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How to Configure the Distributed File System (DFS) Using Windows 2000 Server or Windows Server 2003

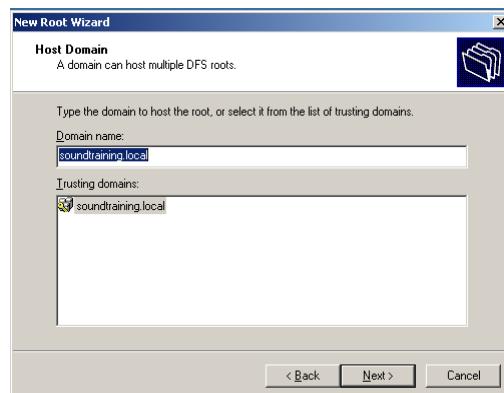
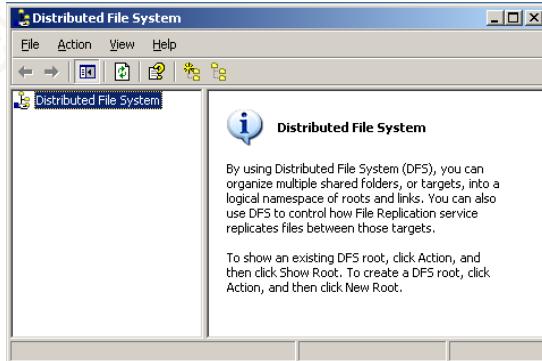
DFS is a way of allowing your users to access all network shares through a central portal. The DFS root becomes a single gateway through which your users can access network shares on various computers in geographically dispersed locations. No longer will you have to instruct end-users on how to use Universal Naming Convention path names. Instead, you can publish the DFS root to Active Directory, associate keywords with it, and populate it with links to the various shares. Next, teach your users how to perform natural language searches similar to what they're accustomed to performing with Internet search engines.

Configuring DFS

Using Windows 2000 Server or Windows Server 2003, click on Start, then click on Control Panel. In Control Panel, double-click on Administrative Tools and double-click on Distributed File System.

In the Distributed File System window that opens, right-click on Distributed File System in the left-hand pane and click on New Root... In the Wizard that appears, click on Next >. In the next window, you can choose Stand-alone root or Domain root. The benefits of choosing a domain root include integration with Active Directory and automatic replication. Choose Domain root.

In the Host Domain window that appears, type the domain you want to host the root or you can select it from the list of trusting domains. (A domain can host multiple DFS roots.) Click Next >.



The Host Server window appears. Click on Browse... to select the server you want to host the DFS root.

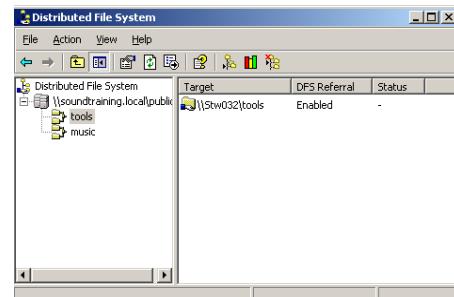
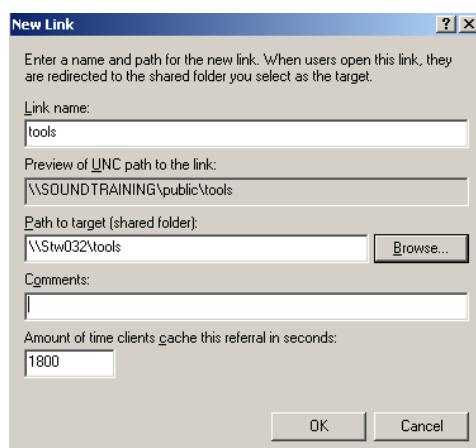
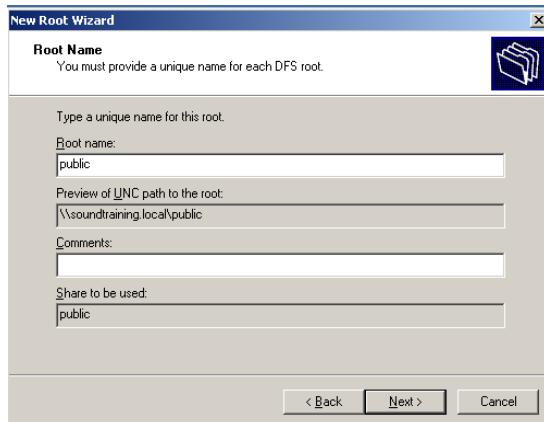
The Root Name window appears and you must name the root. Choose a name that makes sense for both you and your users. The name you choose will be appended to your domain name for the UNC path to the root. Your power users might want to use the UNC path name to access the DFS root, so natural names

are a good idea. Considering that the DFS root is a portal for your end-users to access perhaps all network shares, names such as “public” or “common” are logical choices. When you enter the root name, the name is automatically entered as the share to be used. If the share doesn’t already exist, a window appears prompting you for a share to use. You can use an existing share or create a new one.

