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Feature

Windows 2000 Backup Best Practices and Recovery

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Last week we went over how to configure a Windows 2000 backup plan. Getting that plan together is the cornerstone of any good data fault tolerance policy. It doesn't matter what kind of hardware you have, what kind of power supplies you have, what kind of anything you have, if you don't have a good, reliable, and restorable backup of your organization's critical data, you're going to go down on a ten count.

This week we'll go over some best practices and then discuss how you should prepare for your backups and how to perform a restore.

When crafting your Windows 2000 backup plan, consider implementing the following recommendations.

Test Your Plan

You need to put your plan into action after getting it down in writing. Don't let the first system failure and restore be your first! Make sure you also have fault tolerance for the personnel who perform the backup and restore procedures. It doesn't make much sense to have \$25,000,000 of sophisticated fault tolerant hardware and backup facilities if only one guy knows how to do the whole thing.

Assign Backup and Restore Duties to a Top Level Admin

Don't use the approach that banks use. What do I mean by this? Think about the people who work as bank tellers. Do they impress you as being highly-paid financial professionals who can be trusted with complex, mission-critical tasks? I won't go into the disadvantages banks endure by these hiring practices, but don't let your organization suffer from somebody else's less than top-flight thinking! Make sure the people who perform your backups and restores are your top level admins who can perform procedures flawlessly and recognize when there are problems. Top level admins are more likely to take personal responsibility for problems, and more likely to take the initiative when unusual issues arise.

Note What Files are In Use

Make sure you configure the ntbakup program to perform detailed logging. The detailed logging option will allow you to see what files were successfully copied and which ones didn't copy because they were already in use. It's important to ascertain which files were not copied. Make an assessment as to whether you need to take special actions to backup files that failed to copy because they were in use. Operating system files that don't copy aren't an issue because they will be restored when you reinstall the operating system. Data files such as database or Office documents that don't copy are more of a problem. Office documents should open and close on a random basis, so if you don't get it copied at one backup it'll be copied in a subsequent backup. Database files tend to be open all the time. Consult the database documentation to determine the best way to handle backing up its data files.

Secure the Backup Media

That data on your backup media is gold to not only you, but to a lot of other people too; especially your competition! Secure the backup media in the same way you secure the servers. You don't let your department file servers sit on the receptionist's desk, so don't let the backup tapes sit there either. Establish a chain of custody for the backup tapes. The person who performs the backup must sign the backup log. If the tapes are transferred to another location, the person to whom they're transferred to should also sign the backup log to confirm that they were the "last one there". If a backup tape turns up missing, you need to be

able to follow the paper trail and find out who was the "last one there". That's where you begin your investigation.

Don't Exceed the Active Directory Tombstone Lifetime

Ever hear of this one? Active Directory objects no longer in use are tombstoned just like WINS database objects. You definitely don't want to restore a backup of the Active Directory that's older than 60 days. Actually, you don't usually want to restore a copy of the Active Directory that's older than one day! The point here is that you need to perform backups one or more times a day so that the restored data is a fresh and contemporary as possible.

Take Advantage of RAID

RAID can be your best friend when it comes to buying time! There are two types of RAID volumes that you can use without breaking the bank. Mirror sets (RAID 1) can be used on the system and boot partitions, and Stripe Sets with Parity (RAID 5) can be used for data volumes. Keep in mind that RAID is **not** a replacement for a good backup routine. RAID is excellent at buying time and preventing downtime due to isolated hardware failures. Use both RAID and backups and you'll almost be able to sleep well at night.

Preparing for a Successful Restore

You have to backup your data before you can restore it. Make sure you know how the ntbakup program works. It's a fairly simple application, but you should read through the Help file before staking your life on it! The Help file is actually helpful, so you'll be doing yourself a favor by reading it.

