

Microsoft Exchange 2003 – Administering Public Folders with Exchange 2003 and PFMIGRATE

Written by Marc Grote - <mailto:grotem@it-training-grote.de>

Abstract

In this article I will give you an overview about basic Public Folder Administration Tasks with Exchange 2003 and the use of tools like PFMIGRATE.

Let's begin

What are Public Folders

Public folders are an easy and effective way to collect, organize, and share information with other people. You can use public folders to share files or post information on an electronic bulletin board. Public folders can also be used to store items such as calendars and contacts that are shared by two or more people.

Stored on Exchange 2003 computers, public folders are created and designed by administrators and other people in your organization who have the appropriate access permissions. These access permissions determine who can view, create, and modify items in the folders. It is possible to Mail enable public folders to send information directly to the public folder. It is also possible to associate a Windows group with a public folder.

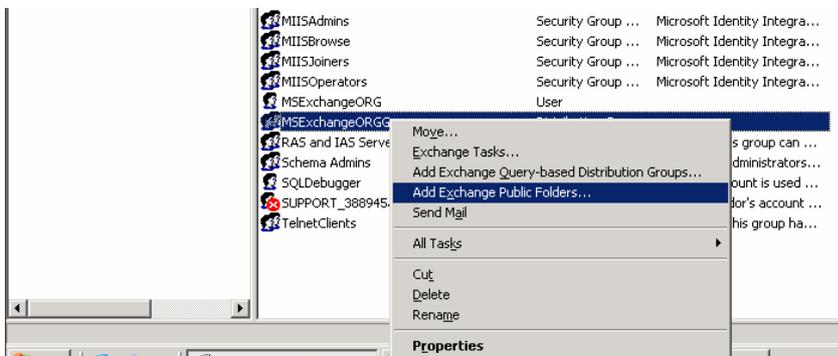


Figure 1: Associate a Public Folder with a Windows Group

Type of public folders

There are two types of public folders in Exchange 2003:

- ? Public Folder
- ? System Folder

Public folders

Public folders are the visible public folders for your users to organize and publish informations. You can create as much public folders you want.

Exchange distinguishes between different public folder trees:

- ? ONE public folder tree type called "MAPI Clients" and
- ? MANY public folder tree types called "General purpose"

Every public folder tree must be associated with an Exchange 2003 Public Folder Store.

Public folders under the MAPI public folder tree are visible in Outlook.

Public folders under the General purpose public folder tree are visible in Explorer and various other clients, except Outlook, like HTTP clients.

System Folder

System folders are hidden folders for internal Exchange System Management. Exchange needs this System Folders for Offline Address Book generation, Free+Busy information and many more. Exchange generates the following System Folders:

- ? EForms Registry
- ? Events Root
- ? Nntp Control Folder
- ? Offline Address Book
- ? Schedule+ Free Busy
- ? StoreEvents
- ? System Configuration

To view System Folders start Exchange System Manager, navigate to Public Folders and right click "View System Folders".

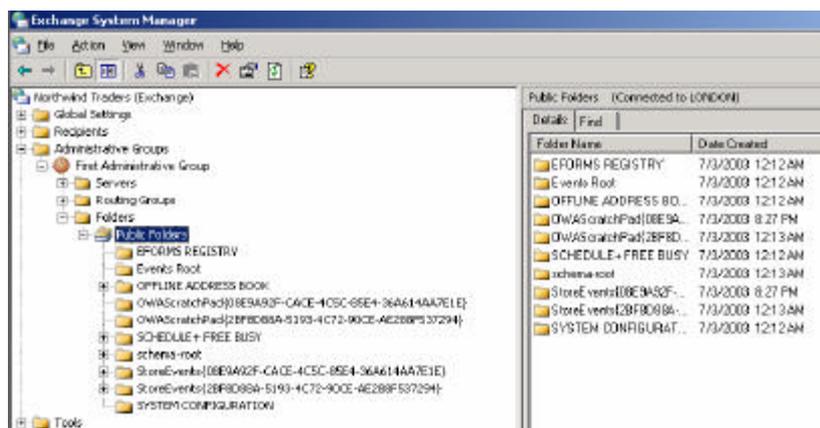


Figure 2: Display System folders in ESM

Who can create public folders

It is possible to create public folders in Exchange System Manager and Microsoft Outlook. To control who is allowed to create public folders, start Exchange System Manager and navigate to the administrative Group (to show administrative groups in ESM right click the Organization object – Properties and select "Display administrative groups"). Right click the administrative group – go to Properties – Security and select the users / groups allowed to "Create public folder" and "Create top level public folder".

