Introduction to SDSF

System Display and Search Facility (SDSF) is an essential system management software tool. It functions as a software console and sends system operator commands to z/OS on behalf of its users. SDSF provides a means of displaying and dynamically changing most system configuration options.

z/OS system administrators and technicians rely on SDSF to help manage the system. Production control staff, software developers, and business users need it to manage batch job execution and output processing.

SDSF and RACF

Prior to z/OS 2.5, security for SDSF functions was provided either by its internal ISFPARMS configuration options, by RACF controls, or by a mix of both. In z/OS version 2.5, security is provided exclusively by RACF.

Failure to implement RACF protection for SDSF will delay your z/OS upgrade plans because users will not be able to use SDSF's services.

RACF protection for SDSF involves a highly-integrated, complex set of controls in the SDSF, JESSPOOL (job output), OPERCMDS (operator commands), WRITER (printers), XFACILIT (health-checker), and CONSOLE (command entry) resource classes and the closely associated JESINPUT (job entry) and NODES (network) classes. The simple task of cancelling a batch job, for example, requires permissions to profiles in the SDSF, OPERCMDS, and JESSPOOL classes.

These controls affect the operation of z/OS as a whole, not just SDSF, and must be implemented with great care to avoid disrupting the system. Considerable RACF technical expertise is required to implement them effectively and expeditiously.

If you need implementation help, call us today!

RSH Consulting, Inc.

RSH Consulting is a cybersecurity professional services firm established in 1992 and dedicated to helping clients strengthen their IBM z/OS mainframe access controls by fully exploiting all the capabilities and latest innovations in RACF. RSH RACF services include security assessments, implementation of new controls, remediation of existing controls, and training.

RACF SDSF Protection Project Plan

This is a sample project plan. A custom-tailored plan will be developed for each z/OS system that reflects any RACF controls already in place.

RACF, JES2, and SDSF Preliminary Analysis
Analyze SDSF ISFPARMS and ISFUSER exit
Analyze JES2, NJE, and RJE configuration
Analyze existing RACF profiles and RACF exits
Conduct RACF SDSF protection seminar
Prepare initial design of SDSF authority by user role

RACFVARS Class
Create profiles for &RACLNDE and internal nodes

CONSOLE Class
Create initial profiles with WARNING AUDIT(ALL)
Analyze SMF log data
Implement profile adjustments with NOWARNING

XFACILIT Class – Health-checker
Create initial HZS-prefixed profiles
Adjust profiles as required

WRITER Class
Create initial profiles with WARNING AUDIT(ALL)
Analyze SMF log data
Implement profile adjustments with NOWARNING

JESINPUT Class
Create initial profiles with WARNING AUDIT(ALL)
Analyze SMF log data
Implement profile adjustments with NOWARNING

NODES Class
Create initial profiles
Adjust profiles as required

OPERCMDS Class
Activate SETR LOGOPTIONS(ALWAYS(OPERCMDS))
Analyze SMF log data
Create initial profiles with WARNING
Analyze SMF log data
Implement profile adjustments with NOWARNING

JESSPOOL Class
Create initial profiles with WARNING AUDIT(ALL)
Analyze SMF log data
Implement profile adjustments with NOWARNING

SDSF Class
Create initial profiles
Adjust profiles as required
Implement simplified ISFPARMS

RSH CONSULTING, INC.
177 Huron Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138
www.rshconsulting.com ▪ 617-969-9050

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