Subject: Microsoft Scripting License Impact
Date: Tue, 06 Aug 1996 17:44:25 -0700
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Some ISPs have dial-in servers that are configured for a single dial-in protocol (ppp or point-to-point protocol). For these ISPs the built in dial-up networking in Windows 95 satisfies their need since it supports ppp connections. These ISPs and retail customers can use Personal Edition and Dial-Up Kit today.

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However, other ISPs have dial-in servers which are configured for multiple dial-in protocols (ppp, slip, tty, etc.). This is because they often serve a wider variety of customers using a lot of different computers and configurations. Some is also due to legacy networks that haven't been updated to full ppp configurations. We don't have any accurate market research data, but a guess would be that 20% - 30% of the ISPs require scripting.

When an end-user dials into one of these ISPs they need to indicate who they are (user name and password) and what protocol they want to use every time. Entering this information is much like logging into an old mini-computer or main-frame with a user name and password every morning to run anything. Users find this inconvenient and seek ways to automate the dial-in process - especially novice users.

Microsoft has a dial-up scripting tool which automates providing the user name and password and telling the dial-in server to start using ppp. Microsoft originally packaged this on the Plus! CD along with other goodies and charged ~$40 for the whole thing. However they now offer it free to anyone that has a Windows 95 license - you can download it from their web site at:

http://www.microsoft.com/kb/softlib/mslfiles/dscrpt.exe

I've attached the license for this piece to this email. It basically says you have the right to use this software with licensed copies of Windows 95.

Sprynet is a good example of an ISP that requires scripted login support for dial-in connections. Our business with them is materially effected by not being able to license and use the dial-up scripting tool. We were intending on hosting Sprynet on our automatic Internet account server which helps novice users of Personal Edition get online with an ISP. However, since we can't include the scripting tool with Personal Edition, none of our customers can use Sprynet. Even if we didn't host Sprynet on our Internet account server, end-users still can't use Personal Edition with Sprynet unless they manually login every time to the service.

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I heard from an SE (Morten Maaquard) that a Norwegian ISP approached Microsoft and wanted to redistribute just this dial-up scripting tool, but use our Navigator software. Microsoft wouldn't do it unless they went for the whole IE program which is very restrictive. The printed Microsoft ISP contract I got requires the ISP to push Internet Explorer as the "preferred worldwide web browser" for its customers. They also must deploy Internet Explorer on company workstations. They must use the IE name and logo on their packaging, advertising, and promotional materials. Newsgroup messages on Microsoft's public news servers also show ISPs that are using their Internet Explorer Administration Kit have access to the scripting tool for free.

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Not to confuse the above situation, but we also have proof that Microsoft refused to license the ISDN software for Windows 95 to us. They claimed they only license it to hardware vendors that produce ISDN cards. However, I have a printed Microsoft ISP contract which offers this exact software to the ISP as long as the ISP offers ISDN connectivity to their users - which is exactly what we wanted to enable our ISPs to do! This is an important leveraging point for MS on telco accounts since they want to rapidly deploy ISDN. ISDN subscribers are advanced users that through word of mouth can greatly influence other market segments.

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