Default Administrative Account

With the introduction of Quest vWorkspace version 7.2, we have added a new feature which we call the "Default Administrative Account". This feature provides two very real conveniences to the vWorkspace administrator:

1. The ability to specify, on a per-Location basis (see Figure 1), a default account that vWorkspace will use for all computer groups within the particular location
2. Update, on a per-Location basis, the default account that vWorkspace will use for all computer groups within the particular location
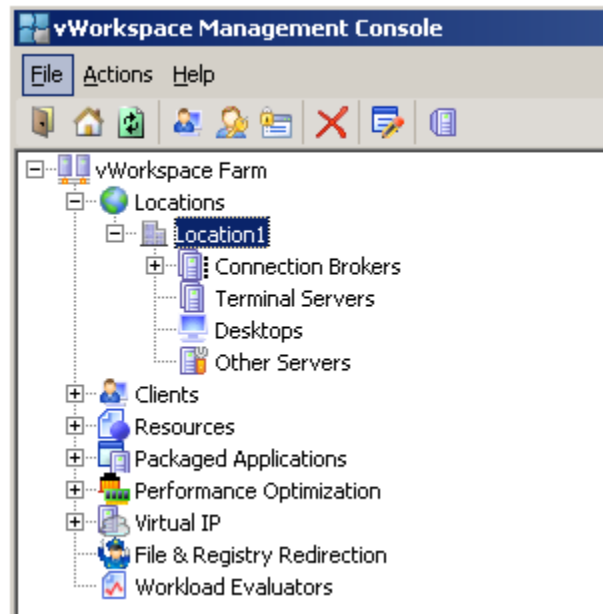

Figure 1. A Location Node in the vWorkspace Management Console

While this may not seem like much of a "wow!" feature, it brings a couple of big benefits:

- It allows you to empower junior administrators to create computer groups and provision VMs without having to know the administrative user account and password (*division of administrative authority/workload*)
- if you're the administrator in a large environment, it can be a significant time saver to update the administrative account in a single location rather than having to manually visit each computer group to update the account (*reduction of administrative burden*)

In my book, anything that makes it easier for the administrator is a good thing!

How to Configure the Default Administrative Account

To configure the default administrative account, you must first right-click on a child node in the "**Locations**" object of the vWorkspace administration console. After right-clicking, you will see the Location Node context menu (see Figure 2) where you can select the "**Properties…**" option.
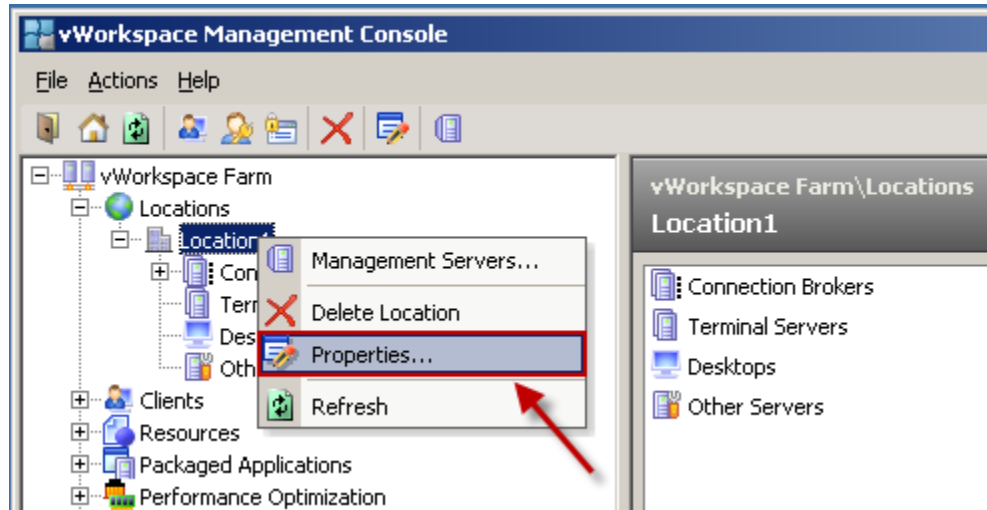

Figure 2. Selecting the Location Properties Option

When the **Location Properties** dialog first opens, the **Virtualization Entities** panel is selected. Move the selection to the **Administrative Account** option by clicking on the **Administrative Account** link in the command pane.

