RunAs Radio

http://www.runasradio.com


RunAs Radio is a weekly Internet Audio Talk Show for IT Professionals working with Microsoft products. The full range of IT topics is covered from a Microsoft-centric viewpoint.


*Text Transcript of Show #086*
(Transcription services provided by PWOP Productions)

# Baldwin Ng and Jay Sauls Help Us Plan with MAP!
# December 3, 2008

[Music]

**Brandon Wenn:** From runasradio.com, you're listening to RunAs Radio, the Internet audio talk show for IT professionals with Richard Campbell and Greg Hughes. This is Brandon Wenn, announcing show #86, with guests Baldwin Ng and Jay Sauls, recorded Thursday, October 6, 2008. RunAs Radio is produced each week by PWOP Productions, providing professional media and podcasting services online at pwop.com.

**Richard Campbell:** You're listening to RunAs Radio. I'm your host, Richard Campbell. Here with me always, my good friend Greg Hughes.

**Greg Hughes:** Hey Richard.

**Richard Campbell:** So we're in the Fish Bowl abusing the Fish Bowl. Fish Bowl is supposed to be for video recording but here we are doing audio recording.

**Greg Hughes:** It's slightly quieter in here so we are a bit like fish out of water.

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah, except that we are in the fish bowl so we should be in the water. So we're at the center of TechEd in Europe in Barcelona right now. This is right in the middle of the floor; there are booths all around us, the ASPX area. We've been doing Speaker Idols; the second heat just went by.

**Greg Hughes:** Right, it was a good one too. That would have been through two heats, some great presenters. I'm actually pretty surprised about the quality of speakers and presenters that have come through so far. I'm really encouraged, I hope the last heat -- clearly we're going to have some good people on the finals.

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah, without a doubt. Speaker Idol is really about looking for new speakers for TechEd and we video taped them all so the track chairs can learn about them and so far so good. I think it's going to be a great, great show.

**Greg Hughes:** Yup and we've also had the opportunity to meet with them and speak with a lot of subject matter experts, people here at Microsoft's TechEd show who are really the golden nugget people in their areas to get information from and quite often that information is leading edge or even bleeding edge.

**Richard Campbell:** So great. We're sitting here with Baldwin and Jay and they're with the Solutions Acceleration Team?

**Baldwin Ng:** That's right. That's Solution Accelerator.

**Richard Campbell:** Solution Accelerators. So what are solution accelerators?

**Baldwin Ng:** Simply put, Solution Accelerators are a suite of free automated tools and best practice type of guidance that would help IT pros and consultants to go through different product migration scenarios across most Microsoft products so including desktop deployment, server virtualizations, a very hot topic these days…

**Richard Campbell:** Sure.

**Baldwin Ng:** How do you get started and what's the guidance on that, how do you design the infrastructure around a Hypervisor type of system using Hyper-V for example and then subsequently how do you know which service is a good candidate for it. It really requires you to know a lot more about utilization on Mac thereof and we bought out some tools that actually provide you with that insight.

**Richard Campbell:** And so you announced a new version of the -- which tool was this?

**Baldwin Ng:** It's called a MAP toolkit or Microsoft Assessment Planning toolkit.

**Richard Campbell:** So assessment and planning. It's a very broad name, assessment and planning, so maybe you can give us an idea of what this thing does.

**Baldwin Ng:** So for example, these days a lot of customers are probably looking at the pocketbooks, the copper pocketbooks, thinking about how much money they're spending on power and cooling of those seriously under utilized service.

**Richard Campbell:** Sure.

**Baldwin Ng:** So this Microsoft Assessment and Planning toolkit or MAP toolkit is going to be able to help an IT pro or IT business manager to look at their current existing physical server environment and try to figure out overtime what kind of utilization is actually being taken up by these servers, is it a lot, is it actually in many cases less than 5% or 10% of utilization…

**Richard Campbell:** Right.

**Baldwin Ng:** And if so, then these tools would then generate some what if's scenarios about if I would buy a 16 CPU server for example, can I jam everything into one server or two as opposed to 10 or 20.

**Greg Hughes:** I don't know anything about these assessment tools. I'm learning about this for the first time. So in a data center, is there anything that allows me to measure, for example, power that I'm using or can you infer any of that type of thing or are we talking mostly about the computing resources of the machines in terms of in order to take full advantage of that?

