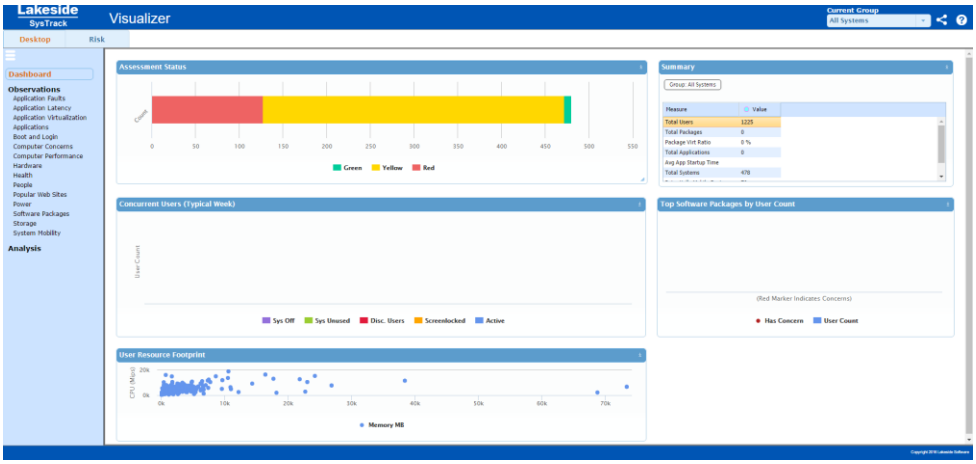
Lakeside SysTrack assessment for VDI Part 2

If you have read the first part of that blog that explained the basics I now dive into more details on the service and what can be done with the data collected during the assessment.

If you missed part one, please read first and then come back for more details.

SysTrack Visualizer

From the dashboard, you can open the SysTrack Site Visualizer to drill deeper into the data collected with SysTrack assuming you work on a Mac the use of Firefox is recommended as MSFT Silverlight is required to show the various dashboard and datasets. The first thing you will see is the Site Visualizer dashboard show in the below image.



This provides you with details on the Assessment status (top left) all asset systems and users (top right) the currency on users per week (mid left) the top software packages per user count (mid right) as well as the user resource footprint (bottom right) if you hoover over the graphs you get more details.

This it nice but I would like to draw your attention to the left Observations list this dataset gives you more granular details.

Visualizer Main screen

The main screen of the visualizer is very tidy and gets you around fairly easy with the basics explained in the next section.