Figure 3. Selecting Administrative Account Configuration Option

With the Administrative Account panel visible (see Figure 4), enable the **Specify default administrative account** checkbox to activate the textboxes that will enable you to enter the desired credentials.
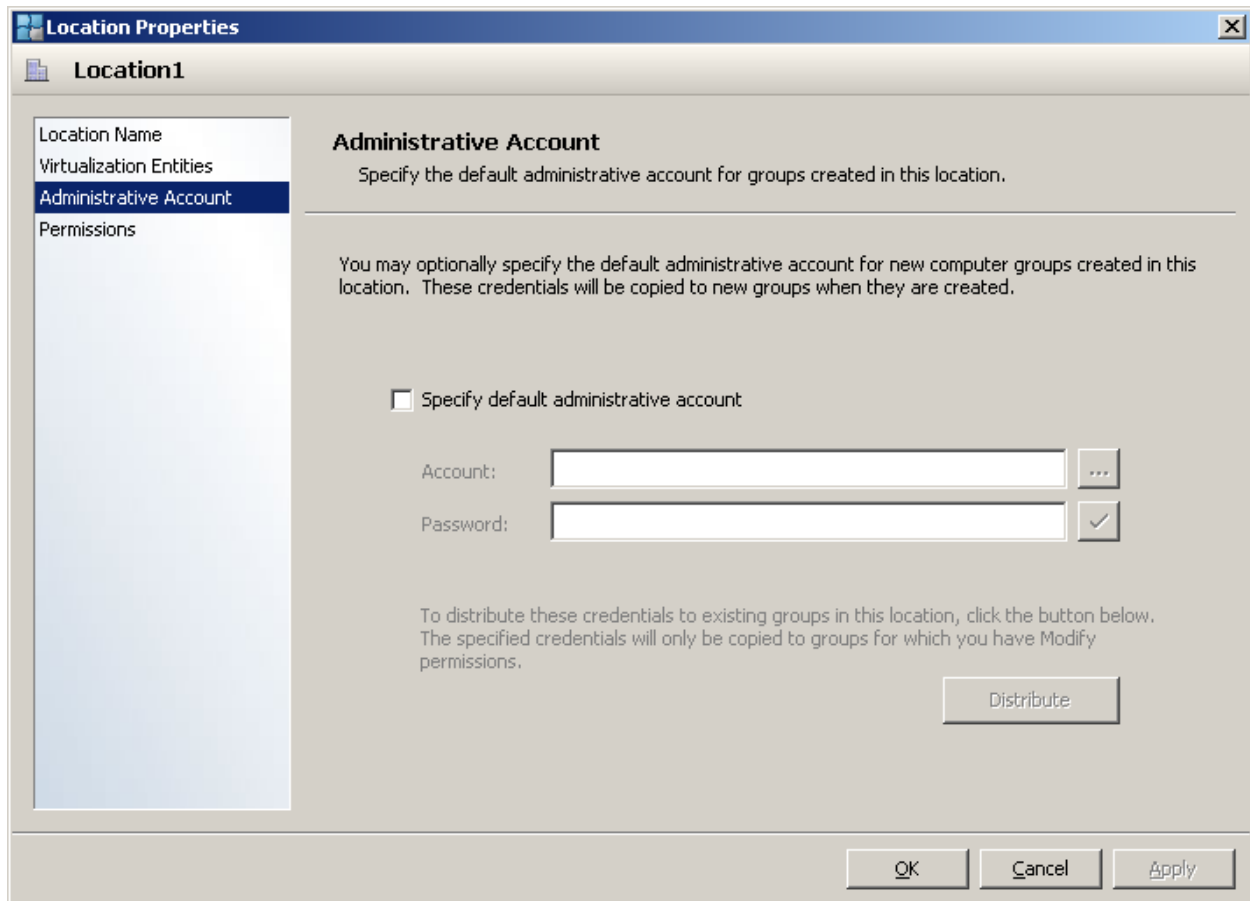
Figure 4. Administrative Account panel is visible

Enter the Domain\Account and password you want to use as the default for all **Computer Groups** created within this **Location**. You can use the ellipsis button (Figure 5) to select the user account via search dialogs or enter it manually, and you can use the Checkbox (Figure 5) to verify that the credentials you have entered are valid.
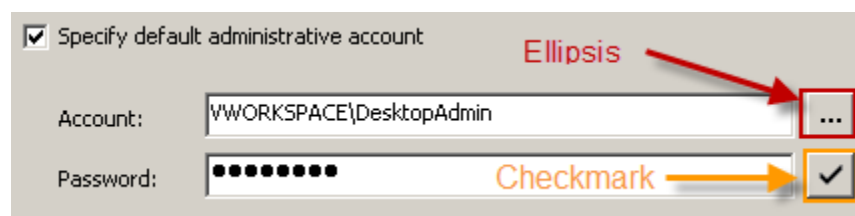

