Remote Assistance to End Users through the Barracuda SSL VPN

Remote Assistance (RA) is a helpdesk feature for the Barracuda SSL VPN that enables remotely-connected users to easily communicate with their IT department. System administrators and helpdesk personnel can see at a glance which users are in need of help, communicate with a remote user via instant messages and, if needed, even view and control the remote system directly to resolve various issues.

Requirements for Remote Assistance

Starting with the 2.0 firmware release, Remote Assistance is a standard feature on the Barracuda SSL VPN 380 and above, and must be run in a stand-alone (un-clustered) environment.

The Barracuda SSL VPN Agent requires a Java Virtual Machine (JVM) to be installed on both the remote and the helpdesk systems in order for the two-way communication tunnel to be initiated. A specialized VNC server and client is used to access and control the remote system, and is downloaded as needed from the Barracuda SSL VPN so no separate installation is required.

Remote Assistance Configuration

There are two main types of users for Remote Assistance:

1) a **standard user,** who requests assistance
2) a **helpdesk** or system administrator, who responds to requests for assistance

The Access Rights granted to an account by the *ssladmin* administrative user (from the ACCESS CONTROL > Access Rights page) determine which category a particular account falls into.

Standard Users (User)

Any account that is granted the following Resource Right, will have the ability to create and manage their own Assistance Requests:

- ***Remote Assistance Personal*** – Enables access to their own Remote Assistance page where:
  - all existing Assistance Requests for the account are listed;
  - a new Assistance Request can be created for themselves;
  - any of their Assistance Requests can be modified or deleted (closed).

Helpdesk or System Administrator (Assistant)

The following Resource Rights are considered the Assistant, or Helpdesk, rights:

- ***Remote Assistance Create*** – Allows creating of Assistance Requests for other users.
- ***Remote Assistance Edit*** – Allows editing of the details of an Assistance Request that has been submitted, such as the assigned Assistant, the scheduled time and the status of the Request.
- ***Remote Assistance View*** – Allows viewing of all existing Assistance Requests, as well as connecting to a remote system that is requesting assistance.
- ***Remote Assistance Delete*** – Allows closing of any Assistance Requests that are still open.

In general, you should always define separate Policies for each desired level of access to Remote Assistance, instead of directly assigning the desired Resources to individual accounts. This allows you to easily maintain tiered helpdesk accounts, so that you can separate helpdesk users who are authorized to only create Requests for any account, from other helpdesk assistants who can also access a remote system. First, create separate Policies for each level of access you wish to grant to the different groups, then associate the appropriate rights with each group. You can then place each account into whichever Policy has the correct level of access, and also see as a glance exactly which accounts have a specific level of access.

Requesting Remote Assistance

The Remote Assistance page is available from the RESOURCES tab of the Web interface to the Barracuda SSL VPN, to all accounts with the appropriate Access Rights. For regular users, the page is called **My Remote Assistance**. All activity related to Remote Assistance, including creating, viewing and editing a Remote Assistance Request, is done from these pages.

Create a Remote Assistance Request

Any user with the Access Right to create an Assistance Request can do so by entering the following information on their Remote Assistance page:

- ***Name*** – A brief summary of the nature of the Request, used as a label for the Request.
- ***Description*** – A detailed description of the problem and any additional notes pertinent to this Request.
- ***Email*** – The user's email address; pre-populated with values from the user's account details. Any notifications regarding this Request will be sent to the address entered here.
- ***Phone*** – The user's phone number; pre-populated with values from the user's account details.

View and Modify a Remote Assistance Request

Once the Request is submitted, it is added to the *My Remote Assistance Requests* section on that page, which will also include any Requests created for that user by an Assistant (helpdesk or system administrator). The following information, if available, is displayed for each Request:

- ***Name*** – The label for the Request. The initial value is what was specified upon creation, although it can be modified by editing the Request.
- ***Username*** – The account that is requesting assistance.
- ***Assistant*** – The name of the helpdesk/system Assistant assigned to this Request
- ***Available From*** – The requested times of assistance. An asterisk (*) means that no specific time is requested. This value can be modified by editing the Request.
- ***Status*** – The current status of this Request. Possible statuses are:
    - *In Progress* – The Assistant's system and your remote system are currently connected, and the Assistant is working on this Request.
    - *Waiting for Connection* – The Assistant's system and your remote system are waiting to connect to each other.
    - *Inactive* – No work is currently being done on this Request.
    - *Disconnected* – The Assistant's system has disconnected from your remote system.
- ***Actions*** – What can be done with this Request.
    - *Edit* – Make modifications to the Request. A separate window will display from which the details of the Request can be edited, including scheduling a time for assistance, and adding additional information.
    - *Copy* – Use the information in this Request to create another Request.
    - *Delete* – Close this Request if no further action is desired. Once a Request is closed, it will typically NOT be retrievable (unless the system administrator has explicitly chosen to retain this Request).
    - *Launch* – Initiate the client side of an assistance session, usually executed when the Assistant has requested access to your system and the status for this Request is showing as '*Waiting for connection'*. Once the client side has been launched, the status will update to '*In Progress'*
    - *More ..* – Additional, infrequent actions.
        - *Add to Resource Category* – Create a link to this Request from your My Resources page.