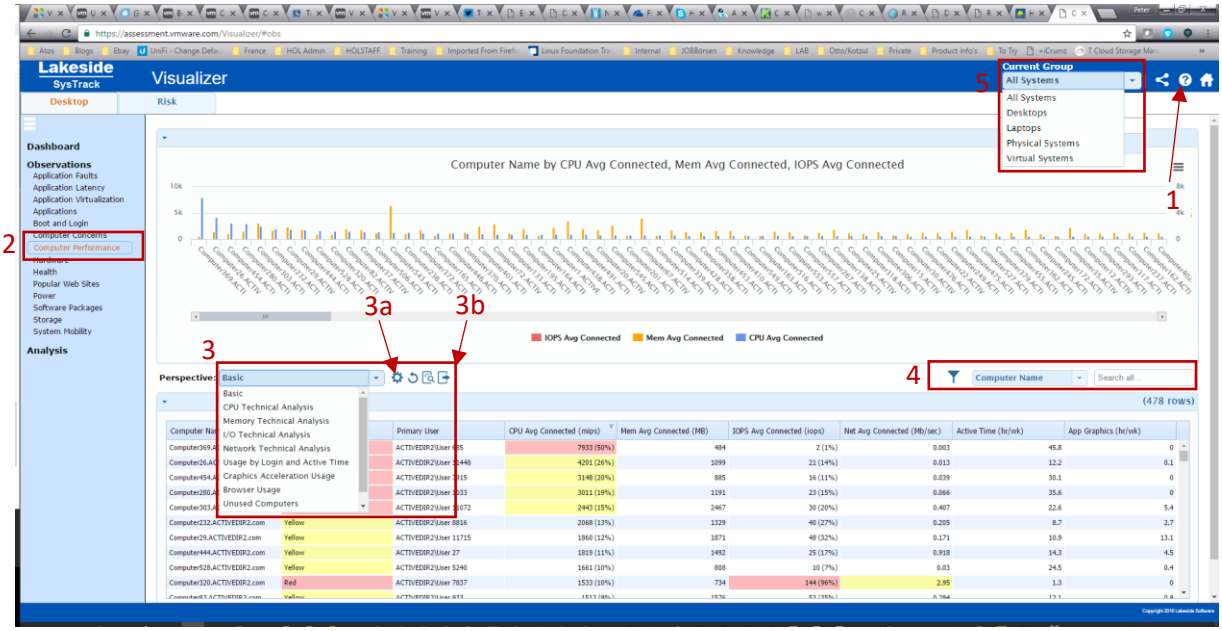


Figure 8 Visualizer Main screen

1.) Hoover over the question mark on the top left to get detailed info on each section.

However if you are like me “who reads the manual anyway” you can just follow the instructions below to get the bascis. And start working with the Visualizer.

2.) Select the area of your choice on the left to open the view for e.g. computer performance
3.) With the perspective pulldown, you can charge into different perspectives.
    a. and even customize them with the tiny settings icon on the right (3a) which lets you select the data shown.
    b. With the export function, you can export datasets and work with them outside the Visualizer which helps to use the data even further.
4.) On the right filter section, you can filter against different criteria and search in data sets
5.) On the top right, you can select different devices groups you want to analyse

All in all, the new GUI is straight forward to use now let’s get started.

Datasets

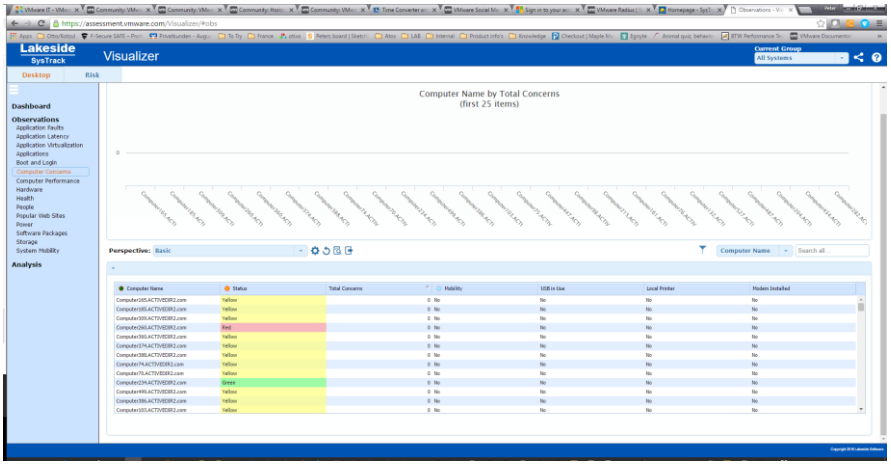
The most info’s and details are collected in the observations list which is massively important to get to the last details on application or network.

Hoovering over the observation list will reveal the explanation details. This provides a variety of info’s which will help you to drilldown into the last detail of the collected data and provide a deep understanding of Computer concerns, Application Latency, System mobility and Software packages to mention only four of the more important ones. But feel free to drill into all the details you require to understand your target group of VDI.