Figure 5. Entering & Validating Credentials

The first time you use the verification checkmark button you will be presented with the informational dialog shown in Figure 6. If you don't want to see this message on future credentials verification attempts, enable the checkbox and click "OK".
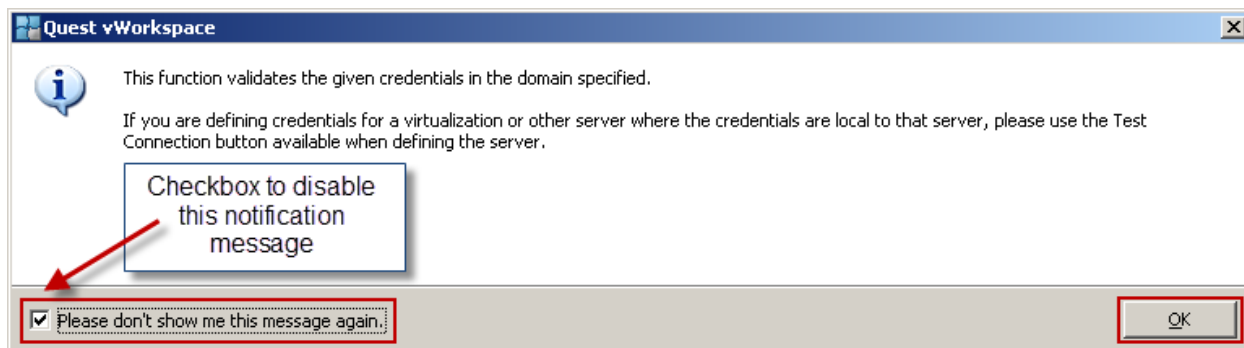
Figure 6. Credentials Verification Informational Dialog

Once you've acknowledged the informational dialog, the credentials will be validated against Active Directory. If the credentials fail (maybe you mistyped the password, or it could be that the account is not an administrator account), you will be presented with the dialog shown in Figure 7. Once you acknowledge this dialog, you will be returned to the **Administrative Account** panel where you can make appropriate changes and retry the account verification.
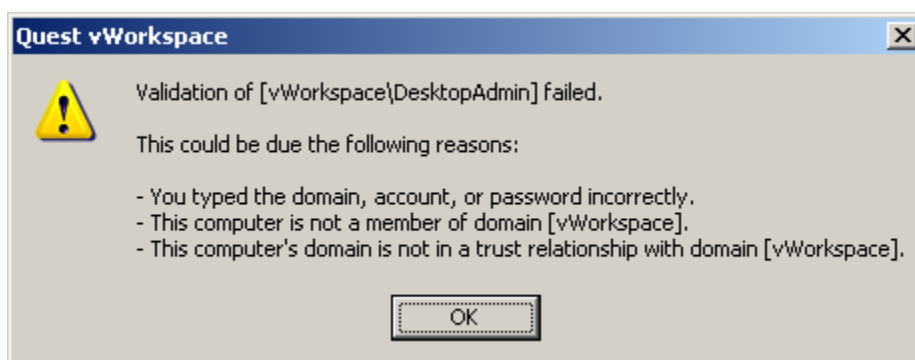

Figure 7. Credentials Verification Failure Message

Once the supplied credentials have been successfully verified against Active Directory, you will receive the success dialog shown in Figure 8.
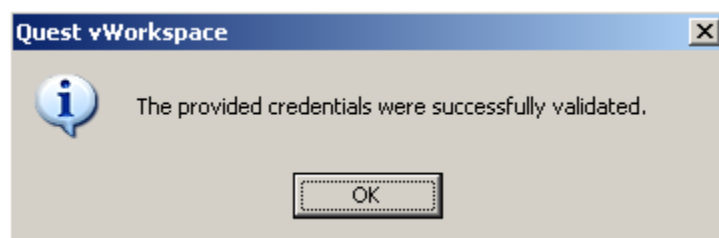

Figure 8. Credentials Verification Success Notification

At this point, you know that you've entered credentials that can be successfully validated against the Active Directory domain. Now, you need to decide whether you want to push these credentials to any pre-existing **Computer Group** within the **Location**. You would accomplish this "push" by selecting the "Distribute" button; however, for now, we're going to simply click the "OK" button (Figure 9) to confirm