**Jay Sauls:** The tool actually does several things. In terms of power management resources, what we do is we provide an ability to go out and discover machines. If you don't know what you've got, we can go and look at active directory, look at an IP address range, find all the machines in that environment and say, okay, great, now here is what you've got.

**Greg Hughes:** Sure.

**Jay Sauls:** At second pass, we can go through and say let's observe these machines and find out what their utilizations are, what CPU utilization is, what your hard disk utilization is, what applications are on those machines so you can understand, you know, I've got these applications that aren't using much CPU.

**Greg Hughes:** Right.

**Jay Sauls:** Another pass we can do is to say let's go through a hypothetical scenario where we define a host machine in terms of how many CPU's it has, what speed they are, all those kinds of things and we can make recommendations for migrating physical machines to become virtual machine guest and we can do that in an Hyper-V environment or in a virtual server environment.

**Greg Hughes:** Yeah, I got you.

**Jay Sauls:** And then the final thing that actually gets to your point about cost, we have some calculators that can help you say okay, let's make some assumptions about how much I pay for a kilowatt of electricity, how much an average machine uses in terms of power and demonstrate okay, as you go from X number of physical machines to Y number of virtual machines running on a set for physical hardware, here's what you might be able to anticipate in terms of reduction of cost.

**Greg Hughes:** I'm curious about how that's delivered and how it's packaged. I mean, so having worked with data centers that are over capacity in terms of power but under capacity in terms of space, it's a classic problem. We've done some pretty amazingly complicated and gory looking spreadsheets to try to figure out and to do estimates, you know, but we had to self-build those tools? It sounds like maybe you're offering something that -- can you tell us sort of what it looks like to the user or how is it delivered?

**Jay Sauls:** For the power calculation itself?

**Greg Hughes:** Sure or in general.

**Jay Sauls:** So in general, the idea is that we provide kind of a framework for people to work through especially in environments that may not be as sophisticated as a large enterprise environment. So large enterprise environment has the blessing of usually they have several resources in terms of people who know what they're doing and have lots of experience in this area…

**Richard Campbell:** And they get to run those big tools, these system operation managers and so forth. They've probably already got a live inventory of their systems so they are a long way down the path compared to a smaller operation.

**Jay Sauls:** That's right and so what we're trying to do is capture a lot of that knowledge and a lot of those best practices and bring those into a package that's accessible for a much larger audience.

**Greg Hughes:** Got you.

**Jay Sauls:** And so the tools itself that we're providing in terms of, for example, a cost calculator are not terribly sophisticated but they give a good framework that is accessible for people who are even running 5 to 10 machines to their environment all the way to up to several thousand.

**Richard Campbell:** So what does it take to set this up? I mean, it's called the Solution Accelerator, it's free, so I download it; I install it on these machines?

**Baldwin Ng:** That's right. All Solution Accelerators are free and what that means is once you install you can use it and if you run into issues, you can actually call product support or the customer support hotline and it's supported by other products.

**Jay Sauls:** Right but one of the things that we like to emphasize is the MAP's tool in particular, which is what we've been talking about, is a single computer tool. You install this on one centralize machine in your environment, it could be a laptop, it could be a heavy duty desktop, it depends really on how many machines need to go inventory in terms of how much hardware you want to throw at it but you put it on one machine and then in an *agentless* fashion will go out and inventory all the other machines in your environment.

**Greg Hughes:** So I don't have to install anything on my servers or on my client machine or anything, just on one machine…

**Jay Sauls:** That's absolutely right.

**Greg Hughes:** Using WMI as something to go out and query the machines. How are you doing this?

**Jay Sauls:** So the only requirement is that we have the ability to interrogate those machines via WMI.

**Greg Hughes:** Okay.

**Jay Sauls:** So in a client environment, that typically means reconfiguring the Windows Firewall to allow remote administration and WMI calls come through. We provide information for people who aren't familiar with it so here's how you can configure active directory as a group policy to push that out automatically, and then in a server environment or in a data center environment, as long as you can get a machine running MAP on the right subnet or within the right DMZ to access the other machines in that environment and assuming they're not running local firewalls, then you're good to go.