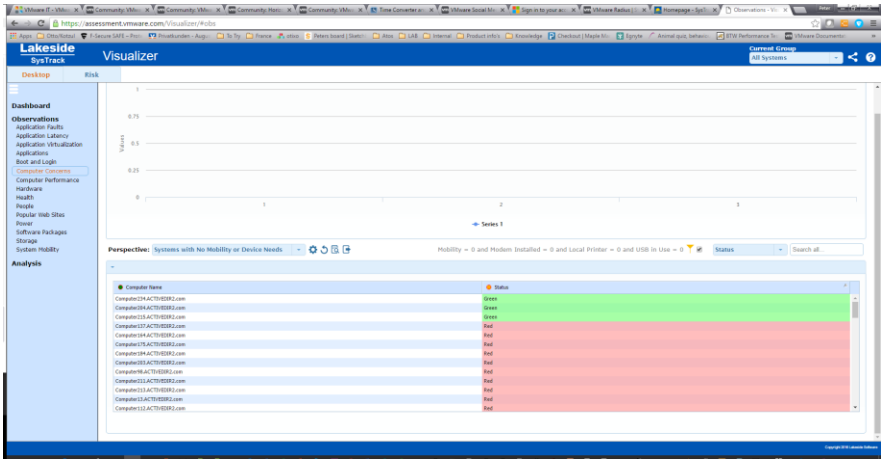
I will give you some examples how to narrow down the candidates from VDI.

Computer Concerns

To understand which system are good candidates for VDI you can start with that dataset and change the perspective of the data set. The basic view looks like the below.



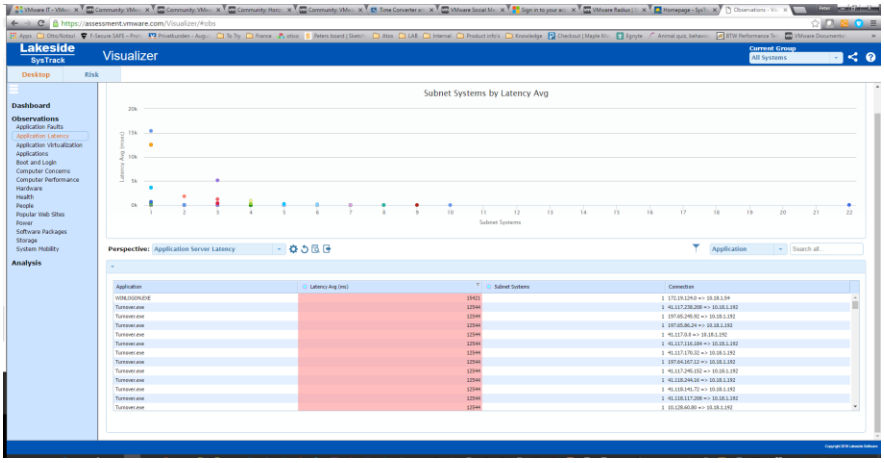
By manipulation the perspectives or filter against the status you get the low hanging fruits straight away. In my example I changed the perspective to Systems with No Mobility or device need and then ordered the status which reveals all systems they do not use and USB drives or local printers and are stationery. In a next step you can then focus on the systems which have some requirements like local printing or USB access which can be accommodated via PCOIP protocol.



All datasets can be exported as mentioned at the beginning and further aggregated for example with excel and combine with another exported dataset via pivot in excel.

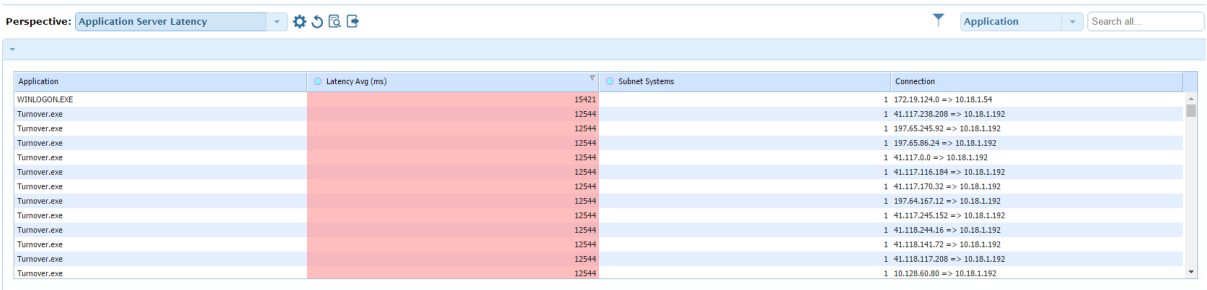
Application Latency

You can also start with Application latency to determine which systems are good candidates for VDI.