If the Security tab is missing, you must patch the Registry. Start – Regedit and create the following registry key: HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Exchange\EXAdmin – REG_DWORD – ShowSecurityPage – Value 1.

Replication

To ensure availability of public folders and to reduce network traffic through Exchange 2003 Routing Groups, it is possible to replicate public folders to different Exchange Servers. A copy of a public folder is called a replica. Public Folder replication is simple. Navigate to the public folder which you want to replicate – right click Properties – Replication and add a new public folder store to replicate to. You can specify the replication interval and the Replication Message Priority.

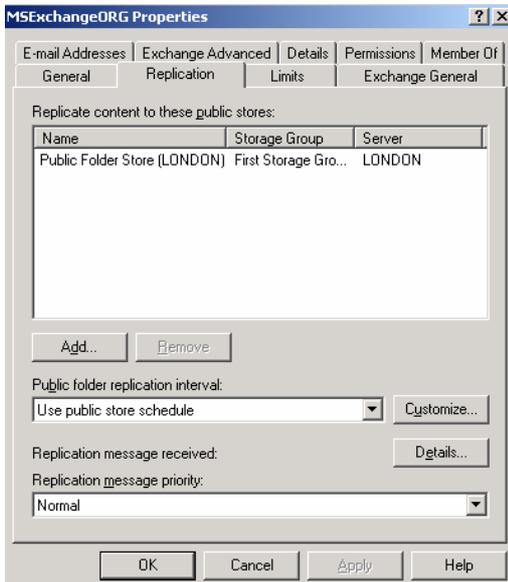


Figure 3: Public folder replication

Public Folder permission

There are some ways how to apply permissions to Public Folders in Exchange 2003. We must distinguish between three different types of permissions:

Client permissions = are Exchange specific rights. Microsoft has created a handful Permission Roles for common administrative tasks.

Directory rights = are Active Directory permissions for public folders stored in Active Directory

Administrative rights = are permission how can manage Public Folder rights, Replicas, creation of public folders and many more.



Figure 4: Public folder permissions

Public Folder Referrals

When a user connects to a public folder store that does not contain a copy of the content the user is looking for, the user is redirected to another store that has a copy of the content. This is called public folder affinity in Exchange 5.5.

Since Exchange 2000 public folder referrals are transitive- that means if an affinity exists between Routing Group A and Routing Group B and between Routing Group B and Routing Group C, an affinity automatically exists between Routing Group A and Routing Group C.

Full-Text Indexing

For faster searches and to improve performance it is possible to create a Full-Text Index of your public information store. For more Information read the following article: <http://www.msexchange.org/tutorials/Full-Text-Index-Information-Store.html>

Public Folder Enhancements in Exchange 2003

There are some Public Folder Enhancements in Exchange 2003:

- ? Send Hierarchy (Hierarchy Replication Push) from Exchange System Manager
- ? Send Content (Content Replication Push) from Exchange System Manager
- ? View Public Folder Content from Exchange System Manager
- ? Search for Folders in Exchange System Manager
- ? Offline Address Book Folders Structure

Send Hierarchy (Hierarchy Replication Push) from Exchange System Manager

You can push or initiate hierarchy replication between specific servers by using Exchange System Manager.

Send Content (Content Replication Push) from Exchange System Manager

You can use Exchange System Manager to push the public folder content from one server to another. This is very useful when you are troubleshooting public folder replication.

View Public Folder Content from Exchange System Manager

You can use Exchange System Manager to view the actual content of public folders. This is done through OWA integration with Exchange System Manager

