
Windows 2000 Top Networking Issues

We examine some of the most common network-related calls that have recently been coming in to Microsoft's support department.

By PCNA Staff

How can I automate the creation of user accounts?

Assuming you don't wish to opt for a third-party tool, there are two ways of automating the creation of user accounts within Windows 2000. The easiest way is to use NETDOM, which is a tool which ships with the Windows 2000 Resource Kit. You'll also find the program on the Windows 2000 CD-ROM as part of X86\Support\Tools\Support.cab, which you'll need to unpack if the installation of Win2k hasn't already done this for you. Note that you should not use any other version of NETDOM apart from that which ships with Windows 2000, as previous versions don't support all of Windows 2000's functionality. The syntax for adding a user from a command line (or batch file, of course) via NETDOM is:

```
NETDOM /Domain:MYDOMAIN /user:adminuser /password:apassword  
MEMBER MYCOMPUTER /ADD
```

Note how the /USER and /PASSWORD switches let you specify the account name and password of a user who has permission to create new accounts. NETDOM can also be used to join a user to a domain from the command line or a batch file. This can apply to Windows NT workstations and standalone servers. If you have administrative access to the PDC (such as through a user account member of the Local Administrators or Domain Administrators groups), NETDOM automatically creates the computer account if necessary. The syntax is:

```
NETDOM /Domain:MYDOMAIN /user:adminuser /password:apassword  
MEMBER MYCOMPUTER /JOINDOMAIN
```

The command line above may be run on any computer as soon as you have administrative access to the computer MYCOMPUTER. If you are already logged onto the domain with an administrator account, then the options /DOMAIN, /USER and /PASSWORD are not required.

How do we set user rights?

To set users' rights on a Windows 2000 machine, go to Start/Settings/Control Panel. Double-click Administrative Tools, and then double-click Local Security Policy. Double-click Security Settings, double-click Local Policies, and then double-click User Rights Assignment. Double-click the user right you want to change. Click Add, and then click the accounts to which you want to assign the right. Click OK, and then click OK again. To confirm the changes have taken effect locally, close the Local Security Policy window and then open it. The newly assigned rights should show under the Effective Settings column. If the rights are not being assigned locally, check to see what Group Policy objects are being applied through Active Directory, and whether those Group Policy objects have settings that are in conflict with the local settings.

To access the Domain and OU level, open Active Directory Users And Computers from the Administrative Tools panel. To modify the OU or domain-level user rights from within Active Directory Users And Computers, select the OU or domain that contains the objects (computers) to which you want that user right assigned. Right-click the OU or domain, and then click Properties. Click the Group Policy tab, and then double-click the Policy name in the Group Policy Object Links. If none exists, click New, and then double-click the newly-added policy. From Computer Configuration, Windows Settings, Security Settings, Local Poli-

cies select User Rights Assignment. Double-click the user right that needs to be set. Check the box next to Define These Policy Settings. Click Add. Type a name, or browse to select the user or group needing this user right. Click OK three times.

How do we enable Diagnostic Event Logging for ADS?

You can enable enhanced event logging for certain Windows 2000 services. This may be useful for debugging purposes. This logging is disabled by default because the amount of data that can be logged can quickly fill the event log. You may want to enable enhanced event logging if an Active Directory server is experiencing problems related to items such as the knowledge consistency checker (KCC), performance counters, initialisation/termination, service control, name resolution, backup, field engineering, LDAP interface events, setup, global catalog, inter-site messaging, security events, ExDS interface events, MAPI interface events, replication events, garbage collection, internal configuration, directory access or internal processing.

To enable event logging, use the Registry Editor to navigate to the HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\NTDS\Diagnostics key. Valid parameters are 0 for no logging (the default), 1 for minimum, 3 for medium and 5 for maximum. Microsoft does not say whether values of 2 and 4 have any effect.

Windows 2000 won't let me number our workstations.

While NT allows you to assign a totally numeric name to a computer, Win2k does not. This restriction in Windows 2000 is for new computer names only. Old computer names (from Windows NT 4.0-based computers) are preserved during an upgrade to Win2k. After a computer is upgraded, any name changes have to follow Windows 2000's naming conventions. Because of this, an upgraded computer can keep an all-numeric name, but that name cannot be changed to another all-numeric name.

How can I delegate specific administrative tasks?

Administrators can use Microsoft Management Console to create special tools to delegate specific administrative tasks to users or groups. Saved as MMC console (.msc) files, these custom tools can be sent by email, shared in a network folder, or posted on the Web. They can also be assigned to users, groups, or computers with system policy settings.

To create an MMC file, click Start, click Run, type mmc, and then click OK. Microsoft Management Console starts with an empty console (or administrative tool). The empty console has no management functionality until you add snap-ins. On the Console menu, click Add/Remove Snap-in. Click Add. Click the appropriate snap-ins in the list of available standalone snap-ins, and then click Add. When you have finished adding snap-ins, click Close. You can nest the snap-ins in a tiered structure by adding a snap-in under another snap-in in the "Snap-ins added to" box. In some cases it may be necessary to click the Extensions tab. This tab contains a checkbox named "Add all extensions". When this checkbox is selected (the default behaviour), all extensions that are locally installed on the computer on which the console file is opened will be used. If this checkbox is cleared, any extension snap-ins in the list that are selected are explicitly loaded when the console file is opened on a different computer.

Click OK to close the "Add/Remove Snap-in" dialog box. The Console Root window is now populated with the selected snap-ins, located in the Console Root folder. You can customise the layout of snap-ins in the Console. In the left pane, right-click a snap-in icon, and then click New Window From Here. This opens a new window rooted at the snap-in you selected. On the Window menu, click either Tile Horizontally or Cascade to customize the windows. To save your new MMC console, click Save as on the Console menu and type a name for your console. The console is saved as a file that you can distribute to anyone who needs to configure a computer with the tool.

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