**Greg Hughes:** If I have a management network for example that has access to those, it might be a way to…

**Jay Sauls:** That's a great scenario where you've kind of got -- back towards is kind of a bad term, but you got a single place where you can stand, metaphorically speaking, and be able to see the rest of your environment. That's where you can put your mass machine and be able to pull in all these data.

**Greg Hughes:** Some Solution Accelerators are white papers, right. They describe how to use other tools that already exist out there to gather new ways to do something but it sounds like you actually have an installable package that goes along as part of this Solution Accelerator.

**Jay Sauls:** That's right. So one of our goals that we've been moving towards over a long period of time is traditionally the Solution Accelerator's group has been producing white papers, documentations, phone books…

**Richard Campbell:** Really guidance materials.

**Jay Sauls:** Guidance materials. We're trying to capture as much as possible that guidance materials and actionable tools so that instead of somebody having to sit down for three weeks and pile their way through a huge set of documents just to find the four, five things that they really wanted to know, package all that up and bring it to people in an automated fashion so that they can apply it directly to their environment without necessarily having to get into detail that doesn't help them in their day to day.

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah, just like the automation of this that it would spit back an inventory of my machine and actually we're going all the way down to what OS are running, what apps they've got installed on it…

**Baldwin Ng:** That's right.

**Richard Campbell:** What drivers are you using?

**Baldwin Ng:** Yeah, what drivers and also if discerned device drivers have compatibility issues. Windows Vista Migration Scenario will tell you what you should do and in many cases you need to go contact the manufacturer. In other cases, if the driver is all compatible, you don't have to worry about those.

**Richard Campbell:** So this is actually to be a tool -- I mean, we were talking about Hyper-V initially here and all virtualization, but I could use this tool to assess the upgrades of a whole set of clients all at once to say Vista.

**Baldwin Ng:** Exactly. As a matter of fact, the list had been going longer you know. With the MAP toolkit 3.2 we just released at TechEd EMEA show, we've now added a whole lot of other scenarios beyond Hyper-V, beyond when you talk about the OS migration like migrating your XP machines to Windows Vista, migrating your Windows Sever 2003 machine to Windows Server 2008. So we've add for this release also things like with SQL server 2000 already gone out of what we call the mainstream support by Microsoft…

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah, it's been eight years.

**Baldwin Ng:** Its been a while and most folks are now trying to figure out where are those SQL server 2000 legacy instances so that they can migrate them, and again a lot of customers don't necessarily have a comprehensive system management software so finding those are hard and using the MAP toolkit you now have the ability to find those instances…

**Richard Campbell:** I think a specialist is the key when you're talking about MSDE runtime. Back in the 2000 era, we had this basically hidden version of SQL server running on people's desktops.

**Baldwin Ng:** That's right and we will help you actually find those because remember these tools can help you find both client machines with server machines.

**Richard Campbell:** Right.

**Baldwin Ng:** So through this discovery method and applying the logic of SQL server discovery, we can now find all of these instances both on desktops and the server environment.

**Richard Campbell:** So you've combined these abilities to inventory all these machines with that guidance piece to say here is what the requirements to be for Vista and these machines comply, these ones are under power, these ones have conflicting drivers and so on.

**Baldwin Ng:** Exactly, yeah, and the other piece that we're also talking about is since MAP 3.1 and now increasingly in 3.2 and beyond, we've added another scenario in term of security assessment so as probably the audience would know, a security center is a feature of Windows OS.

**Richard Campbell:** Right.

**Baldwin Ng:** And we now have the ability to actually now only look at a report, the settings of this security center to see your desktop, for example, do they have Windows Firewall to attend on, do they have anti-spyware, antivirus software installed. It will also tell you if the anti-spyware software actually has a date, and then what's even better is we can assess your PC's readiness for potential install of a forefront client security and network guys' protection.

**Greg Hughes:** So using a lot of really the same API's such as you're using for NAP -- so a different acronym here, Network Access Protection, it sounds like doing a lot of the same types of interrogation but we can leverage that for different purposes…

**Baldwin Ng:** That's right, that's right. In many ways, the tool really had been gathering a lot of these treasure data and now we're just unlocking some of these value.

**Greg Hughes:** It's a great example of where the new API's of Microsoft has been putting into the products over the last couple of years and opening those interfaces up to third parties and you could even think of -- I mean, Microsoft is a huge corporation, you have 91,000 employees there now, and so it's really a whole bunch of small businesses all inside one large business but you were able to leverage those common API's internally as well as third parties doing them.

