

# Re: help understanding authentication on workgroups

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*Source:*

[http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.network\\_web/2006-04/msg00073.html](http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.network_web/2006-04/msg00073.html)

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- *From:* Chuck <none@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Sun, 02 Apr 2006 21:49:09 -0700
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On Sun, 2 Apr 2006 16:44:01 -0700, Greg Nash  
<GregNash@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

I've spent a lot of time trying to understand the concept of simple workgroups (all PCs's with XP pro service pak 2, simple file sharing on, network client services on and print/file sharing on), but none of the networking internet help sites appear to address some of the issues:

1. Does the computer browser service (administrative tools/services) have to be started on all but one ("host") of the PC's in the workgroup (I've seen conflicting recommendations; it doesn't seem to make much difference anyway). If so are there any other special settings required for this "host"? In any case should the computer browser be set to "manual" or "automatic".
2. From reading MS documentation, workgroup authentication is said to be "local". I understood this to mean that if you can log onto any PC in the network then you can see all other PCs in the workgroup, plus any files that they share. However, I generally get a login window with username "computername\guest" when I try to access PC "computername". When I supply the password for that guest account on that computer, I get access to that PC in the workgroup. At the same time one PC on the workgroup has no guest account (only administrator account) and the other PCs can see it and it's shared files without being forced to go through the login process.

What is going on here with respect to authentication?

Thanks  
Greg Nash

Greg,

The browser provides visibility.

The rule of the browser is simple. If you're going to use browser services, there must be a browser on the network for each computer to get the browse list

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from. If there is just one computer running the browser, then that computer will be the master browser. If there are two or more computers running the browser, then those computers have to decide which one will be the master browser.

If the master browser computers stays online constantly, there will be no problem. If the master browser ever drops offline, you have the possibility for problems. If you have more questions after reading my article, I'd appreciate the feedback.

<<http://nitecruZR.blogspot.com/2005/04/nt-browser-or-why-cant-i-always-see.html>>  
<http://nitecruZR.blogspot.com/2005/04/nt-browser-or-why-cant-i-always-see.html>

Authentication provides access.

By local authentication, the meaning is for network access by non-Guest accounts, you have to use an identical non-Guest account on both the client (the computer that you're logged in to), and any server (the remote computer that you need to access). Authentication is required, whether or not you use the browser (Network Neighborhood), or just do an adhoc mapping by name or even by IP address).

<<http://nitecruZR.blogspot.com/2005/06/file-sharing-under-windows-xp.html>>  
<http://nitecruZR.blogspot.com/2005/06/file-sharing-under-windows-xp.html>

Now things get complicated when you setup accounts with or without passwords. It is possible to setup network access on any account with no password required (ie a blank password). If you're going to use blank passwords, you should do consistently, or you may run into problems. Maybe this is part of your problem.

When you refer to the computer that "has no guest account", what specifically do you mean? Was Guest deleted? Or was Guest disabled for local access? Remember local and remote access is potentially different for any account.

Do my questions raise any more questions from you? Ask away. Windows browsing and authentication has many possible problems, and I don't think it's possible to document all of them.

<<http://nitecruZR.blogspot.com/2005/07/windows-networking.html>>  
<http://nitecruZR.blogspot.com/2005/07/windows-networking.html>

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Cheers,

Chuck, MS-MVP [Windows - Networking]

<http://nitecruZR.blogspot.com/>

Paranoia is not a problem, when it's a normal response from experience.

My email is AT DOT

actual address pchuck mvps org.

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