

## letter to the editor

### TO RIK FARROW:

Rik,

Very likely someone has already mentioned sfs—<http://www.fs.net/sfswww/sfsfaq.html>—to you. But just in case . . .

Cheers,

**MARKO**

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### RIK FARROW REPLIES:

I am aware of SFS, as Kevin Fu wrote an article about it for the Security edition of *;login:* (which I edited) four or five years ago.

SFS does provide strong security over untrusted networks. It also works mainly for anonymous access, as its strong point is self-certification of the server, not of the user accessing the server. Users can authenticate using sfsagent, then log out and back in again.

For most organizations that are using NFS, SFS would work well enough, but the extra hoops needed for user authentication (and if there are multiple SFS servers, on each server) are an obstacle.

My column was about old, generally ignored failings to authenticate users in NFS, which many people are still using. It was the incident at SDSC that got me interested in this again. I want people to examine what they are currently using, rather than championing a new approach. There are quite a few people working on improving NFS, whereas SFS is still considered alpha software, and the last update was April 23, 2003.

I hope we have succeeded in reminding people of the existence of SFS, so they can make their own decision.

**RIK FARROW**

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