Upgrading Domino 8 from Windows 2003 to Windows 2008

By Chuck Connell

In 2009, Lotus Domino 8.x became certified on Windows Server 2008 (WS8). But many administrators already have Domino 8 running on Windows Server 2003 (WS3). WS3 is super-stable and administrators have years of experience setting it up and trusting it as Domino platform.

A logical operation at an established Notes/Domino shop is to upgrade an existing Domino 8 server from WS3 to WS8. Note that I am talking here about an upgrade to the underlying operating system of an existing server, while leaving Domino intact. I performed this operation myself recently, and ran into a couple gotchas that administrators should be aware of.

(For background, I suggest that readers see this article which I wrote about building a *new* server with WS8 and Domino 8. It contains some information that is helpful here as well.)

Windows Firewall

WS8 enables the Windows firewall by default. Since the initial firewall settings are tight, Notes client users will not be able to see the Domino server on port 1352 and Domino web users will not be able to see the HTTP task on port 80. This is quite surprising, since you will finish an upgrade with no apparent errors, but users will find that the existing server has apparently disappeared!

The solution is to turn off the Windows firewall completely, or add new firewall rules that enable port 1352 (for Notes, Designer, and Admin) and/or port 80 (web browsers) and/or port 443 (secure web access). If you are using Domino for NNTP, POP, LDAP, or other protocols, you will need to enable those ports also. See the article linked above for details about doing this, which is quite simple.

Domino Console

WS8 is stricter than WS3 about protecting system services from human bungling. So, by default, system services do not interact with the Windows desktop. Domino 8 solves this problem by including a Java-based application that functions similar to the old "DOS box" Domino console. A fresh installation of Domino 8 on WS8 configures Domino to launch under the Java console.

Unfortunately, existing Domino 8 servers (built on WS3) do not have this configuration. The result is that when you start Domino on WS8 as a system service, it launches as a pure service and you cannot see it. This is quite frustrating. As with the firewall problems, it appears that you have performed a correct upgrade, but Domino is mysteriously invisible on the machine.

The solution is to modify the command line used for the Domino system service.

1. Start / regedit.exe
2. Computer / HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE / CurrentControlSet / Services
3. Lotus Domino Server
4. ImagePath
5. Add the command line options "-jc" and "-c". Be sure to put them in separate double quotes.

After this change, when Domino starts as a system service, it will launch under the Java console application and you will be able to see it on the desktop.

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