our newly entered credentials as the new default value for any computer groups that we create in the scope of the selected **Location** child node.
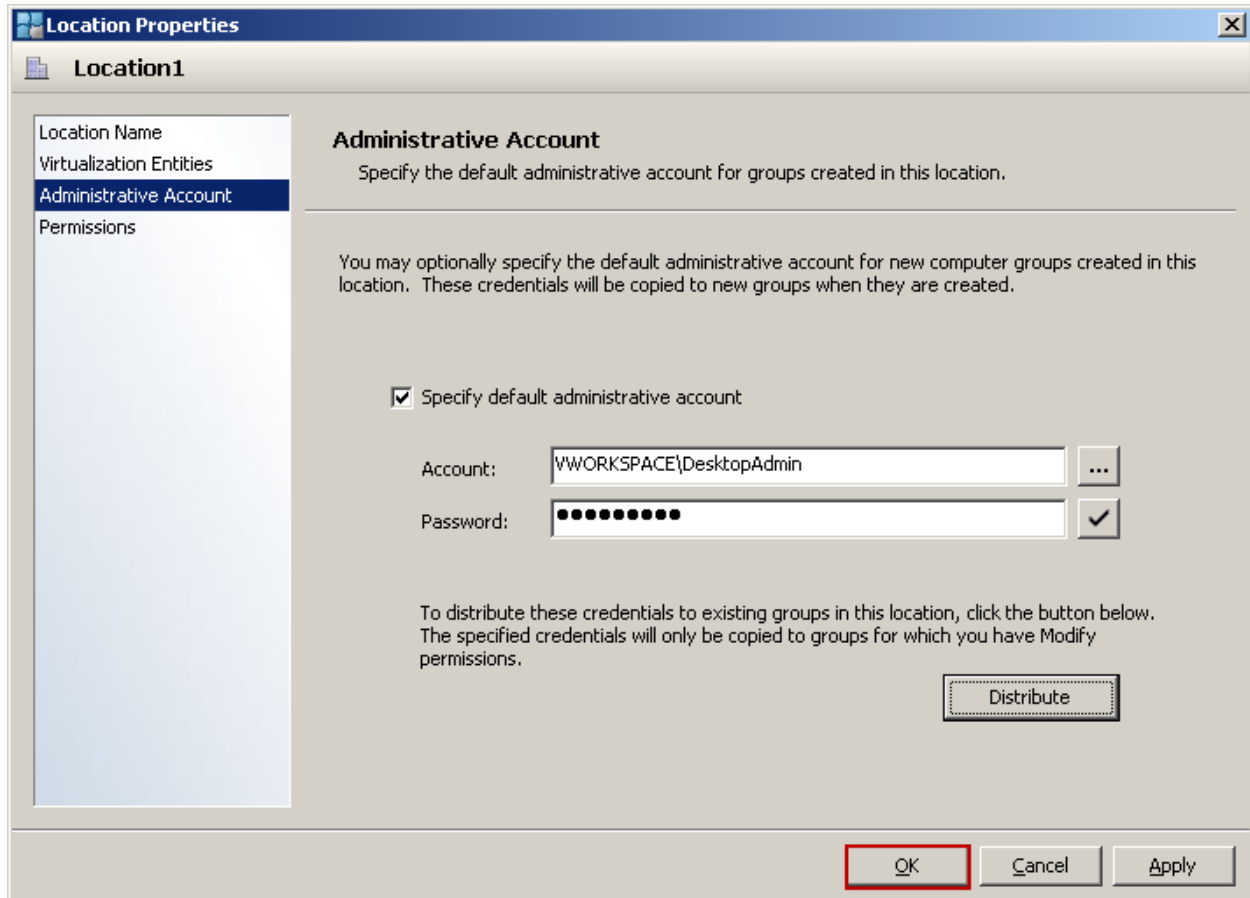
Creating a New Computer Group with Default Administrative Account

Now that we've established default credentials to use when creating a **Computer Group**, let's test to make sure we get the expected behavior. Within the Location where we made the configuration changes, right-click on the "**Desktops**" node and select the "**New Computer Group…**" option from the context sensitive menu (Figure 10).
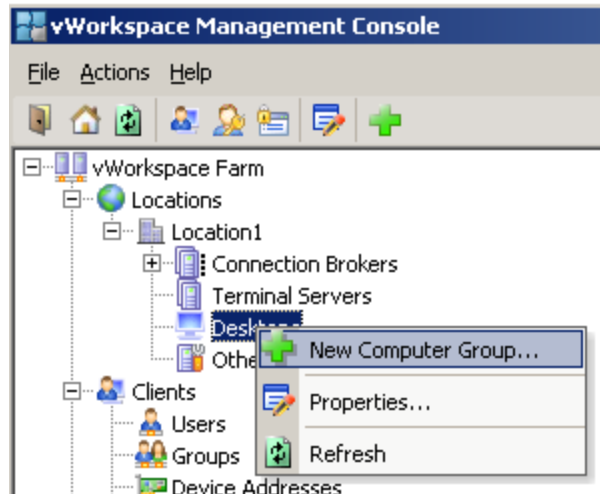
Figure 10. Creating a New Computer Group