Providing Remote Assistance

All Assistants (users with Access Rights that allow creating, editing, viewing or closing an Assistance Request) will have a **Remote Assistance** page on their RESOURCES tab. All activity related to Remote Assistance, including creating and working on a Remote Assistance Request, is done from these pages.

Create a Request for other Users

Assistants with the ***Remote Assistance Create*** Right will be able to enter the following information when creating an Assistance Request:

- ***Name*** – A brief summary of the nature of the Request.
- ***Description*** – A detailed description of the problem.
- ***Username*** – The name of the account for which this request is being created.
- ***Full Name*** – The complete name of the owner of the account specified above.
- ***Email*** – The user's email address; pre-populated with values from the user's account details. Any notifications regarding this Request will be sent to the address entered here.
- ***Phone*** – The user's phone number; pre-populated with values from the user's account details.
- ***Start Immediately*** – Whether there is a time restriction for this request. If this Request can be handled at any time, set this to *Yes*; otherwise, set to *No* to activate the ***Preferred Time*** field.
- ***Preferred Time*** – The date and time that this Request should be handled. Set to blank to request assistance to begin as soon as possible.

View and Modify a Remote Assistance Request

All open Requests, whether created by a User or by an Assistant, will be displayed in the *Remote Assistance Requests* section of **Remote Assistance** page. The following information, if available, is displayed for each Request:

- ***Name*** – The label for the Request. The initial value is what was specified upon creation, although it can be modified by editing the Request.
- ***Username*** – The account that is requesting assistance.
- ***Assistant*** – The name of the helpdesk/system Assistant assigned to this Request. This account will be notified via email of any changes that have been made to this Request, including when it is closed.
- ***Available From*** – The requested times of assistance. An asterisk (*) means that no specific time is requested. This value can be modified by editing the Request.
- ***Status*** – The current status of this Request. Possible statuses are:
    - *Waiting for Connection* – The remote user has already initiated an assistance session, and is waiting for an Assistant to respond. Click **Launch** to open a Remote Assistance window that connects directly to the remote user's desktop
    - *Inactive* – No action is currently being taken on this Request. Click **Launch** to initiate a connection to the remote system. The status will automatically change to '*Waiting for connection'*, and the assistance session will begin when the user responds.
    - *In Progress* – The assistance session is currently active.
    - *Disconnected* – The connection to the remote system is no longer valid.
- ***Actions*** – What can be done with this Request.
    - *Edit* – Make modifications to the Request. A separate window will display from which the details of the Request can be edited, including the following additional information:
        - ***Enforce Time*** – Prevents an assistance session from being launched outside of the requested times of assistance.
        - ***One-Time Request*** – Determines whether a "closed" ticket is permanently removed, or just set to the *'Inactive'* state for easy re-opening.
    - *Copy* – Use the information in this Request to create another Request.
    - *Delete* – Close this Request if no further action is desired. Once a Request is closed, it will typically NOT be retrievable (unless the ***One-Time Request*** field is set to ***No***).
    - *Launch* – Initiate a direct connection to the remote system. Once a connection has been established successfully, the status will update to '*In Progress'* .

- *More ..* – Additional, infrequent actions.
    - *Assign Remote Assistance Request* – Create a link to this Request from your My Resources page.

Working on a Remote Assistance Request

To begin work on an Assistance Request, the Assistant will generally require a direct connection to the remote system. Such a connection is initiated via the ***Launch*** action for a Request, which will set the status to '*Waiting for Connection'*. When the User responds, the status will be set to '*In Progress*', and an RDP session to the remote system still be launched.

When the assistance session is complete, the Assistant can terminate the connection by closing the Remote Assistance window. Doing so will also set the status to *'Inactive'* if the ***One-Time Request*** field is set to *No.* Otherwise, terminating the session will also cause the Request to be closed, and therefore deleted from the list of Requests.

All modifications to a Request, including its closure, will trigger an email notification to both the owner of the Request as well as to the assigned Assistant.

Communications During a Remote Assistance Session

Once an assistance session has started, the remote user and the Assistant can communicate with and send files to each other via a chat client that is built into the Remote Assistance window.

The following standard user options are available from the Barracuda SSL VPN Agent menu in the taskbar, under ***Assistance***:

- Show Chat Window
- Send File to Assistant

The following Assistant options are available as icons in the Remote Assistance window:

- Send File
- Chat Window
- Quick Chat Bar

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