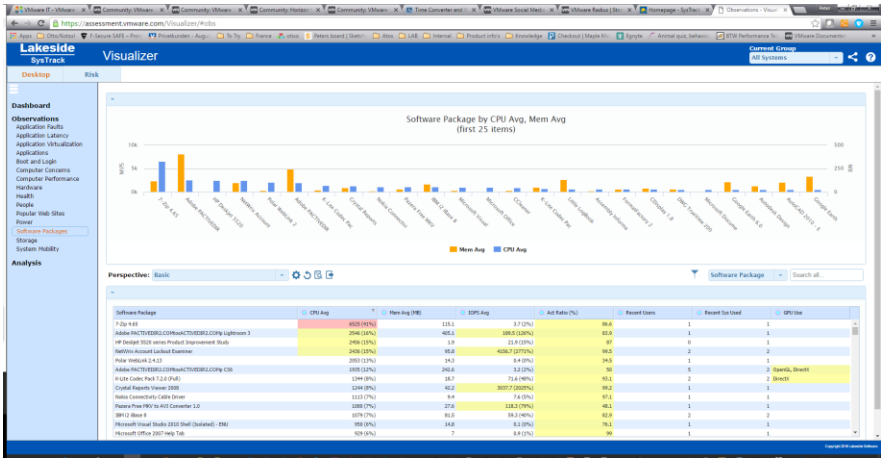
In my example manipulating the perspective to Application Server latency and the order with the highest latency descending. Which reveals the systems with the highest latency to backend systems.

In the connection column, you can see the communication to particular IP addresses which helps to determine if the backend system is either internet facing like a SaaS app or internal facing like you exchange servers.



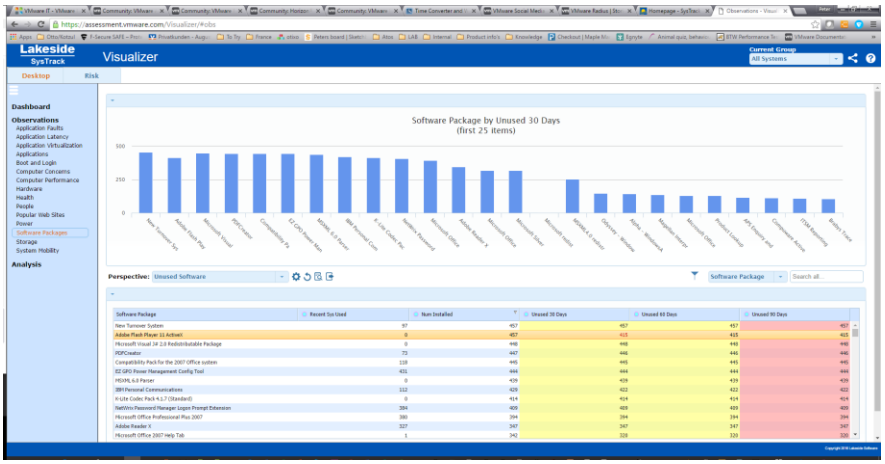
Software packages

The whole point of VDI is delivering business application to end-users to be able to access them from any device. This section is essential to understand what your application landscape looks like as well as the consumption of compute resources (CPU, Memory, IPOS) to be able to size the user's desktop for best user performance. But also, to understand how much applications are running on your user estate and this is often not easy especially if the user can install software himself.

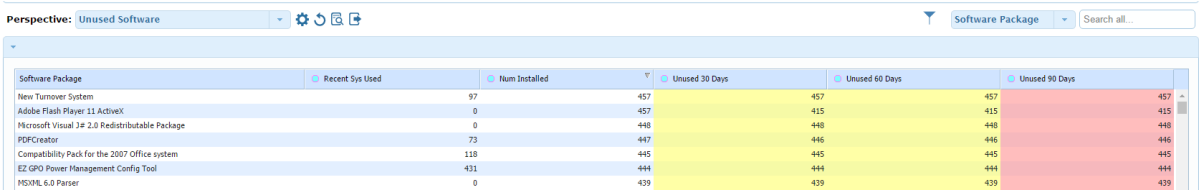


In some cases, user will tell you that they have need a particular application for their daily work, but in some cases, it is more a status symbol then a real need we are all been there my colleague has is so I need it as well.