In the **New Computer Group** wizard that is presented, provide appropriate information for the first few items and click "**Next**" until you reach the **Administrative Account** panel. Verify that the credentials you provided at the **Location** level is pre-populated in the **Account** and **Password** textboxes (Figure 11). At this point, you can click the checkmark button to verify that the credentials are valid.
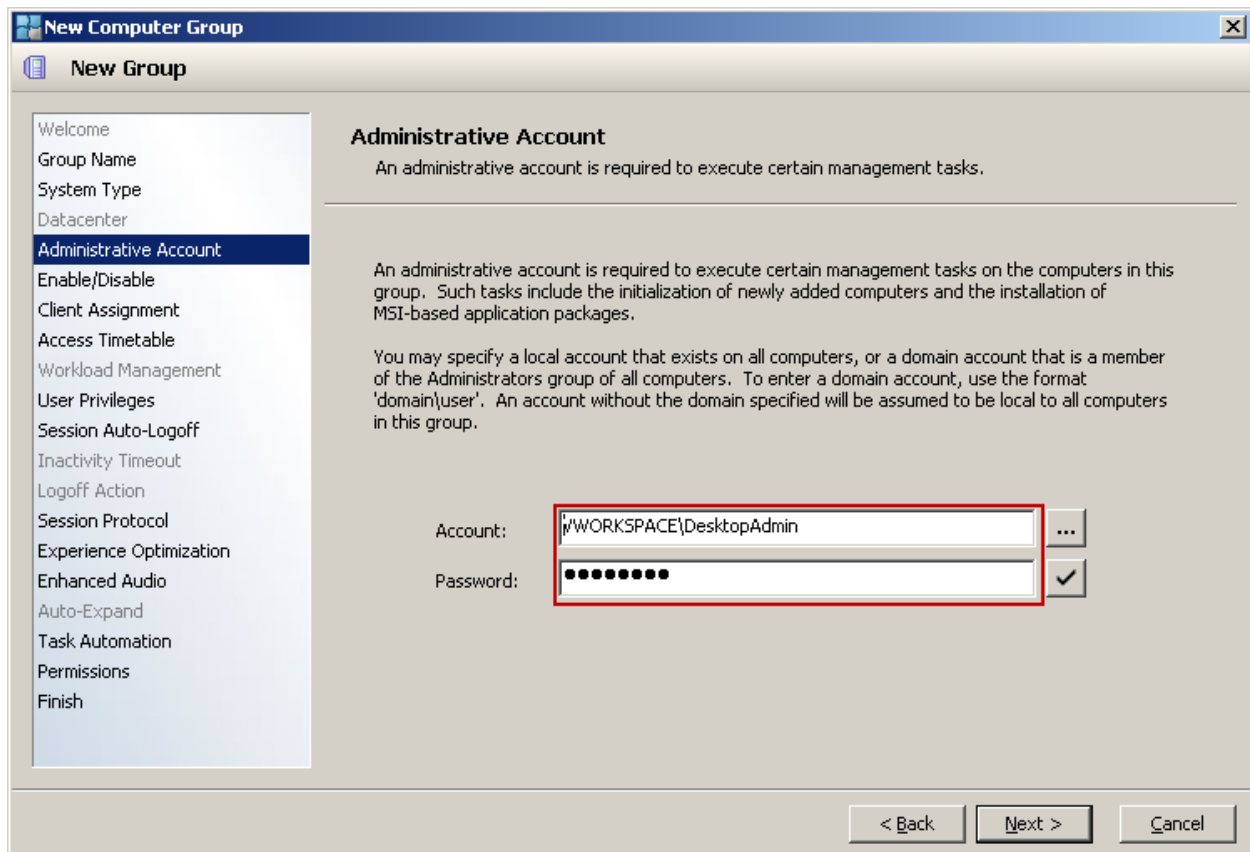

Figure 11. Verifying that Default Administrative Account is Working

Proceed through the remaining steps in the **New Computer Group** wizard and then select the computer group in the vWorkspace management console (**Physicals** in the example shown in Figure 12). Look in the right-hand pane of the display to verify that the *Admin Account* value reflects the account you specified as your **Default Administrative Account**.
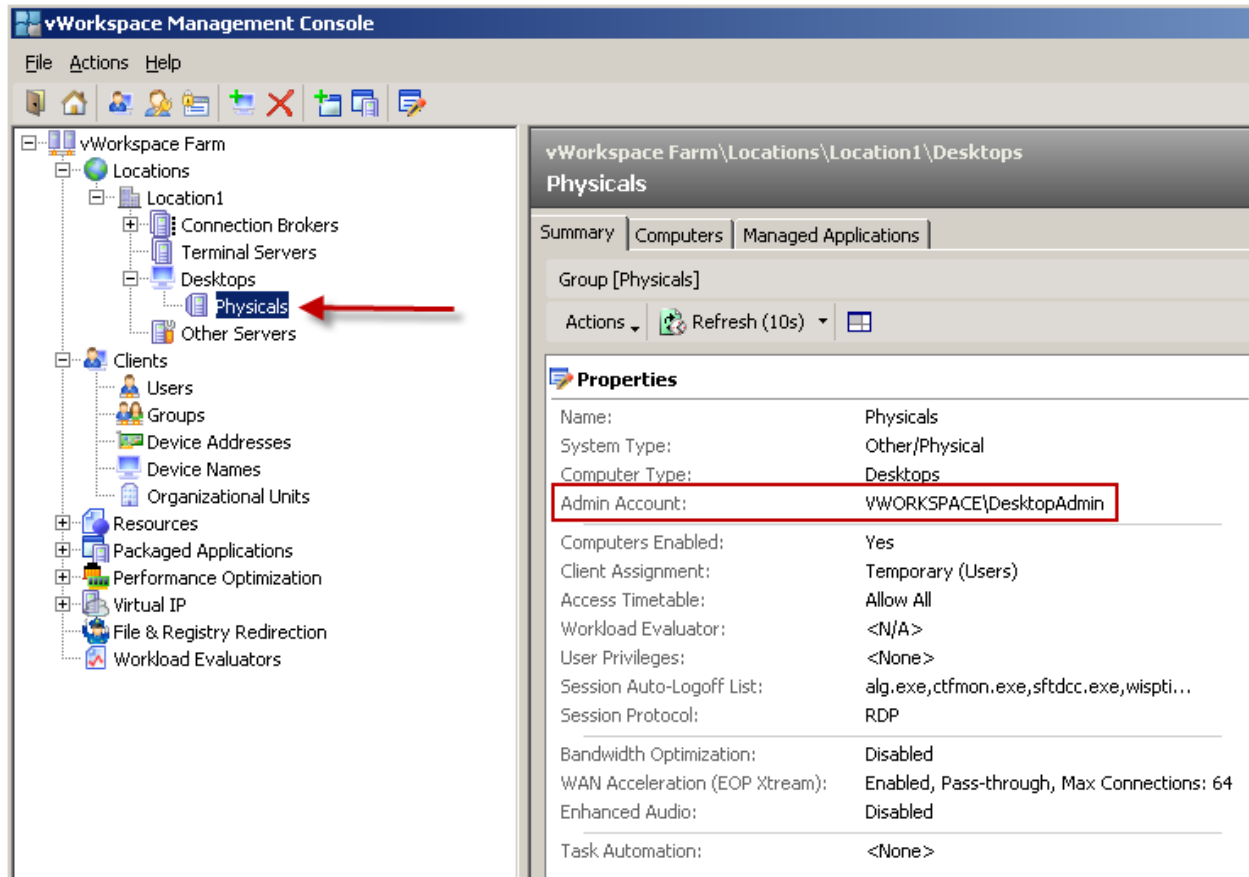
Figure 12. Default Administrative Account Successfully Applied