After selecting or creating the share, the Completing the New Root Wizard appears. Click Finish. You’re not finished, though.

Next, you need to populate the DFS root with links to the various shares around your network. Before populating the root with links, you must have already created the shares. For the purpose of this guide, we’ll use a share called “music” on a Windows XP computer, plus a share called “tools” on our Windows Server 2003 computer.

In the DFS Microsoft Management Console, right-click on the new DFS root and choose New Link.... Choose a descriptive name for the link, then enter or browse to the path to the target (the network share). Repeat the process for each link you want to create; one for each



share on the network. After the links are created, they are displayed in the DFS MMC along with the UNC path to the link.

Now that the root has been created and populated with links, the next thing to do is publish the root to Active Directory so users can access it quickly and easily.

Click on Start, then move your mouse over Administrative Tools and click on Active Directory Users and Computers. In the ADUC Microsoft Management Console, right-click on the container where you wish to place your new DFS root as a share

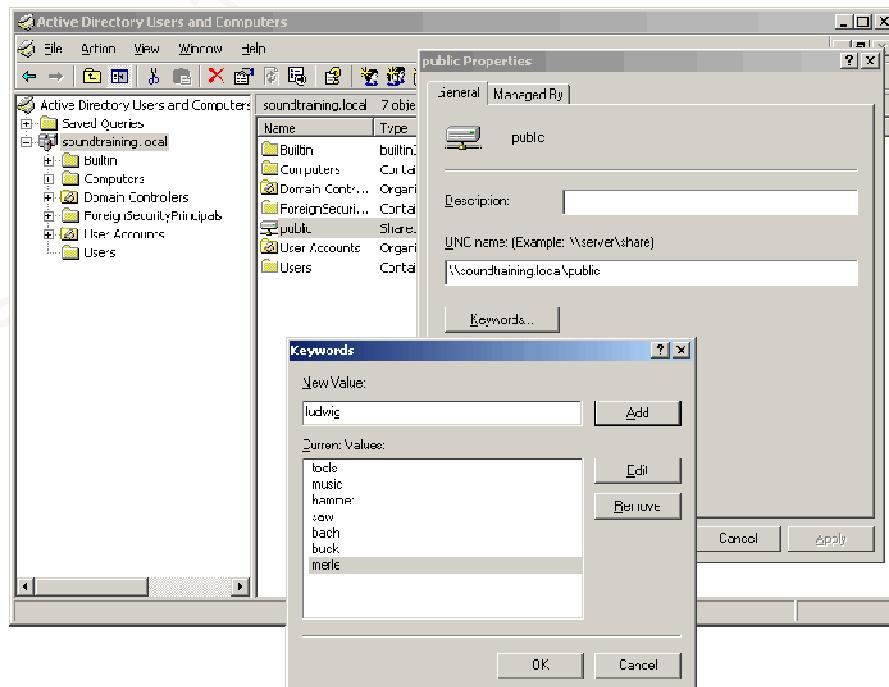
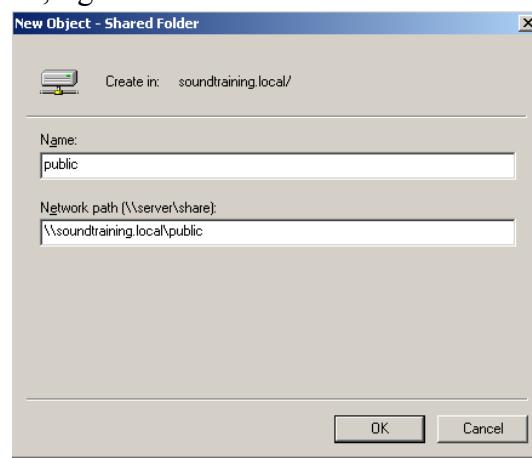
(perhaps your domain or an Organizational Unit you created to hold shares).

Choose New > Shared

Folder. Choose a name for the share. This is the name by which the share will be known to your end-users when they query Active Directory for it. Usually it will have the same name as

the actual share. In this example, it was named “public”. Next, specify the network path to the share. Because we created a domain DFS root, we can specify the UNC path using the domain name instead of a server name (e.g., \\soundtraining.local\public). The new share appears in the ADUC console.

Next, add keywords to help users search AD for the share. Right-click



on the share and click on Properties. Click on the button labeled Keywords and add appropriate keywords to the share. Try to think of natural words that users would actually use in conducting their searches. When you're finished, click on OK twice to associate the keywords with the share. Users can now conduct Active Directory searches using the keywords you chose.

Searching Active Directory

You will have to provide some basic training for your users to show them how to conduct AD searches from their workstations.

In Windows XP, open My Network Places. On the left-hand side, under Network Tasks, click on Search Active Directory. In the search window that appears, choose Find Shared Folders. Enter the keyword you wish to use for the search. The results are displayed in a window below.

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