So, let's check on that I changed my perspective to unused software to see the difference between installed and used software with the column unused for 30, 60, 90 days.

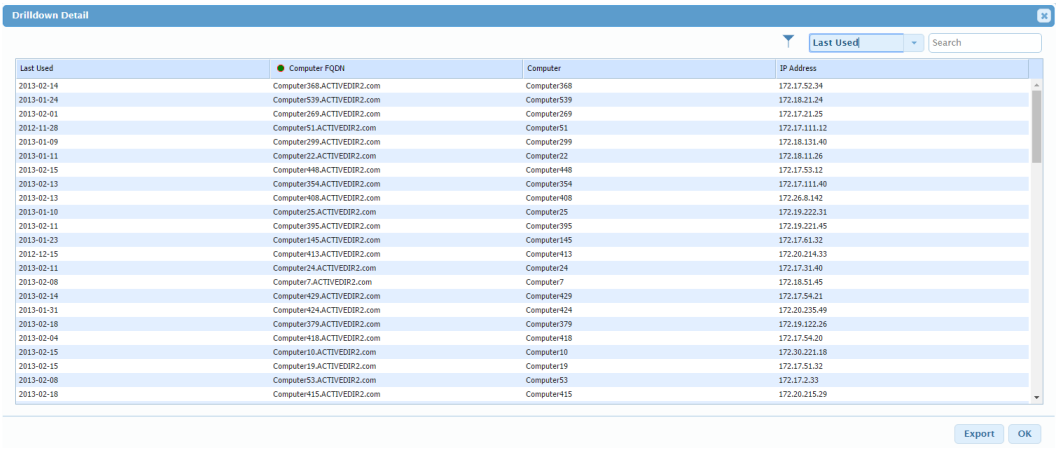


Here are some findings I order by number of most installed, apps and I can see the New Turnover System is installed on 457 systems but was only used recently on 97. Assuming this is licensed software this is a huge waste of licenses.



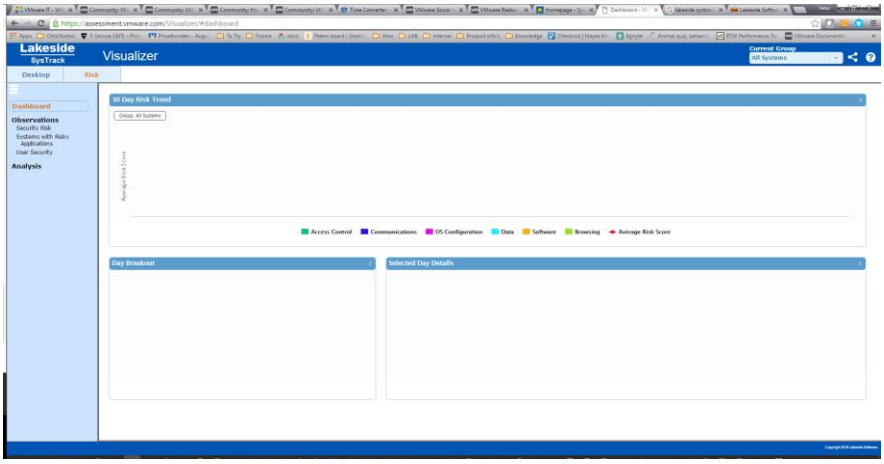
Software Package	Recent Sys Used	Num Installed	Unused 30 Days	Unused 60 Days	Unused 90 Days
New Turnover System	97	457	457	457	457
Adobe Flash Player 11 ActiveX	0	457	415	415	415
Microsoft Visual J# 2.0 Redistributable Package	0	448	448	448	448
PDFCreator	73	447	446	446	446
Compatibility Pack for the 2007 Office system	118	445	445	445	445
EZ GPO Power Management Config Tool	431	444	444	444	444
MSXML 6.0 Parser	0	439	439	439	439

To drill down into the systems that used the software double-click on the figure and it shows you the systems that used or did not use the software in each column and can be exported.



