

Re: Rebuilding SBS Server 2003 SP2

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- *From:* "Billy Burrows" <billy.burrows@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 21 Mar 2008 03:32:55 GMT
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Thanks again for replying again Lanwench, I'd be well stuffed without your help!

I read like three how-to's online, the stuff @ Microsoft and I bought a book and of course the help files inc with SBS, Windows Small Business Server 2003 Administrators Companion. My problem is that I like to get stuck in and learn by doing so I skim (a lot), think "that sounds reasonable" (a lot) then dive on in. This approach has worked well over the years except in women, kids, and now SBS, I guess it really is true that preparation avoids disappointment!

Your promise of not needing to re-install my server interests me VERY much (someone else said that a couple of weeks back) but I don't see a way past it! Say for instance my server is named "IHATEMYBOSS.server" (.server and not .local because of MAC clients) but our MX record and SSL certificate state mail.ourdomain.com. I can't use Exchange system manager because it's whining that there's a SSL certificate in place and the server names do not match, and they don't, one specifies IHATTEMYBOSS while the cert says mail. I also have issues with RPC over HTTP (although not 100% connection failure is done to this but i got a gut feeling!), the Outlook over the internet settings is given using IHATEMYBOSS.ourdomain.com but the MX record and SSL are configured for mail.ourdomain.com. The only reason I am rebuilding SBS is to make the server name mail, because for some dumb reason you can't re-name a SBS server.

I have run through the msoft support page that talks you through removing the SSL on the inetmgr website related to exchange system manager but no joy and even if exchange system manager worked I'd still be stuck with the RPC issue!

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What's really really annoying is that everything else (OWA, RWW, VPM, everything) works perfectly save a few system warnings about latency on C:\ and processes using a high amount of RAM (sometimes). I suspect that I could help this situation by staggering maintenance processes somewhat. I just configured everything to @ run at night out of business hours so the poor thing is trying to run a server backup, data backup, mailbox gizmo and probably updates too all within a 4 – 6 hour period. I should maybe stagger this a lil better! As for the RAM I have an additional 2Gb just waiting for my lazy self to stick it in.

If I really do not have to re-install I would love not to but I have tried to resolve above issues for weeks with no joy so mentally I'm reduced to ok, I will do it, I will rebuild but please god let it be one last time! What I find really funny is other servers off site running UBUNTU server (LDAP, SAMBA, QMAIL, APACHE, PHP, MYSQL) all have uptimes in the months and months and it would have been longer save for a relocation. apt-get upgrade updates the whole system and there's never ever a problem. I've almost totally forgiven bash and that evil VI editor, but thank god there's help with SBS, if I put these questions in a lug or nix forum all's I'd get out is RTFN.

By X2 I meant two drives (X 2 hard drives like times two), I like the idea of RAID but it caused me a huge pain in the A the last time I implemented it so I now have some reservations. My first problem is the number of available disks I could now put into an array if i decided to run with it. The first ever implementation of our SBS used a main board with up to I think a 6 drive array that would have done a 1 + 0 RAID array. SBS ran like a dog until it totally wouldn't work and this tuned out to be a main board issue. The supplier was happy to swap it out but in troubleshooting I found lots of forums with people complaining about it so I changed the make and model last minute and didn't have a lot of time to check it out, local supplier too so had limited options to choose from.

The board we ended up with has onboard RAID but will only accommodate two drives in the array leaving me with the only options of either striping or mirroring with two drives. I would like the additional performance of striping (but wouldn't it be pants over just two drives anyway?) but reluctant to have another striping only config, I love the redundancy idea but this is pointless performance wise I would have thought and a lot of people on this forum totally slated using onboard RAID controllers when I was on here crying about the last SBS falldown, so i'm assuming using that what I have would be a bad idea anyway?

The board I have has 6 SATA II ports but only the first two can be used in a

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RAID array, sux dunit! So I suppose what would be really cool would be for an EXPERT to say ok your boned but the best option is this

As I see it my options are:

1) Talk the boss outta some cash and go get a RAID card and implement some cunning schema as detailed by you earlier and while im there I can get some new drives because the uber spec ones the supplier PROMISED rocked actually suck in a big way! This approach is likely to fail though, if I could scam cash that easily I'd go grab a blade server or something

2) Just stick in one drive for the OS and partition for the OS and data, install a second drive for backups only, configure XPress Recovery2 or just ghost it and hope any failure is not hardware related

3) Install two drives in a RAID 0 array grabbing some extra clocks and backing up nightly to a third drive

4) Install two drives in a RAID 1 array perhaps experience a performance hit and still backup to a third drive nightly

5) Go 2 disk JBOD and backup data to a third nightly and cross my fingers, tightly.

My reasoning is leaning towards a 2 disk mirror with a third disk for nightly backups then later on when we get the 2008 SBS I can maybe justify some new kit. I suspect this is going to be a weekend of learning, thanks a lot for your time and thoughts on all my woes!!!!!!!!!!!!

Cheers ;-)

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wisdom and experience I would be most grateful.

Grateful, even? :-)

This will be the second rebuild (first time due to hard drive failure) this time to overcome a server naming issue.

Wow. What's your server called – IHATEMYBOSS ? This is a pretty large task to undertake for something that's merely cosmetic (and internal).

Some things that I am not sure about:

Is it worth partitioning the main SBS installation drive into the following?

C:\ (Main SBS partition)

D:\ (pagefile)

E:\ (data).

There's no advantage to putting the page file on a different partition. You will see a performance improvement only if it's a separate disk/array. If you don't have that setup, and will have a single array, I would do something like this:

C: (OS, pagefile) – 20 to 40GB

D: (Exchange & SQL data) – at least 100GB depending on your needs, ideally more

E: (Users shared folders, clientapps, fax, any other custom / company shared data) – the rest of the space

The advantage of the partitions is that things don't step on each others' toes. So, a user's data folder can't get chock full of MP3

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files and knock Exchange offline.

The hard drive is 400Gb,

I'm hoping you've got a hardware RAID array in here?

the system has 4Gb RAM. With Nix we would normally assign a swap partition of 3X system RAM, would the same sizing principles apply to SBS for the pagefile partition?

We do this routinely with NIX systems for performance reasons

No performance benefit here, as per the above.

and so that we do not have to worry about recovering data from backup in the event of having to re-install the system.

Sure. And it's just tidier.

Does partitioning like this on an SBS system improve performance and will it help in the event of a future system re-install? If so what's the recommended partition sizes for the base installation, page file partition and the data partition? How can I remove the old server from client systems so that offline files will not try to synchronize with it?

Disable offline files first. And keep it that way –what's the need of that nonsense on a LAN-connected computer?

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On The previous re-build
simply un-ticking the option to synchronize
to the old server in
start > All Programs > Accessories >
synchronize didn't appear to
work.

Disable it via group policy.

Many Thanks for any advice!