**Jay Sauls:** That's right. We really have abused the WMI infrastructure to pull as much data back into these machines as we can. One of the things that we're doing is building an asset, a data asset where we're bringing back, from any particular machine, we'll bring back between 40 and 50 classes of WMI data, anything from information about every process on a machine, information about every memory SIM card on a machine all the way up to all the applications that are installed on the machine. We've literally build a data warehouse that runs on your machine as MAP is all on it and we keep unlocking more and more of that data via the reports that we create overtime.

**Richard Campbell:** Now, I get a sense of viewer saying like depending on the network you're running here, you may need a little bit of clout in the machine that's doing all these interrogating and actually aggregating all that data. Do you have a picture of how much data per machine likewise you're actually collecting?

**Jay Sauls:** Yeah, we get to ask that quite frequently. It really depends on one factor. it's anywhere between about half a megabyte up to a megabyte worth of data per machine…

**Richard Campbell:** Wow.

**Jay Sauls:** And the one factor that really sways it one way or the other is how many applications you have installed on that machine…

**Richard Campbell:** So you've got a heavily loaded down machine that can be an awful lot of data.

**Jay Sauls:** That's right, that's right. So, you know, in a LAN environment is really typically no problem. We have a multithreaded architecture. We will go after, depending on your machine, we'll go after anywhere between 20 and 40 target machines at a time to get their data simultaneously. For each machine that we inventory, it takes anywhere between 45 seconds to a minute and a half to get the data for that particular machine so we're doing 30 or 40 of them at the same time.

**Richard Campbell:** So you have started to do the math and you're trying to figure out if I've got a thousand machines in my network, that's going to be two, three hours?

**Baldwin Ng:** A thousand machines, we can typically do in under an hour.

**Richard Campbell:** Under an hour.

**Baldwin Ng:** Yeah.

**Richard Campbell:** That's fast and that's only with the software installed on one machine.

**Baldwin Ng:** That's right.

**Richard Campbell:** Everything else is a group policy. I mean, if I'm running a domain, this is pretty painless, right.

**Baldwin Ng:** Yeah.

**Richard Campbell:** I'm now in the domain administrator account, I'm pushing group policy out to open up the WMI port for all these machines…

**Baldwin Ng:** That's right.

**Richard Campbell:** I'm hoping you clean up after yourself afterwards.

**Jay Sauls:** Well, if you push out the group policy, then, you know, you own it.

**Richard Campbell:** Right and then you push the group policy back out at the closet and up again.

**Jay Sauls:** That's right and one of the things, cool things that you can do in group policy that people sometimes forget is that you can designate and administrate that machine so you can say "only open the Windows Firewall to allow WMI request from this one IP address."

**Richard Campbell:** Right.

**Jay Sauls:** So that helps. If you say, "Look, I'm going to install MAP on this machine, I know what the IP address is," then you're exposure is only to that one machine.

**Richard Campbell:** We are cracking open our entire network to be able to inventory these things.

**Jay Sauls:** That's right.

**Richard Campbell:** We should have some way to close up the door.

**Jay Sauls:** That's right. Another thing I'd like to talk about, you mentioned this earlier, was thinking about device drivers in Vista and device drivers in Windows Server 2008. One of the things we did that I thought was pretty cool was we partnered with the group within Microsoft that actually issues the logos to device manufacturers…

**Richard Campbell:** By the certification of the drivers.

**Jay Sauls:** Exactly. So every time now a new driver comes through certification, our team actually gets a notification and we get a fee that says "This plug and play device I did has now been certified."

**Richard Campbell:** Right.

**Jay Sauls:** So the tool, when you install it, has an initial list of well over five million devices…

**Richard Campbell:** Holy cow.

**Jay Sauls:** And knows about that they are already certified and then every time you run the tool, it goes up in the Cloud and gets the latest updates. So the time between a new device getting certified and the time that MAP is aware of it is just a matter of weeks.

**Richard Campbell:** That's nice.

**Jay Sauls:** So when you're worried about, hey, I've got all of these machines in my legacy environment, what kind of device driver situation am I going to run into before you even try to upgrade a machine to Vista. You know exactly what you're going to be in for.

