

# Re: Serious SBS 2003 crisis and my wife has left me

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- *From:* vfclists <vfclists@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Fri, 09 Nov 2007 15:45:01 -0800
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On Nov 9, 9:55 pm, vfclists <vfcli...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

I have truly a serious problem with my SBS 2003 system, but the wife bit I made up.

1. One hard drive is gone. The system has two 80Gb hard disks. C: is the main 12Gb OS partition and E: is the remainder of the one with the C: and contains all the data. D: is the 2nd hard disk and it is gone. It is not showing up at all.

When I noticed the D drive was not showing up I decided not to restart the server until I could backup the data.

One user began to experience problems which I thought were a print spooler problem that showed up previously earlier on his account, and that is what led me to investigate further leading to this sequence of steps.

Another symptom is that trying to select an area in Excel and convert it to bold doesn't work, and it makes me wonder if it is some kind of virus problem as well.

One more symptom was the repeated message in the server logs that

"The oldest shadow copy of volume C: was deleted to keep disk space usage for shadow copies of volume C: below the user defined limit."

"The Microsoft Software Shadow Copy Provider service entered the stopped state."

The upshot was that I tried to restart some services and they all worked well except the Workstation service which is hung. It can neither be stopped nor restarted and all account which were logged off before can't log on now. Even though I am logged on to the server via Remote Desktop on a regular user account, I can't browse the network neighbourhood. I dare not close this console as I suspect I will not be able to log on again on the server itself.

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I think restarting the server will get the Workstation service restarted, but I worry that there could be something more wrong. Like some file corruption.

A sample of the problems I faced are listed below, but I think they are due to the problem with the Workstation service.

I have backed up the C: drive and the System State as I am typing this.

The server configuration was backed up daily onto the D: drive from which the staff were supposed to make copies to DVD writer. I suspect that there may be a full server configuration which can restore the system, but I suspect that some of the system files are corrupted. The server itself is 3 years old, and it seems to have gone down just when I was pressing a reluctant management (of "the if it ain't broke don't fix it school") at least for some hard disk upgrades on it and a new refit to the latest service pack.

Is there some conspiracy to get systems to fail exactly after 3 years of mostly troublefree service? The Windows directory date is 15th November 2004, when the SBS 2003 was preinstalled by Dell.

It is setup mainly as a File and Printer server and Exchange is not used. I could switch to Workgroup and the difference will not be really noticed, but some users have become used to additional but not necessary features, and the management would like to move to a full SBS system using Fax, Outlook, Calendaring, Telephony etc.

My intention is to do a reinstall using the latest Service Pack and new hard disks, but I would like to minimize the downtime and settings as much as possible. Management are also considering a new server.

Some of the things I am considering are:

1. Get a system like Acronis and both a local and remote network backup, in addition to backing up to tape. I really can't rely on the disk rotation on the backups to be done regularly.
2. Switch to a Virtual System using VMWare or Virtual Server 2007. I was thinking of a setup which can run on a Virtual Server with minimal hardware dependencies, but with only 1Gb of RAM it wasn't really feasible and the possible disruption wouldn't be worthwhile. The company's needs are simple enough for that to suffice, if backups of the File Server part are done backups are done regularly enough.
3. I also need some tools that can generate both hardware and software reports and send some dire warnings to the boss. I configured that before but it seems they get lost amidst the loads of junk email (AOL), and as nothing has really broken until now it hasn't been of

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much use. This is the first time a staff member has really been unable to do his job in 3 years, and I can switch them to a workgroup without much of a problem, the new more SBS dependent stuff above is why I have to consider this now.

The Server itself is a Dell PE1600SC with 1Gb of RAM and 2 (now 1) 80GB hard disk. The 2nd one is not showing up in Device Manager.

Unless the CPU or some of other non mechanical bits are malfunctioning properly there is probably some more life in it. All it has had to do is to just sit in the corner.

What am looking for is a software and hardware configuration, with necessary tools and hardware which allows rapid recovery from problems.

Is there some "The Reliable SBS 2003 Hardware and Software Configuration Which Idiot Local Users Who Only Push Buttons, Plug and UnPlug cables And Rotate Backup Media and Remote Administrators Who Only Want To Visit When There Are Critical Hands On Issues or The Users Are Too Stupid To Do Their Easy Bit! – Guide"?

I was considering upgrading the current system if there are no motherboard and chipset related problems, but the boss has opted for a new system. One problem was the current system uses an OEM version of SBS so it looks like a new machine means new SBS software

or going for a new Dell PowerEdge SC 1430 with 4 hard disks configured as 2 RAID 1 Hard Disks as the base.

I am also interested in some Network Attached Storage for Backups, an appropriate Tape or Optical Backup (HD DVD Disks look interesting) using Acronis system.

The main concern is the kind of software configuration and setup which allows easily recovery from MS systems eccentricity and the hardware required, and the monitoring and reporting tools which allow us to anticipate and fix them.

Virtualization is seriously under consideration here.

Any ideas?

I am considering a shortlist but will post it later as I get more replies.

The budget expected is about £2000, but I am considering going up to about £4000 as the additional software systems tend to cost a bit.

Management tend to balk at invisible, intangible software on servers they can't understand, but this should be a wake up call.

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I probably have to reboot the server now as the boss, who hardly turns of his system cannot access his file shares. I suspect the time for reauthentication has come and he is being thrown out because of the Workstation service error.

Will be back later.

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Some of the funny displays are show below.

2. In the Server Management console a lot of the settings are gone. I think the Server Management console requires some kind of logon and a lot of the applicable pages don't show up.

3. When I try to Administer the Active Directory window. I get a dialog stating

Naming information cannot be located because:

The workstation driver is not installed.

Contact the system administrator t verify that your domain is properly configured and currently online.

Broswing in Connect to Domain gives the error:

Unable to browse the domain because:

The interface is unknown

When Connect to Domain Controller

The following domain could not be contacted:

The RPC server is not available.

When I try to open the Active Directory Domains and Trusts the error is:

The configuration information describing this enterprise is not available.

The workstation driver is not installed.

The system is back up now and the hard disks is showing now. Everything is fine ( apparently). It failed to restart until I shut I powered it down completely and restarted it.

But it has been a worrying experience and I need to look at tools that can predict and fix it before it goes wrong.

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