

Top Ten Benefits of Microsoft® Windows® Storage Server 2003

Here are the 10 most valuable benefits Microsoft Windows Storage Server 2003 can provide to your organization.

1. Dependable Storage for Your IT Environments

Windows Storage Server 2003 is designed to help keep your organization's stored data highly protected and highly available, whether that information is local to users, stored remotely at different branch or departmental sites, or is consolidated into a datacenter. Small, midsize, and enterprise-sized businesses can all benefit from Windows Storage Server's highly effective and dependable means of sharing files and storage.

2. Easily and Quickly Deployable

Network attached storage (NAS) solutions based on Windows Storage Server 2003 are rapidly deployable solutions, making gigabytes to terabytes of storage available to the organization within minutes. NAS devices running Windows Storage Server 2003 come preconfigured for simple Plug and Play integration into the existing network. An intuitive Web browser interface with simple step-by-step installation instructions helps to ensure that storage is correctly and effectively installed on the network within minutes.

3. Seamless Integration with Your Existing IT Infrastructure

Windows Storage Server 2003 can be added into your organization's infrastructure wherever additional storage is needed—without having to reconfigure the existing storage infrastructure or bring down the network. Through its support for a broad range of file serving protocols, Windows Storage Server 2003 enables simple and effective file sharing across heterogeneous environments, including Windows, UNIX/Linux, Novell, and Macintosh platforms. This means that users on different platforms can access the same files without additional interventions. Moreover, Windows Storage Server 2003 can work with current business investments. These include server management infrastructure, such as the Distributed File System (DFS) and Microsoft® Active Directory® directory service (which enables the use of previously established Group Policy Objects); utilities, such as antivirus and backup software; and security capabilities, such as user authentication and file and data encryption.

4. Scalability and Reliability

Windows Storage Server 2003 can provide networked storage solutions for small, midsize, and enterprise-sized organizations. Devices built on Windows Storage Server 2003 can range in storage capacity from 160 gigabytes to several terabytes. Because disk capacity can be extended by simply hot plugging new disks in the appliance (without the need for network or server downtime), the process of making available additional storage is simple and non-disruptive. In addition to scalability benefits, NAS devices built on Windows Storage Server 2003 are highly reliable and have low maintenance requirements. Because NAS devices only contain those components necessary to dedicated file serving functionality, there are fewer potential points of failure. Moreover, because Windows Storage Server 2003 is designed to support both clustering and fully redundant hardware components, it can help your business realize high data availability and protection through fault tolerance.

5. Increased Storage Utilization and Low Cost of Acquisition

Windows Storage Server 2003 provides your organization with a highly effective alternative to direct attached storage. Adding storage to the network enables users to share storage resources from a centralized pool, thus helping to eliminate many storage resource provisioning problems associated with direct attached storage. Pooling storage resources decreases the total cost of ownership (TCO). Rather than adding more storage through the purchase of additional servers, you can consolidate storage onto Windows Storage Server 2003. By doing that, your organization may realize lowered TCO through both decreased capital equipment costs and through reduced IT staff hours. You can simplify time and management-intensive tasks, such as distributed backups and restores, by using Windows Storage Server 2003. Management of storage resources is simplified with Storage Manager, which supports quota management, file screening, and reporting (supported by most hardware vendors).

Increased efficiency.
Reduced complexity



6. Fast Data Recovery

With the new Microsoft Volume Shadow Copy service, Windows Storage Server 2003 has the built in capability to enable extremely fast recovery of lost data—recovery times can be dramatically reduced, to minutes rather than the hours or days it can take to recover from tape. Shadow copies, point-in-time images, or “snapshots” of data, can be made as frequently as the administrator deems necessary—daily, every 12 hours, or even as often as every 4 hours. Shadow copy creation, unlike tape backups, is a non-intrusive process: users do not need to stop work on open files during backup. End users can also benefit from the Shadow Copies for Shared Folders feature, which, if activated, enables simple and almost instantaneous restoration of a previous version of a file or folder that was accidentally deleted or overwritten.

7. Simple Management

Administrators will find managing network attached storage with Windows Storage Server 2003 easier than ever. A web based user interface (UI) enables the system administrator to easily set up the NAS device in only a few short steps. Windows Storage Server 2003 can be remotely managed from devices on the network. Because Windows Storage Server 2003 can be acquired preconfigured with RAID (redundant array of independent disks), fault tolerant and high performance solutions are already built in. For companies with complex or extensive storage deployment needs, Windows Storage Server 2003 includes scriptable command line utilities for customizing disk configuration.

8. Effective NAS-SAN Integration

NAS devices based on Windows Storage Server 2003 can be easily integrated into a storage area network (SAN) as a NAS “gateway” to the SAN. This configuration brings to NAS devices all the advantages of a SAN, including high performance (Fibre Channel) storage, SAN backups, and maximum flexibility in allocating and sharing storage among NAS filers. For organizations with a preexisting SAN, adding a NAS gateway to the SAN allows for consolidation of general purpose file servers. Because Windows Storage Server 2003 provides support for clustering, attaching multiple NAS gateways to the SAN provides failover capacity if a NAS device failure occurs.

9. Enhanced Performance

Windows Storage Server 2003 serves files to users, applications, and servers faster than ever before. Because network attached storage devices separate the file serving read/write operations from application read/writes, NAS devices are not overburdened with CPU intensive operations; instead they are dedicated to file management functions and can, therefore, be optimized for high speed high performance solutions. Not only can original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) configure their NAS hardware to optimize file serving performance between the server and the storage device, but the operating system itself can be tuned for higher performance. In Windows Storage Server 2003, the server messenger block (SMB) file sharing protocol has been improved so that it serves files much faster—35-85% faster (NetBench comparison¹), depending on the configuration—than before. File sharing between UNIX clients and Windows Storage Server 2003 is 50% faster (when tested on generic hardware) than in the previous version of Windows Powered NAS (internal Microsoft test data).

10. More Storage Solutions With Wide Partner Ecosystem

Windows Storage Server 2003 helps customers build the storage solutions that work best for their businesses. Storage Server 2003 is designed so that original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are able to offer a wide variety of NAS hardware configurations. Businesses can choose among NAS appliances with different storage capacities, performance, and management options. Independent software vendors (ISVs) can offer a range of utilities that function effectively with Windows Storage Server 2003, including backup, management and anti-virus utilities. In combination, Windows Storage Server 2003, in partnership with OEMs and ISVs, helps to bring to customers the widest possible range of storage solutions.

Footnotes

¹ Windows Server 2003 File Server, Web Server, and Active Directory Performance Testing (4/03) at www.veritest.com/clients/reports/microsoft