At this point, you have successfully configured and utilized the **Default Administrative Account** feature. Now, let's walk through an example use case where we have an administrator change the **Administrative Account** on an individual **Computer Group**.

Reconfiguring the Administrative Account credentials

There are two ways to reconfigure the **Administrative Account** credentials for a **Computer Group**. The first is to make the changes locally on the **Computer Group** itself; the next is to make the change to the **Default Administrative Account** settings on the **Location** node and distribute the settings to all contained **Computer Groups**.

Process for Changing Administrative Credentials on an Individual Computer Group

To change the **Administrative Account** setting on the individual **Computer Group** properties panel, right click on the **Computer Group** and select the **Properties…** item from the context sensitive menu (see Figure 13).
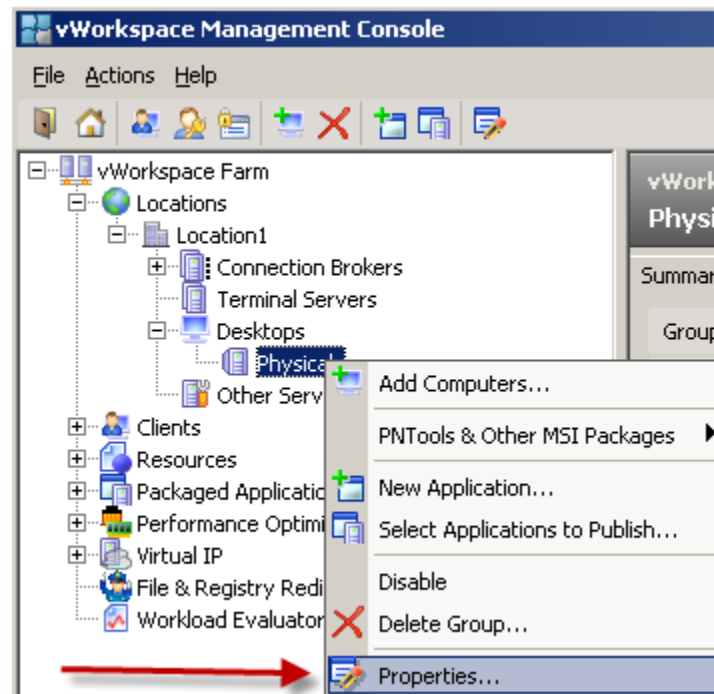

