

Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 SP2 – Administrative changes in Public Folder Management

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Abstract

In this article I will give you some information about new and enhanced Public Folder Management features in Exchange Server 2003 SP2.

Let's begin

What are Public Folders?

Let us start with some basics. Public folders are an easy and effective way to collect, organize, and share information with other people. It is possible use Exchange public folders like an electronic bulletin board to post information, which are accessible for many people.

Public folders can be created by administrators – and after some permission changes from other people. Administrators can set appropriate permissions for people to view, create and modify items in public folders. It is also possible to mail enable public folders to send content directly to the public folder.

Attention: There are some rumors on the World Wide Web that Exchange 12 – the successor of Exchange 2003 will be the last Exchange version with this traditional form of public folders.

Type of public folders

There are two types of public folders in Exchange 2003:

- Public Folder
- System Folder

Public folders

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

Exchange distinguishes between the following public folder trees:

- ONE public folder tree type called “MAPI Clients” and
- MANY public folder tree types called “General purpose” public folders

System Folder

System folders are hidden folders for internal Exchange System Management. Exchange needs this System Folders as an example for organizational forms, Offline Address Book generation and Free+Busy information.

Exchange generates the following System Folders:

- EForms Registry
- Events Root

- Offline Address Book
- Schedule+ Free Busy
- StoreEvents
- NNTP Control Folder
- System Configuration

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

New OAB in SP2

There is also a new Public Folder name OAB (Offline Address Book 4.0) which is new in Exchange Server 2003 SP2. OAB 4.0 has the following advantages over older versions:

- Improved Logging
- Differential OAB updates
- Reduced OAB file size (up to 30%)

Attention: Outlook 2003 Clients must have Outlook 2003 SP2 installed to use these improvements.

One of the biggest changes in Public Folder management in Exchange Server 2003 SP2 is the removal of the Propagate Settings (Figure 1) option from the Public Folder context menu.

