

# Managing shares and authentication for a small network

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To: debian-user@lists.debian.org

Hi all,

I'd like to ask your opinion on the best approach for setting up file sharing and user authentication for a small home network with a diverse list of clients.

I have currently a Debian server providing various services including samba, nfs, ftp etc. In addition I have a few desktops and notebooks running a mixture of Debian, XP and OS X.

Recently I've decided to move my old server to a Mac Mini and thought that it would be the right time to rethink how the various services are layed out and maybe solve a few issues along the way...

So here's what I have:

- the Debian server
- my notebook running Debian as well
- my wife's desktop running XP
- an iBook running OS X

The server's main purpose is to host all our common files that should be accessible to all client machines. All clients should be able to create/modify/delete files on the common shares, security is not an issue here.

Currently I have a special samba user/group set up which owns all the shared files and all shares are forced to use these. I also have sticky bits set on the main folders.

However I have a few issues:

- The linux boxes on the network access the files over nfs so I always need to be very carefull to create the users on each box so that they have the same uid/gid as on the server
- Files created/downloaded/unpacked directly on the server will have the right group ownership (samba) but not the user. (The sticky bit only works for groups.) Combined with the default umask, the files created this way might not be readable or at least not deletable from the Windows

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machines.

I don't want to change the default umask for the entire filesystem...

- Similarly sometimes Windows executable installer files refuse to run directly from the network shares.

I've started this whole investigation when during the installation of my new server I've again reached the point where I had to synchronise the user ids.

My first thought was whether I could make this easier or completely unnecessary. This led me to NIS and then immediately to LDAP.

My second thought after reading up on it a bit was that it might be a bit of an overkill for my needs. More specifically I'm not sure how much good LDAP will do me for the notebooks on which I need to be able to log in even if I'm not at home and hence do not have access to the LDAP server.

As far as I understand this means that the user still needs to be in the passwd file, which raises the question of synchronising the uids/gids again.

This time between the LDAP server and the local passwd/group files...

Another thing that I've been contemplating was whether or not I should just completely forget about nfs for the common shares and just mount them through smbfs... If I would remount them even on the server to a different mount point and would make sure to only modify the files through that path then this might take care of the ownership/umask problems. Are there any problems with this?

Finally, though I've found a lot of material on the net regarding how to configure and populate LDAP and how to set up PAM, NSS and samba to use it, so far I didn't find anything regarding how to use it to mount home directories from a server for instance...

I would greatly appreciate if you could share your thoughts/experiences with me on which conceptual approach would be the best in this situation!

Many thanks for your help in advance!

Balazs

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