Figure 13. Selecting the Properties... Menu Item on an Individual Computer Group

Next, select the **Administrative Account** panel and enter the appropriate credentials in the **Account** and **Password** textboxes   (see Figure 14). As described previously, you can use the ellipsis button to assist with the accurate entry of the **Account** name and the check mark button to verify that you have entered valid credentials. Finally, click the OK button to confirm your changes and close the **Computer Group Properties** dialog.
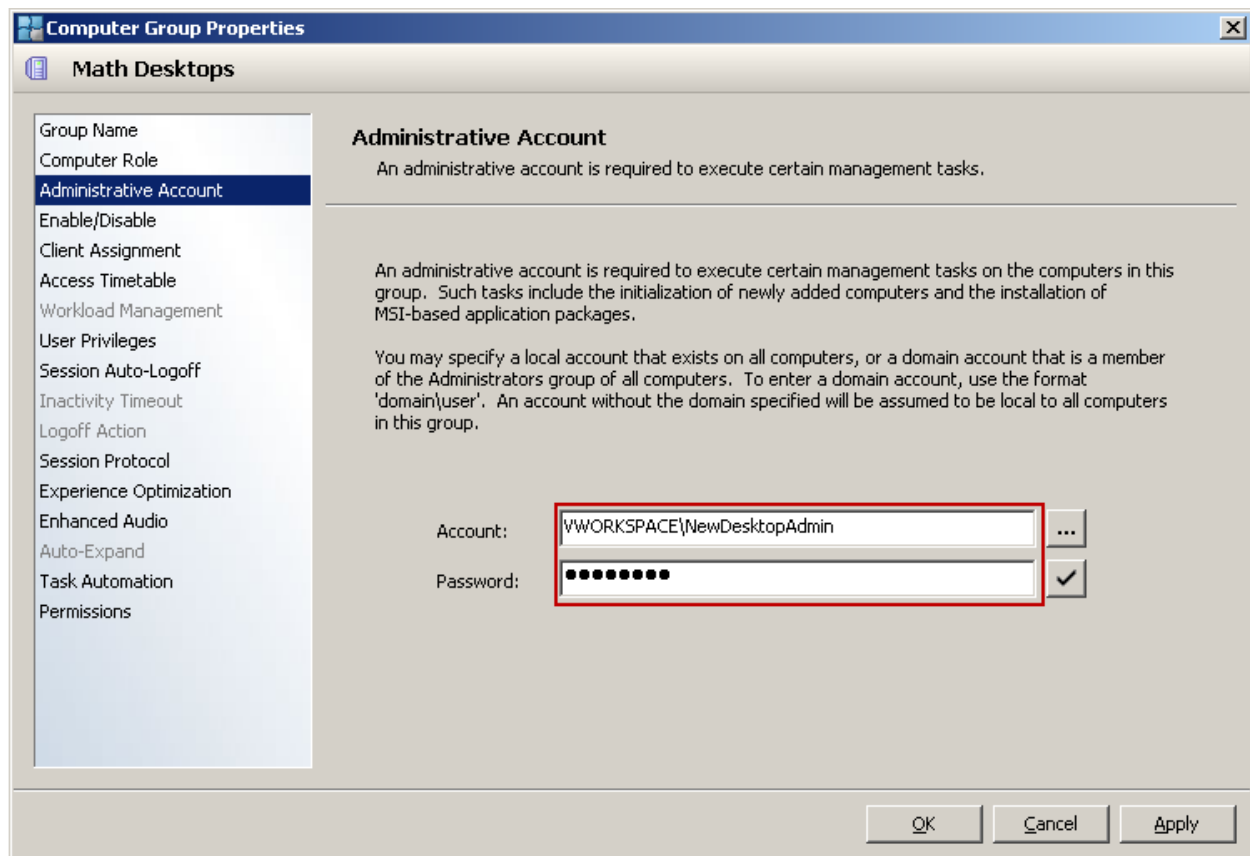
Figure 14. Reset Administrative Account on an Individual Computer Group

Process for Changing Default Administrative Account & Distributing the new Settings to Subordinate Computer Groups

In some cases, you may find it more effective to make the changes at the **Location** node level and propagate those changes to all subordinate **Computer Groups**. To effect the change at the **Location** node, right click on the desire **Location** node in the vWorkspace Management Console and select the **Properties…** context menu item (see Figure 15)
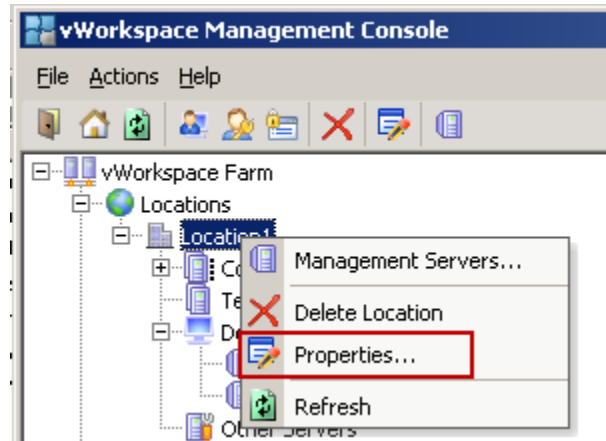