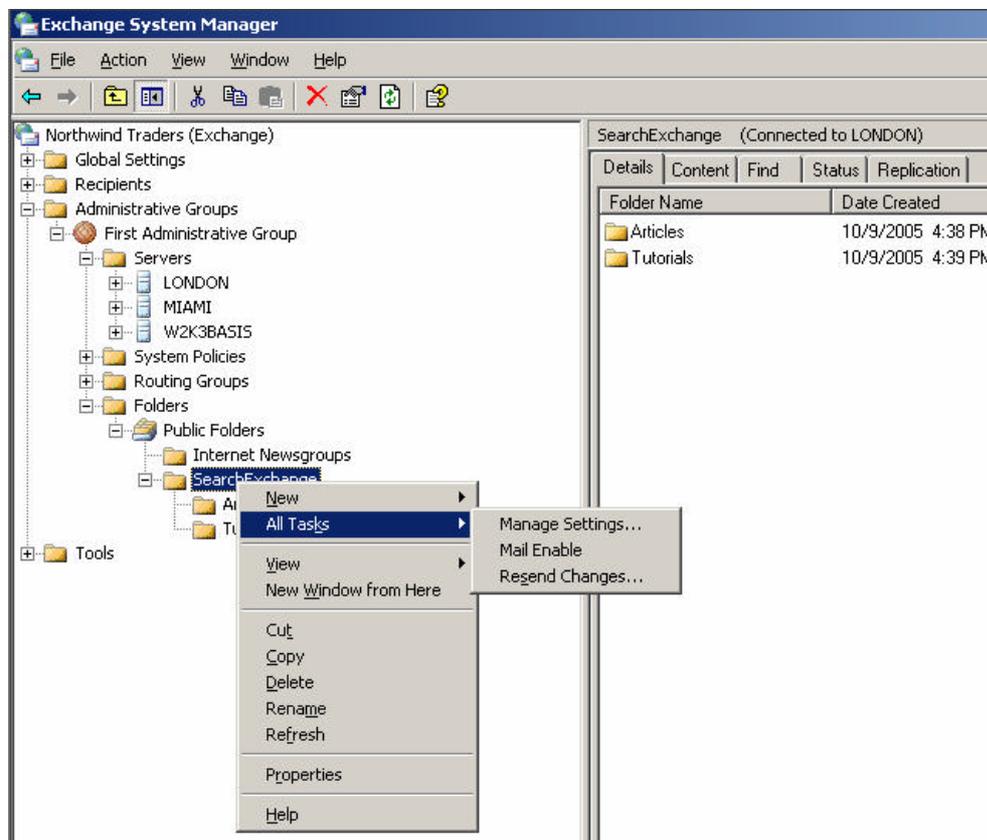


Figure 1: New Manage Settings Wizard in Exchange Server 2003 SP2

Exchange Server 2003 SP2 replaces this context menu item with a new Manage Settings option (Figure 1). This Manage Settings option starts a wizard that lets an Administrator propagate particular properties of selected Public Folders to subfolders underneath it.



Figure 2: Manage Folder settings wizard

You can specify an Action you want to take (Figure 3).

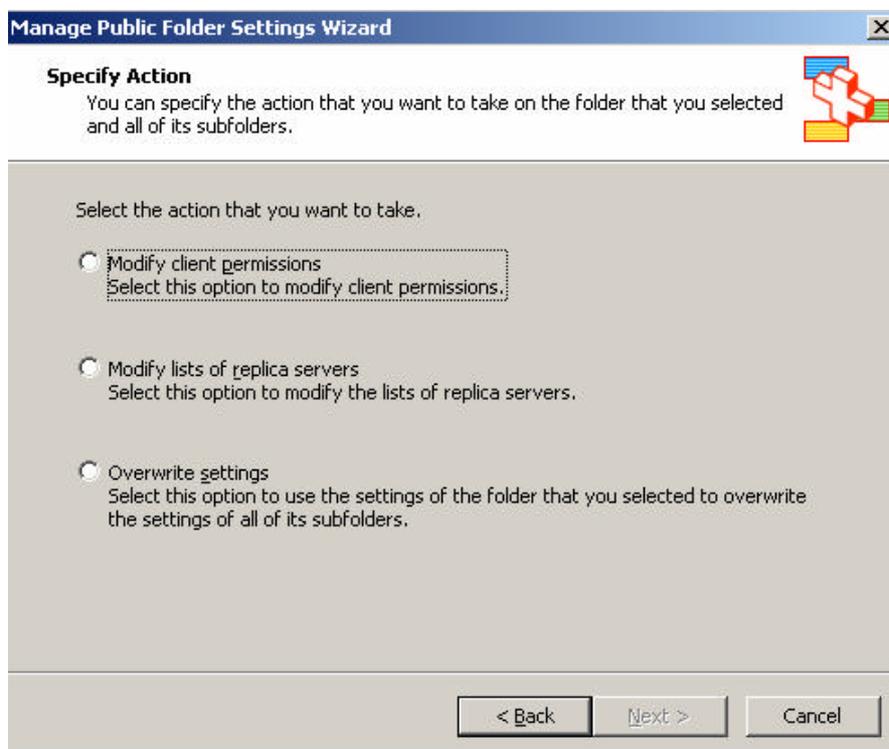


Figure 3: Select the Action

You can Add, remove and Modify users for the specified public folder structure.

