



Discovery

Using Novell® Identity Manager, Discovery has automated the provisioning of user accounts for new employees, cutting the time taken from 24 hours to just 20 minutes. The solution provides access to applications according to each user's role in the organization, and automatically removes all access privileges on termination of employment.

Overview

Founded in 1992, Discovery is a leading financial services company based in South Africa with additional operations in the UK and US. Locally, the company specializes in the health and life insurance markets, and is a pioneer in the emerging market for lifestyle and wellness products and benefits.

Challenge

Discovery has operational centers throughout South Africa, and growing business interests in the UK and US, employing a total of approximately 7,000 people. Monthly staff turnover at Discovery is much lower than the industry average. Even so, each month between 60 and 100 people join the company and approximately the same number leave. This turnover of staff was putting a strain on Discovery's identity management processes.

The company had implemented Microsoft* Identity Integration Server to synchronize its user directories and largely eliminate paper-based administration for additions, changes and deletions. However, as Discovery looked to introduce more sophisticated automation for identity management and role-based provisioning of new users, the Microsoft solution became increasingly inadequate.

The software had worked well as a pure synchronization tool, but was limited in its scope, leaving a significant amount of manual work for administrators. It was also relatively complex and difficult to use, and Discovery had concerns about its scalability.

Solution

Discovery selected Novell Identity Manager as the basis for its new automated provisioning system, and engaged Ubusha Technologies, a leading South African systems integrator, to provide training and guidance to its in-house IT team.

"Our existing Microsoft solution was not sophisticated enough to support our plans for identity management," said Alwyn Van Niekerk, Systems Architect at Discovery. "Novell Identity Manager could do almost everything we needed 'out of the box,' enabling us to keep our significant internal programming expertise focused on our core insurance systems. Ubusha Technologies provided excellent training; their technical consultants are highly competent and very knowledgeable about identity management."

Discovery implemented Novell Identity Manager on SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server, with a staged rollout taking around three

Discovery at a glance:

Multinational provider of health and life insurance and wellness benefits

■ Industry:

Insurance

■ Location:

South Africa, UK, US

■ Solutions:

Novell Identity Manager
SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

■ Results:

- Can provision new users in 20 minutes, rather than 24 hours
- Enabled automatic synchronization of user information across all systems
- Introduced role-based provisioning for new employees
- Eliminated significant manual development and testing effort

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Discovery Health*



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months to completely replace the synchronization previously handled by Microsoft Identity Integration Server. Novell Identity Manager draws on the central human resources database as its master source of identity information, and synchronizes a number of internal systems, including four Microsoft Active Directory* domains. To provision a new employee, Novell Identity Manager uses predetermined criteria in their HR record to determine their role and organizational status, then automatically assigns the correct access rights for the relevant domains and applications.

“As we intended, the new identity management solution has not changed the process from HR’s point of view—it’s just that the downstream system is now much smarter,” said Van Niekerk. “Even with the Microsoft synchronization tool, we were spending a lot of time and effort on manual changes to seven different systems each time something changed. The whole approach was quite chaotic. Novell Identity Manager saves us a great amount of manual effort and potential confusion.”

The new solution synchronizes information every 20 minutes across all systems. By contrast, the former solution had a 24-hour cycle, and Discovery needed to make further manual changes to ensure that user information and access rights were reflected accurately throughout the enterprise.

Discovery is using Novell Identity Manager to pull some existing user self-service portals into the central identity management processes, and plans to introduce full password self-service in the near future.

Results

The introduction of Novell Identity Manager has radically simplified Discovery’s identity management processes, eliminating the long development and testing cycles required by the former Microsoft solution.

“Novell Identity Manager is a breeze to use; the toolset is very well developed and it is clearly a mature, user-friendly product,” said Van Niekerk. “Discovery is a dynamic business, and there are many moves and changes to handle, including a major reorganization about once a year. Novell Identity Manager gives us the power to automate all the complex data synchronization needed to make that run smoothly.”

Discovery can now provision users in 20 minutes, rather than 24 hours, so new employees can use e-mail and access all relevant applications on their first day at work. Equally, the solution automatically removes all access rights from ex-employees as soon as their period of employment ends. Previously, an administrator could forget to manually remove an old user from some systems, potentially creating a security risk.

“Our users now have much better control over access rights, and they no longer need to contact several different people to make a change—all systems are automatically updated when the master record changes,” said Van Niekerk. “Our approach to security is now more consistent and requires less manual intervention, leaving us free to focus on our core business.”



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