Figure 15. Select Properties… Option on Location Node

and then select the **Administrative Account** panel and then click the **Distribute** button (Figure 16). On this panel, verify or enter new **Administrative Account** credentials (use the ellipsis and check mark buttons as desired). Once satisfied with your settings, click the **Distribute**.
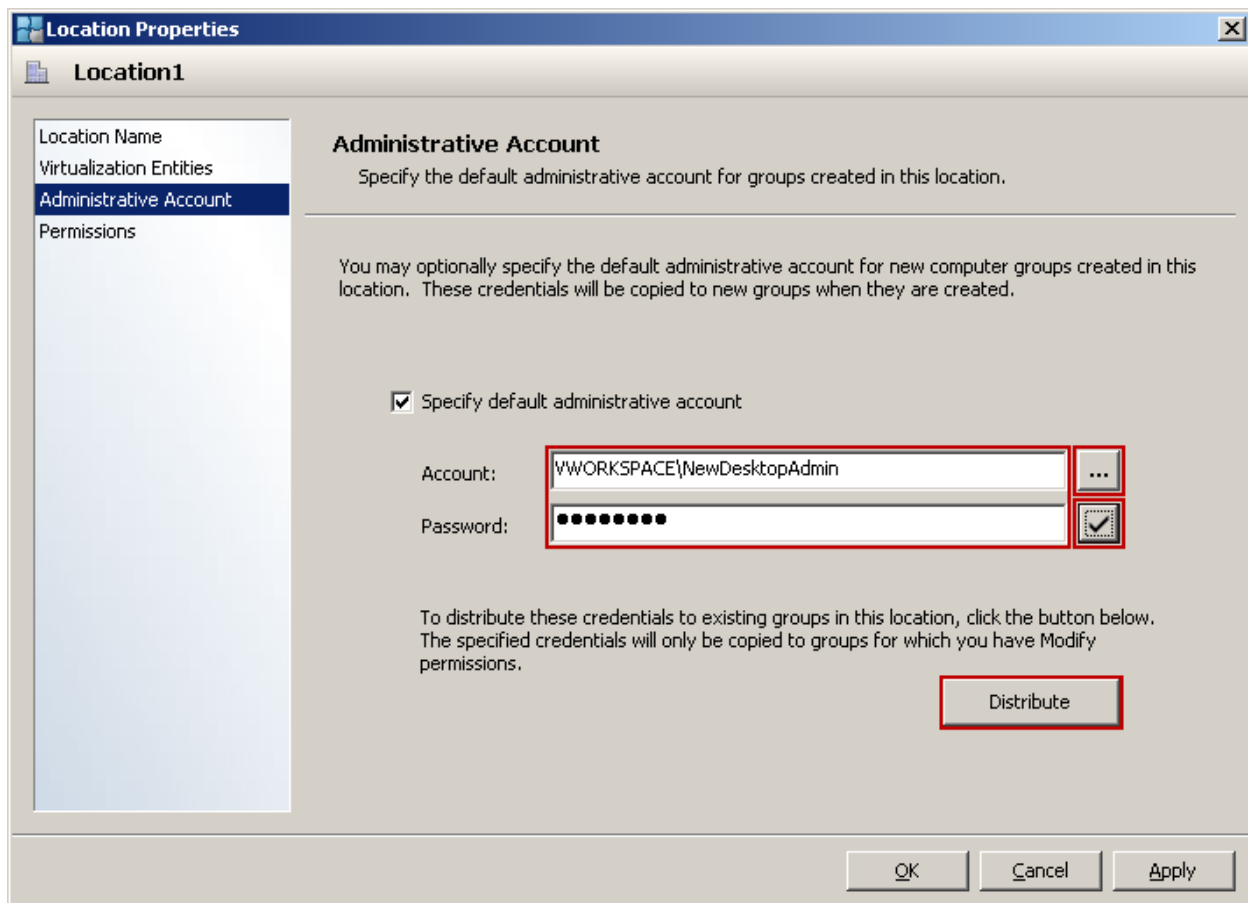
Figure 16. Distributing the Default Administrative Account from Location Node

This will push the configured **Default Administrative Account** credentials configured on the **Location** node to all **Computer Groups** defined within. You will receive a dialog notification that the credentials were successfully pushed to all subordinate **Computer Groups** (Figure 17).
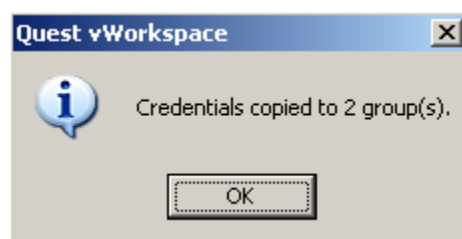

Figure 17. Confirmation that Administrative Account Settings have been Distributed

By using this approach, you can ensure that the **Administrative Account** is correctly configured for all **Computer Groups** contained within the affected **Location**.

Default Administrative Account Best Practices

Following are some general guidelines that will help you derive the maximum value from the **Default Administrative Account** feature of Quest vWorkspace 7.2:

- Configure the default **Administrative Account** on each **Location** node that you define in your environment. Setting this option will help ensure that the administrative credentials used on all contained **Computer Groups** are correct, which will minimize deployment errors and help desk calls.
- If you need to have multiple **Administrative Accounts** within your vWorkspace farm, define a separate **Location** node for each unique set of credentials. Since the default **Administrative Account** settings on the Location node applies to ALL **Computer Groups** within the Location (and there is no way to block the distribution of credentials to an individual **Computer Group**), you will need to define a separate **Location** for each set of **Computer Groups** that needs a unique set of administrative credentials.

Conclusion

While the **Default Administrative Account** settings feature may not be the most exciting new feature introduced with Quest vWorkspace 7.2, it does offer real value and has the potential to simplify the daily activities of your desktop administrator. Isn't that what an administrator's tool is supposed to do? Make the day-to-day activities easier? Quest vWorkspace delivers *Simplicity at Work*!