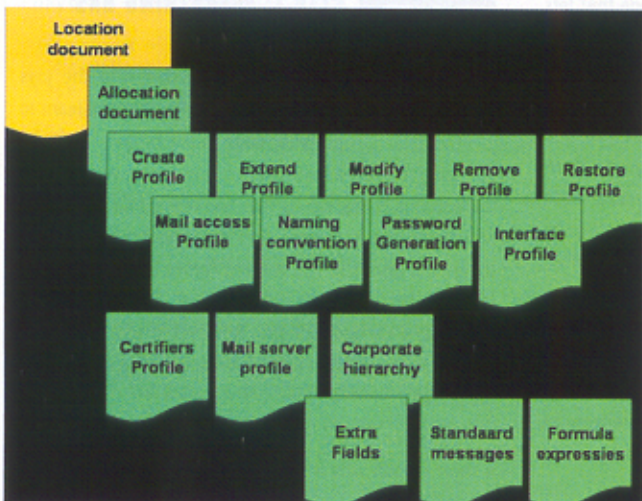
Figure 3: **UserManager profiles**—The tool simplifies the use of request forms by logically restructuring your Notes/Domino environment into profiles.

UserManager setup is flexible. If you have to enter more information than the default settings allow, you can extend the application by adding new fields to the interface without having to modify the design. For large migrations, the tool supports batch processing. So, if a company is moving to a new Domino domain, UserManager can do all the work.

Installation time for UserManager is significant. For it to run automatically, you must first set up the application with all parameters and configurations. Configuration is vital; it's where you determine the location rules. Due to space limitations, I won't explain the entire setup, but I'll show you some key information. Figures 4 and 5 show how to set up your corporate hierarchy. UserManager uses this hierarchy to determine to which groups a user can belong. Later, UserManager maps the hierarchy to the location document with which users are created.

You can define any type of rule from a list of preset rules, or you can set your own, using (for example) the Notes @Formula language. UserManager uses
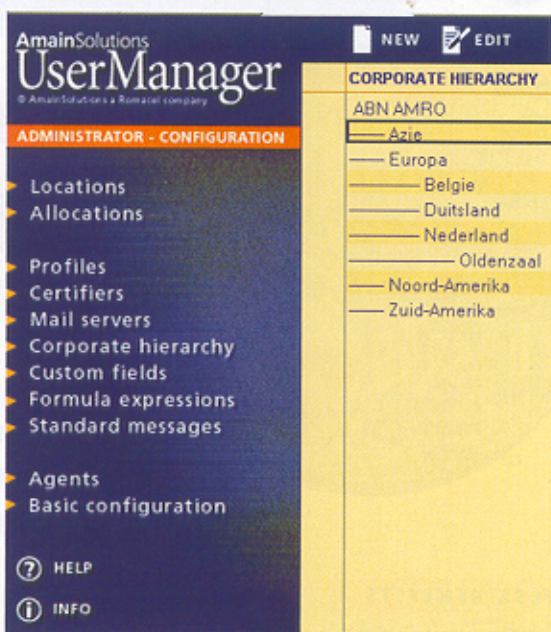
Figure 4: **Corporate hierarchy**—The level of hierarchy you can set up is unlimited.

Figure 5: **Department setup**—Where you define a department in the hierarchy and assign it to a group in the Domino directory.

these rules to validate entries made in the request forms and to process requests and adhere to your rules.

WORTH THE EFFORT

AmainSolutions UserManager is a well-thought-out application. The company has done a superb job in delivering an easy-to-use application that deals with the complex processes of maintaining a Notes/Domino environment.

UserManager lets you map your organization to your Notes/Domino structure. This mapping requires you to dedicate some time to setting up and configuring all location documents and profiles, and you shouldn't underestimate this investment. But this kind of exercise usually results in a far cleaner and more robust Domino directory. Although setup takes a considerable amount of time, it isn't a downfall of the application. It's purely a necessity of automating Notes/Domino administration processes.

Although I'm impressed with this product, unfortunately, there isn't any integration with a portal environment such as IBM WebSphere Portal server. However, AmainSolutions is working on adding this kind of integration to a future release. **ADVISOR**