Risk Analysis

As you may have noticed with the recent changes to latest Lakeside version we have now also a risk analysis which is great. The dashboard gives you and 30day risk trend divided into the below areas.

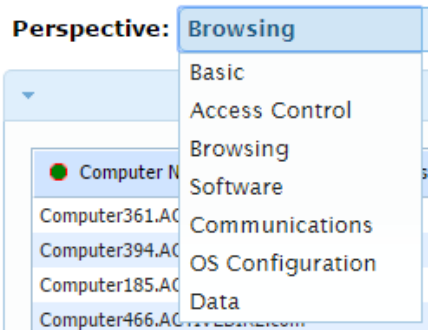


The observation section is comprised of Security risk, Systems with Risky applications and User security.

Security risk

The Security Risk dataset provides you with indication of the security risk of systems based on different risk factors like web browsing exposure and software update status. A high-level view of security risk by Group is available from the dashboard by changing the perspective you can drill into details on particular risk.

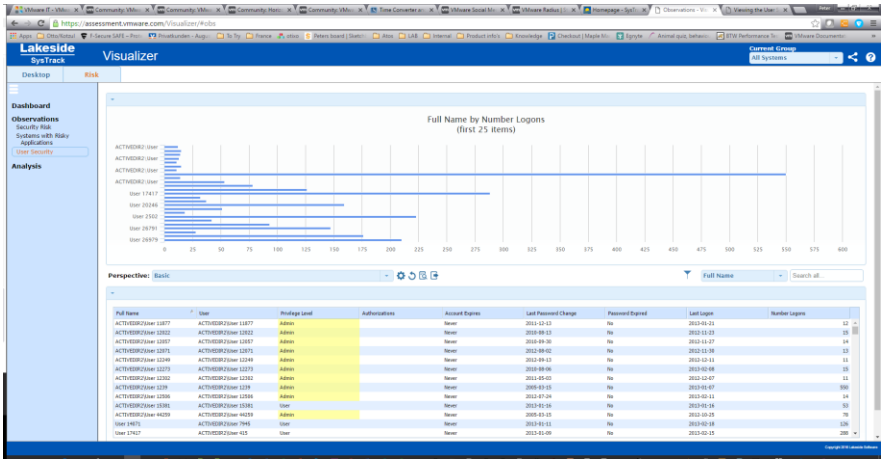
If you change the perspective to browsing it shows Internet browser component and the security risk including web browsing exposure, non-standard browsers, and Internet Explorer trusted sites.



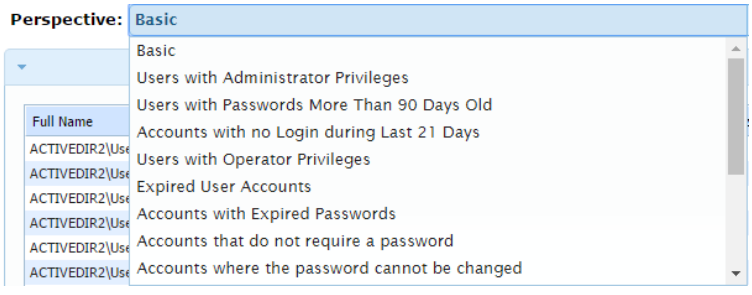
Other interesting perspectives are Access control which reveals risk including expired passwords, virus scanner status, and security events to only mention one but take a look yourself.