**Richard Campbell:** I'm starting to get the feeling like MAP is something I want to run routinely. It's not just when I'm planning a Vista upgrade or if I'm reorganizing for Hyper-V. Is it worth keeping around steadily like a chicken every month or two?

**Jay Sauls:** Yeah. I mean, there are so many different scenarios that we can address. Right now, it's really setup as kind of a project-based approach. I'm worried about a Vista upgrade project. I'm worried about virtualizing these machines to Hyper-V, but overtime, I think we might see an environment where we say, hey, run this thing every couple of weeks or run this thing every month and for example identify changes.

**Greg Hughes:** Right.

**Jay Sauls:** One good scenario for this, let's say I've got SMS or configuration manager in my environment. In general, I want to make sure that all my machines are being managed that way, but occasionally, for whatever reason, you get machines that end up broken and don't get managed by the environment. This is a tool that we can go out and use at fine machines that have…

**Richard Campbell:** Or at machines that have fallen off of -- I'm still going to call an SMS. Maybe you're not allowed to but I remembered this SMS and configuration manager. I mean it's an interesting thought that here are the tools out there that can say here are the machines that are not in your SMS groups so you can sort of recover from that.

**Baldwin Ng:** Right. Another thing I want to point out too is that even in terms of deployment, often times that some folks might think that, oh, desktop deployments are one time deal. For most organizations, unless you're really small, typically it's done in phases anyway.

**Greg Hughes:** It's not going rolling process really.

**Baldwin Ng:** Exactly. So because of its stage of phase, you probably will find yourself running MAP several times because you're doing 5% of your desktop at a time for the migration.

**Greg Hughes:** Right, right.

**Richard Campbell:** I'm also thinking now that I'd love to keep a baseline of my workstations and then be able to do a delta and say how many workstations have changed that may or may not be permitted or have installed software from a foreign source. I mean, this seems like there's a lot of potential there.

**Baldwin Ng:** Right and ultimately, for example in the security assessment we talked about early in finding out these machines that don't have antivirus and anti-spyware software for example, our hope is that by periodically or once in a while running the method to find these things will cause you to think about really purchasing a full-blown management toolset like the full Frontline Security together with NAP and other types of software so that you can actually get yourself continuously well managed as opposed to one day you are, the next day you aren't.

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah, I think that's true. I want to sort of guide us back as, Greg, you alluded to this, the great virtualization spreadsheet. When we used to do this by hand, we've got an inventory of our servers and now we're trying to figure out what can we combine into a virtual server and so this sounds like a primary scenario for MAP.

**Baldwin Ng:** I would say this stage is the popular one even though two years ago this project came out of the Windows Vista migration effort.

**Richard Campbell:** Right.

**Baldwin Ng:** Where hardware compatibility was an issue and looking across tens of thousands of computers manually, it was almost impossible, humanly impossible and I remember I was actually, I ran into a customer in one of the conference and he said that he knows of someone who like to spend weeks if not months to go through the previous XP migration. So he started with the OS problem of overcoming the hurdle but now we really have strived to start expand into the virtualization area and increasingly getting into the secure area online services. So these tools continue to grow, enrich, but I hope we also grow in depth as well so that there is virtualization in other areas as we go deeper and making it easier to use, maybe producing more even easier to read, easier to create customizable report, etc.

**Greg Hughes:** Metaphorically speaking, in the past there is a lot of haystacks out on our field, right, and we really need to be worried about the needles that's in all these haystacks and it's heavy lifting, it's rotten work and it takes a lot of time and a lot of effort and sort of noticed Microsoft and other companies, but there is real value in sort of automating the haystack analysis so that the people can focus their time instead of finding the problems and solving the problems.

**Jay Sauls:** That's absolutely right and you know, our strategy for helping people do that in terms of analysis was to provide them with as much as relevant data as possible but not limit the scenario for which they might use it.

**Greg Hughes:** Right, right.

**Jay Sauls:** And so Excel, for better or for worse, is one of the better analysis tools for this data so when we were going through this process of figuring out how do we want to present data, people will say look, if we give everybody a row set in Excel, they got auto filter, they got sorting, they got search, all of those things you build right in so all of our reports come out in that format.