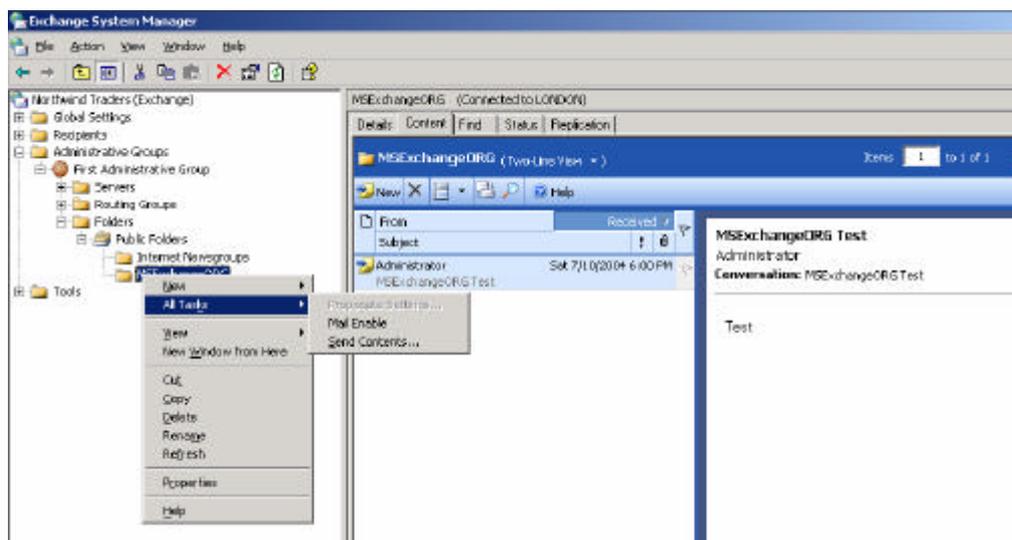


Figure 5: Mail Enable public folders and Send Contents

Search for Folders in Exchange System Manager

You can use Exchange 2003 Exchange System Manager to search for public folders by using different properties of the folder. This does not search public folder content. This only searches though the public folder hierarchy.

Offline Address Book Folders Structure

Exchange 2003 introduces a new offline Address Book folder that is named OAB Version 3a.

OAB Version 1 – For Exchange 4.0 and 5.0 compatibility and earlier Exchange DOS clients, Windows-based 16-bit clients, and Microsoft Exchange Server 4.0 and 5.0 clients.

OAB Version 2 - Offline address books in ANSI character for use with Outlook 97 through Microsoft Outlook 2003.

OAB Version 3a - Offline Address Books that are in Unicode format. These offline Address Books are used by Outlook 2003.

PFMIGRATE

PFMIGRATE allows you to move a bunch of Public Folders from an Exchange Server to an Exchange 2003 Server from the command line.

PFMIGRATE.WSF is a Script, which is located on the Exchange 2003 CD and the Exchange 2003 SP1 under SUPPORT\EXDEPLOY.

PFMIGRATE requires ONE Exchange 2003 Server in your Enterprise because PFMIGRATE uses specific WMI functions from Exchange 2003.

The syntax is simple:

To move System Folders

```
PFMIGRATE.WSF /S:SourceServer /T:DestinationServer /SF /A /N:100 /F:C:\LOGFILE.LOG
```

To move Public Folders

```
PFMIGRATE.WSF /S:SourceServer /T:DestinationServer /A /N:100 /F:C:\LOGFILE.LOG
```

To remove Public Folders after succesful Replication

```
PFMIGRATE.WSF /S:SourceServer /T:DestinationServer /D
```

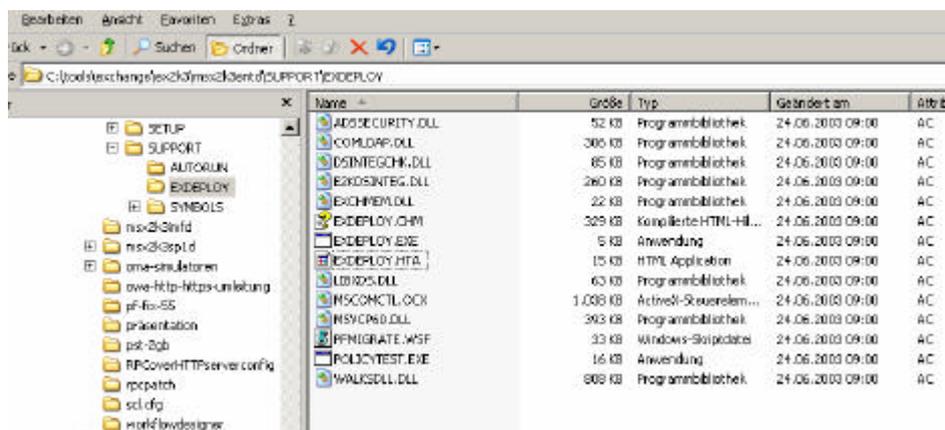


Figure 6: PFMIGRATE Tool

Conclusion

Public Folders are a powerful Tool in Exchange 2003. With the help of Public Folder Replication, Full-Text Indexing, Public Folder rights and PFMIGRATE you have full control over all aspects of Public Folder management.

Related Links

FAQ for Public Folders in Exchange 2003

http://www.microsoft.com/exchange/techinfo/administration/pubFolders_faq.asp

Public Folder improvements in Exchange 2003

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;823817>

Overview of PFMIGRATE

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;EN-US;822895>

Overview of PFADMIN

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;287110>

Public Folder Overview

http://www.msexchange.org/tutorials/Public_Folders_Maximize_Exchange.html

PFDVADMIN

http://hellomate.typepad.com/exchange/2003/10/the_pfdavadmin_.html

How To Reset a Site Folder in Exchange Server 2003

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?kbid=822444>