

Description and guidelines on creating system service agent accounts on Mac OS X (Tiger)

For any system service agent that you want to create in Mac OS X, you would do the following:

```
sudo dscl localhost -create /NetInfo/root/Groups/system_groupname
sudo dscl localhost -create /NetInfo/root/Groups/system_groupname gid group_id
sudo dscl localhost -create /NetInfo/root/Users/system_username
sudo dscl localhost -create /NetInfo/root/Users/system_username uid user_id
sudo dscl localhost -create /NetInfo/root/Users/system_username gid primary_group_id
sudo dscl localhost -create /NetInfo/root/Users/system_username shell user_shell
sudo dscl localhost -create /NetInfo/root/Users/system_username home user_home
sudo dscl localhost -create /NetInfo/root/Users/system_username passwd "*"

```

Where,

system_groupname is a unique group name. By convention on Mac OS X, it is the same name as the username. Examples: tomcat, postfix, amavis, sendmail, etc.

group_id is the unique numeric id for the primary group used by the system service agent. Typically on Mac OS X (probably on other UNIX as well) this is going to be a number below 500. Best practice requires that it be unique, so you have to see what's already been assigned and consult with documentation of the service you're installing. Below is a dump of the groups that come on Mac OS X (Tiger)¹. You can see that there are already pre-existing groups which could be used for many services which aren't included on Mac OS X client.

system_username is a unique name of the system service agent. Examples: tomcat, postfix, amavis, sendmail, etc. Note: some of these names are traditional, like www, tomcat, postfix, etc. Others are up to you to come up with a naming convention. I recommend using the traditional name whenever possible.

user_id is the unique numeric primary number of the user agent under which the service will run. As Tim Parker points out this is a number below 500, but not a number already assigned to

another agent account. Below is a dump of the accounts that come on Mac OS X (Tiger)².

primary_group_id is the primary group which the system agent will belong to. This is the same number which was created in *group_id*.

user_shell is the shell under which the service agent will operate. In most cases this can be set to */usr/bin/false*.

user_home by convention is set to a benign directory. In case the system agent account or its service has a vulnerability you don't want the agent having access to sensitive directories. Typically these are */var/empty*, or */var/service_directory*. Service directory is a directory which you would create for exclusive use by the service.

passwd for system agents this is set to "*", or no password.

1 System groups in Mac OS X (Tiger)

nidump group .

```
nobody:*:-2:
nogroup:*:-1:
wheel:*:0:root
daemon:*:1:root
kmem:*:2:root
sys:*:3:root
tty:*:4:root
operator:*:5:root
mail:*:6:
bin:*:7:
procview:*:8:root
procmmod:*:9:root
staff:*:20:root
lp:*:26:
postfix:*:27:
postdrop:*:28:
certusers:*:29:root,jabber,postfix,cyrusimap
utmp:*:45:
uucp:*:66:
dialer:*:68:
network:*:69:
www:*:70:
mysql:*:74:
sshd:*:75:
qtss:*:76:
mailman:*:78:
appserverusr:*:79:
```


windowserver*:88:88::0:0:WindowServer:/var/empty:/usr/bin/false
tokend*:91:91::0:0:Token Daemon:/var/empty:/usr/bin/false
securityagent*:92:92::0:0:SecurityAgent:/var/empty:/usr/bin/false

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