**Greg Hughes:** And people know how to use it the same way they know how to use a Gerber tool or a Leatherman, right. I mean, it's an everything tool and you sort of just flip out the part that you want to use.

**Jay Sauls:** That's absolutely right and our data store is a SQL server database and it gets installed automatically when you install MAP so people who are familiar with SQL and are competent with it, there's nothing preventing them at all from just going through and writing their queries directly against that database and pulling up their own data.

**Greg Hughes:** I can think of compliance scenarios that you could use this for, a variety of things. I guess one question I'd add for you is what if I'm not concerned about necessarily what is running on a machine that's -- what if I'm concerned about something running on machines that maybe shouldn't really be there?

**Jay Sauls:** Right, so on a client environment, we were able to give a pretty good list of all the installed applications that are there and that includes pretty much everything that shows up in the add/remove program list. So we provide a machine-by-machine list of all the apps that are installed in a particular machine and we also provide an enterprise wide roll-up that says look, you've got 47 instances of Microsoft Word and 35 instances of this and so applications like Halo for PC are going to show up on that list.

**Greg Hughes:** Unless it's in the IT department of course, in which case it was probably approved by…

**Jay Sauls:** Exactly, in which case if somebody completely…

**Baldwin Ng:** Yeah, definitely compliance is one area that I would say is a new topic that people start thinking about so I certainly think that it's conceivable that someday we'll provide, for example in apps, I remember talking to one of the enterprise IT guys just not too long ago, he was requesting basically a black list or white list type of application compliance inventory…

**Richard Campbell:** Nice.

**Baldwin Ng:** So that we can measure against, check it against that black and white list and then take some action against that depending on what you find out. So that's totally conceivable in the future, sure format.

**Richard Campbell:** Are you only assessing bare-metal machines? How do you behave with other virtualized servers?

**Jay Sauls:** So in an environment where you've already got virtual machines, we have a report in place that we'll show you all of the servers that are running some form of Microsoft virtualization whether that's Hyper-V or Virtual Server 2005 or even clients that are running virtual PC.

**Richard Campbell:** Sure.

**Jay Sauls:** And then on the right side of that report next to each server, we showed all of the guests to that server and we showed what operating system it's running, how many CPU's are allocated to it, how much memory, etc.

**Greg Hughes:** And is that only active guests, or can you also at guests that are maybe not turned on at that time?

**Jay Sauls:** So that gets really hairy. In the virtual PC arena, we can't really interrogate virtual PCs so what we actually do is we back into it. We find a guest and then we ask the guest who his host is and that's how we actually create the mapping. That's why on Hyper-V and Virtual Server 2005, yes, we go and interrogate directly against those environments and say give me a list of all your guests, and so then we'll find out about guests that are turned off right now or in the sleep state or does a spin state or whatever.

**Greg Hughes:** Okay.

**Jay Sauls:** But that's a new report that we just added for the 3.2 release that came out last week or this week and we plan on extending that overtime so that we can actually start doing other environments like VMware and SimWorks to give you a more complete view of across your entire environment.

**Richard Campbell:** Excellent and I really like the fact that, I mean, I could be using these tools to create more virtualization. We've already got some going on, you can be able to assess how loaded down my host environment is, how busy my guests are so I get a picture of how much room I got left in this server.

**Jay Sauls:** That's right and it's going to be interesting because I think some of the licensing options that the Windows Server team are offering through the Windows Server 2008 Data Center edition, people will be able to make rich advantage of that by looking at these reports and say okay, great, I can load up these servers with as many guests as will fit to take advantage of the licensing terms and so we'll be able to provide a view into how that's working.

**Richard Campbell:** And give us a picture of where we're in violation or pushing limits of our licensing as well.

**Jay Sauls:** That's what you said.

**Richard Campbell:** Okay. All I'm asking is for a picture of it, I don't know that you actually want to do enforcing but let me know how many I've got. I find virtual machines get away from us.

**Jay Sauls:** We're clearly not in the enforcement business. We're simply on the reporting edge…

**Greg Hughes:** Right.

**Jay Sauls:** And so, you know, if a customer is worried that they might be not agreeing to the terms of the license or they are not sure, we're

going to provide the data but it's for somebody else to interpret.

**Greg Hughes:** I can see where this tool is useful. Even if you have a tool in place to keep track of licensing or if you have a tool in place to keep track of installed software or of configuration or what not that especially in a compliance driven environment, sometimes you need a tool to check the validity of your tools.

