

JESS THACKSTON

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Systems Administrator | Cloud & Server Infrastructure | Microsoft 365

SUMMARY

Systems Administrator with 9+ years supporting Windows Server, Azure, and Microsoft 365 infrastructure in a security- and compliance-driven professional services environment. Owns Active Directory, Azure Virtual Desktop, and Office 365 administration across Exchange Online, Teams, Teams Phones, Intune, and OneDrive, plus SOC 2 audit support, access reviews, patching, backup and disaster recovery, PowerShell automation, and after-hours escalation.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Cloud & Virtualization: Microsoft Azure, Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD), Microsoft Entra ID, Hyper-V, Microsoft 365

Server & Directory: Windows Server, Active Directory, DNS, DHCP, Group Policy, Exchange, IIS, GoDaddy DNS

Microsoft 365 Admin: Exchange Online, Microsoft Teams, Teams Phones, Intune, OneDrive for Business, SharePoint

Security & Compliance: SOC 2, RBAC & user entitlement reviews, Sophos XG, Carbon Black, Splunk, Barracuda Cloud, DumpSec, Permissions Reporter

Backup & Recovery: Arcserve, CloudAlly

Monitoring & Automation: PowerShell, Pingdom, ActiveXperts, Spiceworks, JIRA, Salesforce

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Berkshire Associates, LLC

Columbia, MD

Systems Administrator

May 2020 – Present

- Administer core infrastructure services across on-premises and Azure environments — Active Directory, DNS, DHCP, Group Policy, and Microsoft Entra ID — as one of a three-person IT team supporting 80 employees.
- Deploy, configure, and maintain Azure Virtual Desktop environments for secure remote access, including session host lifecycle management, third-level troubleshooting, and performance tuning.
- Administer Office 365 across Exchange Online, Teams, Teams Phones, Intune, OneDrive, and SharePoint — retention and security policies, Teams and device policies, and enterprise voice routing and number assignment.
- Install, configure, and maintain physical and virtual Windows and Hyper-V servers; execute Exchange and Windows Server upgrades off-hours to eliminate user downtime.
- Maintain system security and stability by proactively patching Windows servers and Sophos XG firewalls, mitigating vulnerabilities before they cause impact.
- Perform quarterly user entitlement and access reviews with DumpSec and Permissions Reporter, enforcing role-based access controls over confidential client data.
- Partner with external auditors on annual SOC 2 walkthroughs and artifact collection, contributing to successful certification and meeting client security requirements.
- Maintain server and cloud backup strategy using Arcserve and CloudAlly, validating restores so data can be recovered quickly after loss or disaster.
- Automate routine administration with PowerShell — user provisioning and deprovisioning, bulk Microsoft 365 changes, and recurring reporting.
- Monitor server and cloud performance using Pingdom, ActiveXperts, and Splunk; respond to alerts and incidents, including after hours, to minimize downtime.
- Support project-based initiatives including a Salesforce migration, running sandbox UAT with the vendor and an internal Sales, Product, and IT team to eliminate issues ahead of production cutover.
- Own onboarding for all new staff — equipment provisioning, account creation, and security training — and maintain documentation used to cross-train IT team members.

Systems Support Specialist

Sept 2018 – May 2020

- Provided front-line technical support to all 80 employees, documenting requests and resolutions in the ticketing system through to closure.
- Managed the full account lifecycle across Active Directory, Microsoft Entra ID, and all business systems.
- Monitored corporate email for spam and phishing and ran quarterly simulated phishing campaigns.

Office Coordinator

Nov 2016 – Sept 2018

- Primary point of contact for visitors, calls, and emergencies; provided company-wide administrative support and coordinated facility maintenance.

Silent Circle

National Harbor, MD

IT Support & Office Manager

Mar 2014 – May 2016

- Supported 50+ employees and executives across global offices via SimpleHelp Technician, Skype, and phone.
- Logged tasks, issues, and hardware inventory in JIRA; imaged and reinstalled macOS systems for new and departing users.