Something About the group *Wheel*

Q: What is the group *wheel*?

A: A *special* group that provides a user with *extended privileges*.

Q: Like what?

A: The *wheel group* is usually *set* to be in the *groups that root is in*.

Q: Are there *security advantages*?

A: Yep. With some tweaking of the *pam.d/su file*, *only members of group wheel can su to root*.

Q: Great…what the %#!@ is *su*?

A: The su utility allows a user to switch to another user's identity on a temporary basis.

NAME

su - run a shell with ***substitute user and group IDs***

SYNOPSIS

su [*OPTION*]... [-] [*USER* [*ARG*]...]

DESCRIPTION

Change the effective user id and group id to that of USER.

-, **-l**, **--login**
make the shell a login shell
-c, **--commmand**=*COMMAND*
pass a single COMMAND to the shell with **-c**
-f, **--fast**
pass **-f** to the shell (for csh or tcsh)
-m, **--preserve-environment**
do not reset environment variables
-p
same as **-m**

-s, **--shell**=*SHELL*
run SHELL if /etc/shells allows it
--help
display this help and exit
--version
output version information and exit

A mere - implies -l. If USER not given, assume root

NOTES:

1. **Typically, to su to another user, you'll be asked for their password…**

Q: OK. What in the #@!& is *Pam?*

A: *pam* is an acronym for *Pluggable Authentication Modules*. PAM performs standard authentication tasks.

The principal feature of the PAM approach is that the nature of the authentication is dynamically configurable. In other words, the system administrator is free to choose how individual service-providing applications will authenticate users. This dynamic configuration is set by the contents of the single Linux-PAM configuration file */etc/pam.conf.*

Alternatively, the configuration can be set by *individual configuration files* located in the */etc/pam.d/* directory.

The presence of this directory will cause Linux-PAM to ignore /etc/pam.conf.

The important point to recognize is that the configuration file(s) define the connection between *applications (services)* and the *pluggable authentication modules (PAMs)* that perform the actual authentication tasks.