MAXIMIZING SECURITY

A guide to using CIS Hardened Images with Nerdio Manager

Safeguarding virtual desktop infrastructures (VDIs) and servers is a main priority for IT professionals, and adopting hardened images offers a forward-thinking solution to bolster both security and operational effectiveness. This guide delves into the essence of CIS Hardened Images®, accentuated by the integration of CIS Benchmarks™ from the Center for Internet Security® (CIS®), to unveil their advantages and provide a detailed guide for their implementation within Nerdio Manager.

What are CIS Hardened Images?

CIS Hardened Images are not just system snapshots but meticulously configured images that include a set of predefined security enhancements and software configurations. These snapshots are aligned with CIS Benchmarks, which are secure recommendation guidelines that help IT professionals reduce vulnerabilities and minimize the potential attack surface of their organizations' operating systems and installed applications.

Benefits of using hardened images

- **Fortified security:** Hardened images, especially those that align with CIS Benchmarks, seal off non-essential ports and enforce top-tier security practices. This robust approach significantly slashes the risk of security breaches, providing a solid defense for your systems.

- **Streamlined compliance:** With CIS Hardened Images, meeting industry and regulatory standards is no longer a daunting task. These images are pre-configured to the Benchmarks, which are referenced by various regulatory requirements. CIS Hardened Images facilitate compliance with numerous regulations right from the start, offering a sense of security and simplifying the audit process to provide a practical solution for your compliance needs.

- **Enhanced deployment efficiency:** The use of pre-configured images streamlines the deployment process, saving valuable time and resources. This empowers IT professionals to scale their operations rapidly and securely.

- **Consistency and reliability:** By leveraging CIS Hardened Images, you can ensure a consistent security posture and dependable system performance across all VDI and server deployments. This uniformity is crucial in delivering highquality, reliable services to clients, fostering trust and satisfaction.

By harnessing the power of CIS Hardened Images with Nerdio, IT professionals can elevate their cybersecurity defenses, streamline compliance efforts, and optimize deployment processes, all while maintaining a steadfast and reliable service infrastructure.

Leveraging CIS Hardened Images in Nerdio Manager:

A step-by-step guide

Step 1: Access Nerdio Manager

Begin by logging into your Nerdio Manager dashboard. Ensure you have administrative privileges to manage images and deploy VMs.

Step 2: Navigate to the global images section

Once logged in, locate the main menu on the left-hand side of the dashboard. This menu contains various sections and tools available within Nerdio Manager. Scroll through the main menu options until you find the global images section.

Step 3: Add a CIS Hardened Image

Click the Add from Azure Library button, then click the drop-down menu for Azure image. Search CIS

and choose the image based on your operating system requirements. Fill out the rest of the form, and then select OK.

Step 4: Customize and test your CIS Hardened Image

Before widely deploying your CIS Hardened Image, it's important to test it thoroughly. After you fill out the form, a VM will be automatically created. Using the image, verify that all applications and services function as expected (and install them as needed), and confirm that the security configurations are correctly applied.

Step 5: Set as image

Next, you need to create the image object. To do this, select Power off and then choose Set as Image. Constructing the image object once the VM is in place is vital to ensure its use in session host creation. If you skip the image creation step, you can still make changes to the VM before converting it into an image.

Step 6: Assign a global image

Once you have a global image set up and configured, you can assign it to your accounts that will utilize this image by navigating to global images in the menu on the left-hand side. You will then select the image you wish to work with and fill out all your desired information.

Step 7: Deploy VMs using the CIS Hardened Image

Once you are satisfied with the testing, you can proceed to use the CIS Hardened Image for broader deployments. When creating new VMs in Nerdio Manager, select your CIS Hardened Image as the base. This ensures that all new deployments adhere to your security and configuration standards.

Step 8: Continuous monitoring and updates

Security is an ongoing process. Regularly update your CIS Hardened Images with the latest security patches and configurations, and utilize Nerdio Manager's monitoring tools to keep an eye on VMs deployed with CIS Hardened Images for any signs of security issues or needed optimizations.

The bottom line

Hardened images are a cornerstone of a secure and efficient infrastructure for IT professionals. By leveraging Nerdio Manager in conjunction with CIS Hardened Images, IT professionals can provide their clients with secure, compliant, and reliable virtual desktops and servers. Remember, the key to maximizing the benefits of hardened images lies in thorough preparation, regular updates, and continuous monitoring.
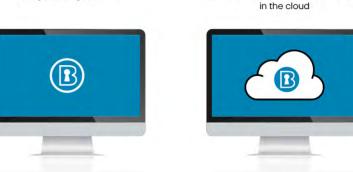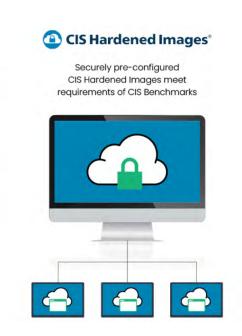
CIS Benchmarks™

Globally recognized secure configuration guidelines

Applied to base OS in the cloud

CIS Benchmarks recommendations are applied to OS and applications in the cloud

CIS Hardened Images®

Securely pre-configured CIS Hardened Images meet requirements of CIS Benchmarks

About Nerdio

Nerdio is a leading provider of powerful, simplified cloud management solutions for businesses of all sizes. Trusted by managed service providers (MSPs) and enterprise IT departments alike, Nerdio equips organizations with seamless, cost-effective management tools for Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD), Windows 365, and comprehensive Modern Work solutions.

With thousands of customers worldwide, Nerdio accelerates cloud adoption, enabling companies to thrive in an era of hybrid work by providing modern, future-proof technology that adapts to evolving workplace needs.

For more information, please visit **www.getnerdio.com**.

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