**Jay Sauls:** That's right.

**Greg Hughes:** And this could be a great resource for doing that that will be relatively lightweight and easy to use.

**Baldwin Ng:** Right, right, and in other words, what Jay is trying to say is that this MAP, Microsoft Assessment Planning toolkit is really designed to help you uncover the knowledge that is just sitting around so in this case it could be that you have too many virtual machines that's loaded into physical class and have Data Center edition for example. For this tool specifically, we are not going to do the policing. The information is going to reside on the MAP machine itself but we know a lot of customers actually who actively talk to Microsoft and say I wanted them in my environment better so that I can actually become compliant to your specific licensing agreement. So in those cases, I think MAP toolkits have really helped them a lot in terms of giving them more knowledge and the compiler.

**Greg Hughes:** Having been responsible for licensing and for a variety of compliance at the publicly held company, you know that there's real value to doing that because we do tend to be proactive about getting that done for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the insurance companies require you to and the whole bunch of other compliant reasons so that's a good resource to be able to sort of check the checkers if you will but again, it's finding those needles in those multiple haystacks that are all over the place. The fact that you guys were able to burn the haystacks down if you will…

**Baldwin Ng:** That's right.

**Greg Hughes:** We can just pick up the needles and then start doing what different colors are the needles and how do we solve the problems associated with my really bad analogy but there's a huge amount of value on that.

**Richard Campbell:** I could see where an auditor would come in with their own laptop with MAP installed to do their own assessment. I mean, granted that they would have to have proper privileges and so forth, but what is an auditor's role other than prove that the numbers you are giving them are right to be able to run the tool to get their independent set of numbers. That's very compelling and quite painless actually compared to just about any other way I would think of doing that. Where do we get this fine product?

**Baldwin Ng:** Well, it's pretty simple. If you go to your favorite web browser, just typed in www.microsoft.com/map and you'll be able to get the latest download version.

**Richard Campbell:** Freely downloadable. A new version is still coming. What's coming next?

**Baldwin Ng:** Well, one is company access. As a matter for fact, we are about to step into several sessions at TechEd EMEA to talk about areas like Windows 7.0 support for the Vista client machines, Windows Server 2008 R2 support, etc, and we may even do more security scenarios. it's going to depend on the community so I…

**Richard Campbell:** How they use it.

**Baldwin Ng:** So I would encourage your audience to write to us and actually tell us what they need.

**Greg Hughes:** We'll put the plug-in for more security stuff right now. The deeper view, the deeper security view that we can get, the better off we are.

**Jay Sauls:** Yeah, that is one of our focuses and one of the things that we're trying to do is push requirements into the next versions of Windows to help us be able to collect more of this data. In fact, we're seeing that even today as one of the scenarios we're going after heavily was power management. Do I have my clients configured correctly to go to sleep, and things like that. We worked closely the Win 17 to say hey, this is the key scenario that people are going to be interested in, we need to make sure that data is available…

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah, you have a company that has a green initiative on being able to use this tool to quickly say yeah, we're shutting down properly, we're starting up for patches properly all of those configurations. That's very powerful. So how are guys going to be able to get a hold of you besides downloading the tool? Is there a contact point there or can they send you an email?

**Baldwin Ng:** Yeah sure, they're welcome to write to mapfdbk@Microsoft.com, stands for feedback, or there's another way, if you go to TechNet forum…

**Richard Campbell:** Yes.

**Baldwin Ng:** You will find Microsoft Assessment and Planning Toolkit Thread as one of the topic area and you could just simply write your requests…

**Richard Campbell:** Sure.

**Baldwin Ng:** And maybe other colleagues of yours and other IT pros would just chime in and say hey, I agree with you, I need the switcher too.

**Richard Campbell:** Yeah, sounds like in a forum it's almost required to reading. There are probably a lot of thoughts that we're going to have that have already taken place on that forum to give us some insights on where you're going.

**Baldwin Ng:** That's right.

**Richard Campbell:** Well, thanks so much for coming on the show. I'm really excited about this tool. I need to run it.

**Jay Sauls:** Yeah, right. It's cool. Thank you.

**Richard Campbell:** All right. And we'll talk to you next time on RunAs Radio.