

Re: SBS2003 Partitioning

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Gosh !

I feel I have been misunderstood and slighted a little too :(I would never sell a server to a customer to maximise billing hours.

I wasn't really offering the HP example for it's memory capacity or proposed users – rather the fact that it had a rather complicated partitioning arrangement. I realise that 50 users on this "PC" is ridiculous. I will ensure that I post information with what I intend to illustrate in future.

I realise that capacity is all down to the business that you are selling to and in this case the capacity is just fine. It may be a PC rather than a server but it is giving a *small* business the benefits that of SBS2003 with remote email etc. It is only hosting 5 accounts.

I just wanted to understand best practice for partitioning in respect of pagefiles on separate partitions and exchange stores/logs etc. I'll take it from the received replies that this is not possible due to personal experiences so I will carry on as I was which works just fine anyway.

"MSR Consulting SBS Support" <support@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message news:admin.2iz5ua@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Sorry, I can't resist a good troll so I'll throw in my .02 (quid,cents, or {insert monetary equiv. here} take your pick if we've decided to be geographically sensitive here ;))

The reason there is no hard and fast rule is that to do so would be ludicrous. At the time of install if you aren't taking into account that specific businesses circumstances then you aren't doing your job. Add to that the variables on your server capabilities, usage patterns of the biz involved, etc, etc, etc and you've got yourself a good math equation of 'right answers'. You said you wanted to get the 'experts'

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views, but then want manufacturer articles, etc. to back up those views. That makes the assumption (wrong in my opinion) that those publishers can take into consideration all variables when publishing their documents. They have to publish *something*, but by necessity will do so around lowest common denominators, their own prejudices, etc. If everything was laid out in a nice neat little package there would be no need for more than one 'expert' in the first place. All manufacturers would pre-configure systems the same way. There would be no debate.

Arthus makes the statement that 'in his experience' businesses struggle to fill up 250 GB of space, much less 80. But in my experience my clients couldn't even get *started* with a 80Gb system. Does that make one of us wrong? Nope, just makes our experiences different.

Another likes SATA drives. I only use SCSI for the server drives (but do use eSATA for D2D backups). Does that mean that we couldn't throw specs at each other all day long about which is better? OK, great, I win the argument if we're just talking about on paper specs, but what about when he adds to the argument the price/performance ratio? I'd lose hands down. So who is right? It's a ridiculous question that only us geeks could find the time to try and answer in such minutiae.

In regards to moving or creating additional paging files....this would depend upon your configuration. I can point you to articles (by MS, etc.) telling you to do so to increase performance. But wouldn't that just lead you to ask 'why'? I mean the theory behind all of this is simple enough right? Offload and spread IO amongst your fastest drives and away from the places where you need IO speed the most. But whether or not to do so and where becomes clear only when looking at a specific machine, it's IO config, and the applications running on it. So the best one can do is say the 'best practice' is to do just that. It can't say 'always' do it, or 'never' do it.

On top of everything else, SBS brings a fairly unique set of circumstances in that it does some things that in most cases you would never find elsewhere. Namely running multiple server applications on a domain controller. So now the variable mix is huge.

As far as I'm concerned about partitions, I'd be perfectly happy with a single partition....*if* I could setup a RAID config the way I would like to. But to do it the way I'd like would require some pretty heavy RAID dollars that most small businesses do not have or would be better spent elsewhere. That has nothing to do with 'technology' or 'best practices', just the reality of business. I'm pretty sure most publications on the topic are not going to tell me "The best way to do it is x, but don't do that, instead you should spend your money on y because you could put more widgets in your inventory and increase your bottom line"

The tools you put into place also effect your desired configuration.

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We use defrag software that specifically deals with Exchange (PerfectDisk), so that impacts how we take into account defragmentation issues like you mentioned (although my personal opinion is that's not as big a reason for putting on separate spindle as performance would be. If the partition is on the same set of spindles then I could care less). MS can't assume that you're using *anything* other than their product, so wouldn't any articles they publish on the topic mean nothing to me in that situation?

I think for OS partition sizing the best you can do in regards to a blanket statement is to look at OS sizes, increase rates of that size due to updates, service packs, etc., localizing a i386 directory, paging file, temp space, and retention of uninstall files. With all of that factored in you should plan on a minimum of 25Gig on the system partition to last you the lifetime of SBS 2003 if you offload all other functions to another partition. Considering the fact that you always want to allow for a minimum amount of free space for defragmentation, shadow copy, and error correction over the drives lifetimes to function well that would be the bare minimum for a "set it and forget it" installation. Any smaller and you should be prepared to have to free up some space in a year or so.

The bottom line is that these are "preferences" built upon individuals "experiences" and the circumstances of an individual setup. Hopefully those preferences are based on solid information. Where one choice is not greatly different than another then take your pick as to which you want to follow. If you want opinions on a specific setup, then we'd need to know the needs, budgets, and circumstances of the situation to provide anything more than generalities. If you want comments on how you are thinking of setting up a system, we'd need to know your ideas in addition to the above. If you want blanket statements about what is right and wrong, you need a long life, a lot of time on your hands, and someone who knows the location of that guru at the top of the mountain.

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admin

Matt Ridings – MSR Consulting

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