You'll need the following information to perform a successful restore:

- 1) Your disk configuration. Use the Disk Management console to determine your partition scheme. You need to exactly replicate this configuration when you restore the computer.
- 2) Make a note of your System and Boot partitions. You need to reinstall to the same boot partition.
- 3) The computer name. Yes! You need to know the NetBIOS and the DNS FQDN of the machine. When you reinstall the operating system prior to the restore, you need to give it the same name, and have it join the same domain.
- 4) IP addressing information. Record the IP address, subnet mask, default gateway, WINS and DNS settings. Run an IPCONFIG /ALL and print out the screen print.
- 5) Check out the Control Panel Add/Remove Programs applet and see what services were installed on the box. You'll need to reinstall these same services when you reinstall the OS prior to restoration.
- 6) Local Admin password. This password is the one in use when the backup file you're restoring was recorded. This is very important and its

often the cause of fear and loathing for administrators performing a restore.

Put this information in a safe place, like in an envelope on the inside of the computer case. What? You use a rack mounted setup with 25 thin xU little boxes that can be easily destroyed by one madman with a baseball bat? You still could squeeze that envelope in there, but you might want to put it somewhere else. Put the information in a location that all backup and restore administrators know of. Do not make the location of this data a secret to any of those responsible for a possible restore.

Performing the Restore

Doing the actual restore is fairly easy. Just follow these handy-dandy steps and you should be able to get where you want to be:

- 1) Replace the dead disk or disks. If you're restoring to an entirely new computer, make sure it's the same make and model as the previous one and has the same hard disk configuration.
- 2) Attach the tape drive or other backup device to the machine.
- 3) Install Windows 2000 to the same partition or volume that it was on before. You'll know this from the notes you took earlier.
- 4) During setup, make sure you use the same computer name, the same local administrator password, the same IP addressing information, and the same options that were installed previously.
- 5) During the install, you should be able to use the built-in FDISK like utility to recreate the partition setup. If there are things that you can't accomplish with the setup utility, wait until the OS reboots after installation is complete. Then, use the Disk Management utility to complete your partition configuration.
- 6) Check the Event Viewer and make sure there were no serious problems. Double check that all the hardware was recognized.
- 7) Start the ntbakup program and load the catalog on the media. Restore everything you had on the boot partition, including the System State.
- 8) Reboot and cross your fingers.

After the reboot, almost everything should work. If you have network services such as DHCP, WINS, DNS, Certificate Services, and other installed on the machine, you might have to go through some extra hurdles to get things working. Check out TechNet or the Help file for the particular service to learn about that service's restore procedure.

Conclusion

Backing up isn't hard to do at all! Once you start, you'll really get into those weekly backup lab sessions where you backup and restore your machines to check on the tape integrity. Order up a pizza, plug in that

DLT drive, and go to town!

This week's feature article by
Thomas W. Shinder,
M.D., MCSE

Ask Uncle Bill



Q and A's



Question:

Hi Uncle Bill,

Is it possible to access windows 2000 terminal server from a network accessible DOS Boot floppy? The PC has no hard disk, only a floppy drive with a network bootable 3.5" floppy or PXE adaptor. I believe windows 2000 currently only has a 16b it and 32 bit windows Terminal Server client software. Any suggestions on this would be appreciated

--Sam

Uncle Bill says:

I got good news for ya Sam! There a great DOS-based Terminal Services client that you can run from a DOS boot disk. Very nice work and it does the job. [Check it out here](#). You can download a feature limited demo. If you like it, you can buy it online with a PayPal account.

Question:

Hi, Uncle Bill

I have a windows 98 desktop, which we upgraded to windows 2000 Prof. Since the upgrade none of the instrumentation software, that ran on 98, runs on 2000. Is there a way I can uninstall 2000 and revert the machine back to 98?

--Dhires

Uncle Bill says:

Hi Dhires! I've got some bad news for you. Unlike the upgrade from Windows 3.1 to Windows 95, there isn't an uninstall process available when you upgrade from Windows 98 to Windows 2000. That's why I always recommend that you install Windows 2000 and Windows XP on its own partition, so that you can multi-boot a computer for awhile before you commit yourself. Unfortunately, you'll have to wipe and reinstall.

Don't Be Shy!

Got a question about MCSE certification or an event log error that just won't go away? Send it in! We'll be answering a question or two every week. Send your submissions to Uncle Bill [here](#).

