SilverbackMDM Best Practice

User Authentication
for Microsoft Active Directory

August 2011

User Authentication for AD - UPN

To ensure the security of the Silverback Self Service provisioning process, Silverback requires a Username and Password to authenticate the user.

Very few Active Directory attributes are capable of authenticating a user, most are not. For Example 'GivenName' of 'email address' are not valid attributes to authenticate a user against Active Directory. The two main formats used to authenticate a user are 'domain\samAccountName' or 'UPN (UserPrincipalName)'.

The UPN is the only attribute stored within Active Directory that can also authenticate the user. Since there can only ever be one instance of the UPN within a forest, it provides the greatest level of non-repudiation. As Microsoft have also deprecated the use of 'domain\username', Silverback utilises the UPN as the authoritative authentication method.

In many instances however, the UPN domain suffix is foreign to your users (eg. username@company.local) and this can cause confusion and unnecessary complexity for end users when enrolling their device. If the UPN domain suffix is foreign to your users, we recommend changing the UPN domain suffix to your email domain. As all users know their email address, this not only streamlines any communication required around the enrolment process but also future proofs the use of UPN's within the organisation.

If you don't already use your current UPN suffix for authentication, you can add a UPN suffix for 'domain.com' and change the user's UPN to match their email address. This would allow the user to effectively authenticate by entering their email address.

The attached Microsoft link describes how to add UPN suffixes to a forest:

http://support.microsoft.com/kb/243629

You can add as many UPN suffix formats as you like. Adding an additional global UPN suffix does not alter user accounts in any way. You will need to go into each account (manually or via a script) and change the UPN suffix for this change to take effect.

Commercial in Confidence. Copyright SilverbackMDM 2011.