User Security Risk

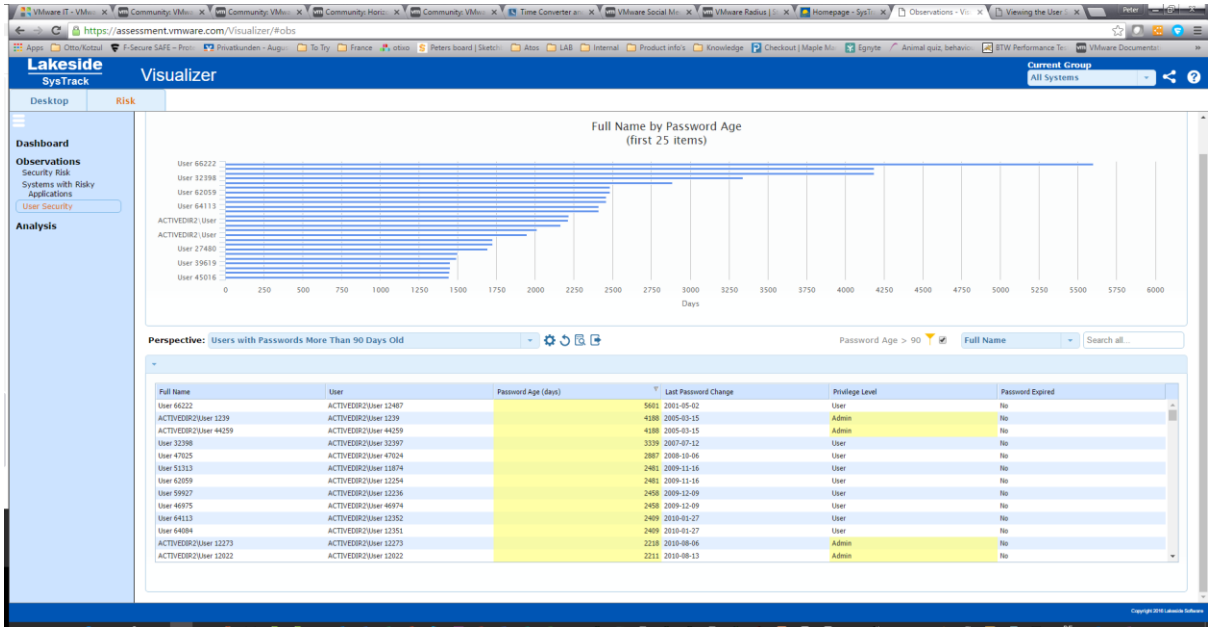
This is my personal favourite and shows you all the details of the user security like password set to never expire, Admin privileges, last password changes, but also users they never logged on to any machine.



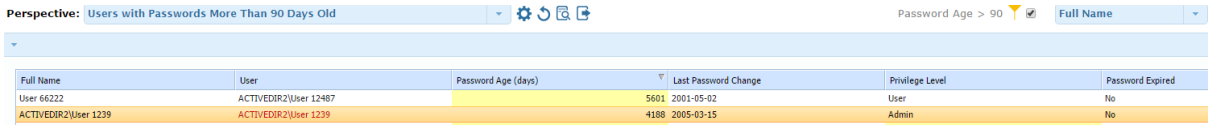
By changing the perspectives, you get more granular details on the naughty bits like User with Admin privileges or user not changed their password for 90 days or more, or account they do not required password's.



In my case I change to "User with passwords more than 90 days"



That reveals that some users did not change their password for 5601 days and an Admin user that did not change it for 4188, this is a serious security thread!



The perspective “Accounts with no Logon during the last 21days” show in my case that I have 1001 accounts they did not logon between 17/10/2012- 18/02/2013 after I exported them into excel.

So, I have a lot of clean-up in my Active Directory to do!
Luckily me it is just demo data.

Conclusion Part 2

The free 90 days’ assessment of VMware together with Lakeside offers great value with the Visualizer and in my opinion mandatory tool if you move to VDI.

The details in data sets and data collected is just mindboggling and give you all you need to come to a decision which users to target instead of putting the finger in the wind

It also puts you into a position to assess security risk in your environment and clean up your Active directory objects they are not uses or not needed anymore.

All in all, a Great service full stop.