Security Advisories

Cumulative Patch for Windows Media Player



This is a cumulative patch that includes all fixes for the Windows Media Player as of June 26, 2002. This patch includes three new vulnerabilities that have been discovered since the last cumulative patch for the Windows Media Player. **SEVERITY: Critical**

[Read more...](#)

Unchecked Buffer in Profile Service Could Allow Code Execution in Commerce Server



This fix addresses four separate issues with Commerce Server 2000 and Commerce Server 2002. If you're one of the few people who use Commerce Server, you should read about the problems and download the fix. **SEVERITY: Critical**

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News Headlines and Resources



Working with and Repairing Outlook Folders



Almost all of us have to deal with Outlook problems at one time or another. If you've ever had to drive yourself crazy with these things, then you need to check out this article. Will Schmied will give you the rundown on common problems, and how you can fix them.

[Read more...](#)

Cannot Browse Printers When You Are Trying to Print or Browse Printer Queues



There's a RPC issue with the Windows 2000 Print Server that can prevent users from browsing for a network printer when the printer is very busy. While it can affect just about any computer, boxes connected to the network via a slow link are more likely to be affected.

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Maxtor 3000XT Firewire Hard Disk



I usually don't hawk hardware products, but this is so good I had to let you know. I needed some massive space to run a bunch of VMware VMs and I was out of drive bays and IDE channels. I decided to take the Firewire (IEEE 1394) plunge and added this 160GB big boy. It only took about 10 minutes to get their PCI firewall in my box and plug in the drive. I booted Windows XP and the drive installed without a hitch. What's really cool is that you can daisy-chain 15 of these dudes! Hmmm. That would be 2400 GBs. Even I would have a hard time filling those up!

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PowerPoint 2002 Add-in: Microsoft Producer 1.1



If you've watched some of those cool presentations at the TechNet site, you've probably wondered how they're able to show slides and record

the audio have have it arranged in a web page so nicely. The trick is to use Microsoft Producer for PowerPoint! The new 1.1 version is available for download and is definitely worth a look for you upward bound admins.

[Read more...](#)

Microsoft Palladium: Nightmare on Computer Street – Part 2



If the dreaded RegWorm is considered part 1 of the continuing saga of nightmare on Computer Street, then part 2 is going to scare you insane! The details released on this product are so enormous, so scary, and so threatening, that if it ever comes into play, you might as well tattoo that number on your forehead and get it over with. Check out this article to learn some of the details.

[Read more...](#)

L2TP/IPSec Client for Win98/ME and Windows NT 4.0



This is one very big deal! How long have you been waiting for an L2TP/IPSec VPN client for your 9x and NT boxes? A long time! The wait is over. You can download for FREE the L2TP/IPSec client from Microsoft. This is a real gift!

[Read more...](#)

How About Some War Chalking for the Holiday?



If you live in the USA, you probably will have a few days off this week. Why not spend the time doing something fun like finding wireless nodes and doing some "War Chalking"? Get some chalk and start walking through your downtown area. You'll be helping other wireless hobos get free Internet access.

[Read more...](#)

Configuring ISA Server Arrays



Are you ready for some heavy-duty, high-performance, caching? Then you need to create an enterprise, caching array. Creating one isn't as easy as you might think! Kai Wilke and yours truly walk you through the procedure so that you'll get it right the first time, every time!

[Read more...](#)

Support WebCast: Microsoft Systems Management Server 2003: Working with the Beta Release



During this Support WebCast session, you will learn what you can and can't do with the beta of SMS 2003. Some features or functions are not operational in the beta. This Support WebCast session will discuss them so that you are aware of what can and can't be tested with the SMS 2003 beta. The WebCast will also provide specific information about topics that were updated from what was stated in previous Support WebCasts.

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Download of the Week



UltraMon



If you have multiple monitors on your computer, then you have to get to know the UltraMon! This app has so many goodies for the multimonitor user its hard to know where to start. How about a taskbar on each monitor that shows the apps open on that monitor only? How about Maximizing Windows across monitors? How about different wallpaper for each monitor? OK, how about preserving the desktop icon configuration on both monitors, so that you can restore it whenever you want? You get the picture, now get the eval!

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