

# Re: What Would Deactivate Hosts File?

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- *From:* "CoolHandJoe" <[joemagueta@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:joemagueta@xxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* 6 Jan 2007 12:55:35 -0800
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In my default install of Windows 2003 server the permissions on the hosts file are

Administrators: Full Control  
System: Full Control  
Server Operators: everything short of Full Control  
Authenticated Users: Read & Execute and Read  
The file is owned by the administrators group.

Joe

Will wrote:

I solved this problem, and I'll post how for posterity, but I would be interested in anyone's theories about why this works. It almost looks like a bug or misfeature to me.

We had modified the default ACL on `c:\windows\system32\drivers\etc` to exclude the Users group. If you give Users read and execute access, and then reboot (it will not work until you reboot), then hosts mysteriously starts working. Note that before and after the reboot I am logged in as local administrator. And the folder always had Full Control access for Administrators and SYSTEM, so it cannot be the case that giving Users access suddenly gave applications in my user context access, since they must have had read access to HOSTS before the ACL change.

What surprises me about this is that I would have thought HOSTS was implemented in the driver or somewhere in the kernel, not in each individual user application. If that is the case, then why would read access to the Users group affect this feature, which should be implemented by a SYSTEM entity? It's almost like the code that runs at SYSTEM level did an ACL check, and after it saw that Users did not have access, it bypassed the feature. That seems like wrong behavior.

Note that the local Users group did NOT have Authenticated Users in it, just Domain Users.

Re: What Would Deactivate Hosts File?

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Will

"Will" <westes-usc@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message  
[news:R6ydnZBeY6ceVQDYnZ2dnUVZ\\_oipnZ2d@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:R6ydnZBeY6ceVQDYnZ2dnUVZ_oipnZ2d@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

On one of our Windows 2003 servers, the HOSTS file is not active. No changes made to the c:\windows\system32\drivers\etc\hosts file are ever active, even after a reboot. Is there some registry setting or group policy that would be deactivating that feature?

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Will