

Technical Overview:

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Windows Services for UNIX

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If you are like me you have mixed platform networks you have to administer. Before I would need 2 computers, one running Linux and one running MS Windows. I ran into Services for UNIX at Linuxworld and I have been trying it out. And of all the Microsoft Products I have seen I can honestly say I love this product. It is incomplete lacking libraries such as GTK and GLIBC but with a recompile you get over those hurtles. What this product does is that it allows you to run UNIX scripts and Applications on a MS Windows NT 4.0 SP6, Windows 2000 Pro SP2 or a Windows XP computer. Since it contains Interix which is a complete subsystem for UNIX, it is not an emulation layer or an emulation program so Applications and scripts run at native speeds. I have compiled Xfree86, GTK and GLIBC as well as KDE for it, so I can run Graphical Apps such as the GIMP, Maya and Quanta Plus, and they all run properly. Microsoft officially supports Red Hat Linux 7.0, Solaris 2.7 and HP-UX, I have gotten it to work with FreeBSD, Solaris 9, Red Hat 7.3 and Suse Linux 8.1. It does not have native SSH support but you can recompile the source for OpenSSH and it will run. Telnet is the remote administration tool built into Services for UNIX. Shells that are included are KSH and CSH but it has all the GNU Developer tools and it also includes native ncurses libs as well as perl and the VI editor. Emacs users can download EMACs for Windows and any files you save can be open in the VI editor. I have also gotten serial connections to work with it and I have successfully installed FreeBSD remotely using Services for UNIX. You can also administer and access any machine on your cluster with the product. Mac support is limited you cannot run any Mac OS X apps. Some bugs that are present are minimal and easily ignorable, but it is a worthwhile product to try and free programs such as Cygwin and UWIN are not comparable at all. Windows services for UNIX wont necessarily make loyal UNIX and LINUX users switch but it offers enough functionality and features that will make Windows administrators sit a little taller in their chairs. It saves me headaches and time and it makes my day just a little more productive.

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