



***Terminal Services vs. Remote  
Desktop Connection in  
Windows 2000 and Windows  
2003***

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White Paper

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# Terminal Services vs. Remote Desktop Connection in Windows 2000 and Windows 2003

## Abstract

With the release of Windows 2003, Microsoft has made significant changes to the way users can connect to remote machines. This document will provide the details necessary to allow the reader to gain an overview of the differences in remote connectivity between Windows 2003 Server and Windows 2000 Server. Included will be an explanation of the two modes of Terminal Services – Remote Administration vs. Application Server, as well as brief descriptions of how each remote connectivity tool is activated.

## Windows 2000 Remote Connectivity

Windows 2000 uses only one method of remote connectivity – Terminal Services. Terminal Services is included with Windows 2000 Server and Advanced Server. There are also client versions available for Windows 95/98, 2000 Professional, and Windows XP.

Terminal Services in Windows 2000 can be configured in two modes – Remote Administration and Application Server.

- Remote Administration Mode – This mode allows for only two simultaneous connections to any given machine. It is designed to allow administrators and a small number of users to access the server remotely. There are no licensing requirements for remote administration mode.
- Application Server Mode – This mode is intended to be used in an environment where applications are installed on the server, and those applications are then run by a large number of users remotely via Terminal Services sessions. Configuring this mode can be quite complex for a number of reasons:
  - Licenses must be purchased for the Terminal Services server as well as for all client machines.
  - Applications need to be installed in a specific way – Software installations can only be performed via Add/Remove Programs in the Control Panel. Attempts to install software in any other way, such as simply double-clicking on an executable file, will result in an error message.
  - Many applications do not support running on a server configured as a Terminal Services Application Server. WMOS, for example, is one such application.

- Changing from Application Server to Remote Administration mode will require a reinstallation of some applications installed on the server.

Regardless of mode used, Terminal Services is added and configured by checking the Terminal Services box within the Add/Remove Windows Components feature of Add/Remove Programs as shown in figure 1-1. You will need the information located in the Windows i386 folder to make any changes to the Terminal Services configuration.

Figure 1-1



## Windows 2003 Remote Connectivity

Microsoft has changed remote connectivity significantly in Windows 2003, splitting it up into two separate utilities - Terminal Services and Remote Desktop Connection. Terminal Services only functions in the Application Server mode and is not installed by default. Remote Desktop Connection has replaced the Remote Administration mode of Terminal Services and is installed by default.

The details and behavior of Terminal Services for Windows 2003 is the same as Terminal Services Application Server Mode for Windows 2000.

Remote Desktop Connection for Windows 2003 behaves the same way as Terminal Services Remote Administration Mode for Windows 2000.

Terminal Services is still activated by checking the Terminal Services box within the Add/Remove Windows Components feature of Add/Remove Programs. **Please keep in**

**mind that installing Terminal Services on a Windows 2003 server will automatically configure it in Application Server Mode!**

Even though Remote Desktop Connection is available by default, the feature still needs to be activated before remote users can connect to the server. This is achieved by checking the “**Enable Remote Desktop on this computer**” box on the Remote tab of **My Computer** properties, shown in Figure 1-2. There is also a convenient link to the Remote Desktop help files, which provides good information on overall Remote Desktop configuration as well as best practices.

Figure 1-2



**NOTE:** If Remote Desktop and Terminal Services are both active on a Windows 2003 server and Terminal Services is disabled, Remote Desktop is also disabled and needs to be reactivated by the method described in the previous paragraph.

Finally, the Remote Desktop client is located under Start > Programs > Accessories > Communications > Remote Desktop Connection. This is the client part of Remote Desktop, which is used to connect remotely to other servers.

## **Summary**

We presented how the role of Terminal Services has changed from Windows 2000 and Windows 2003, and how remote connectivity is configured in both operating systems.

Further information on Terminal Services and Remote Desktop Connection can be found on Microsoft's web site. We hope that you would find this useful for your work.