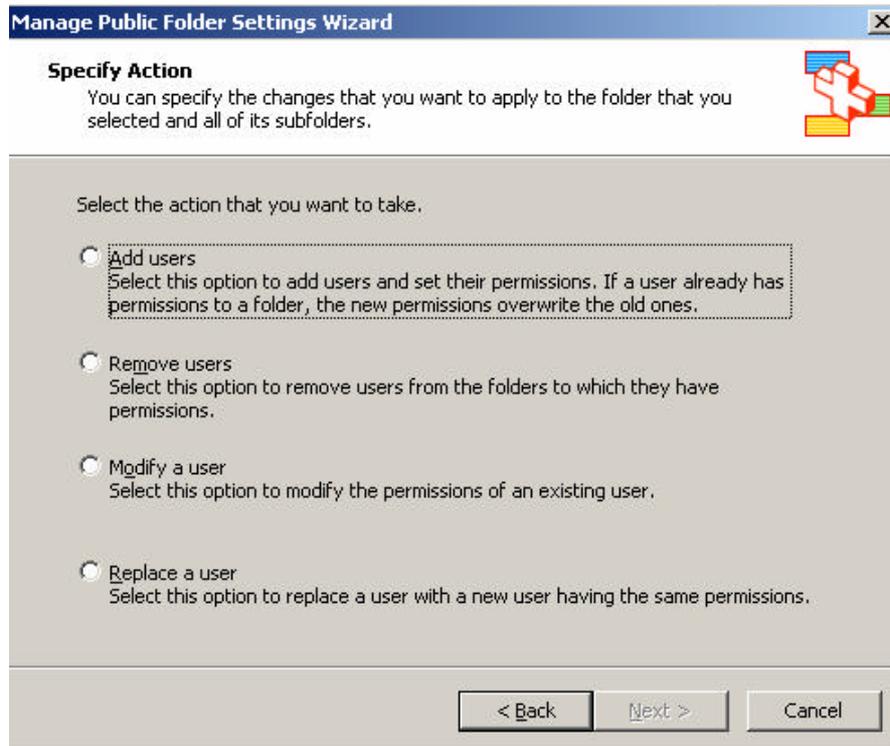


Figure 4: Select the action to modify/add/remove users from public folders

If you choose Add Users you must specify the user and assign him the required permissions (Figure 5).

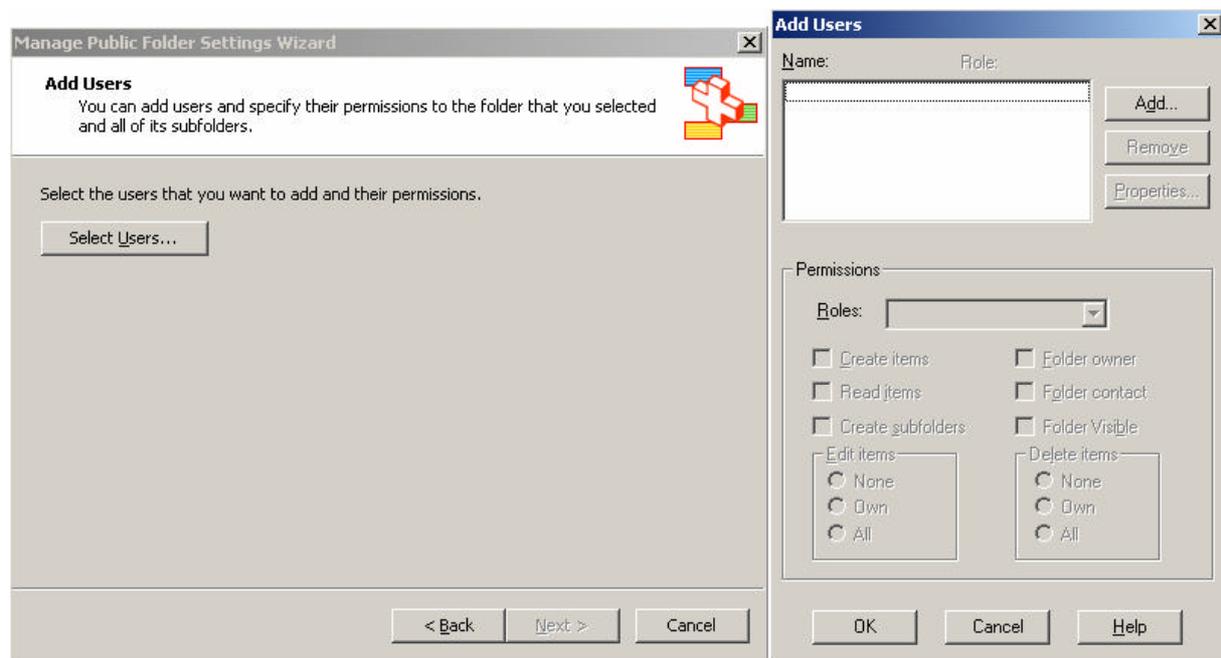


Figure 5: Add Users with required permissions

Another Public Folder related change in Exchange Server 2003 SP2 is that it is no more possible to delete a Public Folder store that contains data not replicated to another server. You first need to move all existing public folder replicas to another server, or delete the public folder if you don't need it.

If you select Move All replicas (Figure 6) from the context menu you will see the following dialog box (Figure 7).

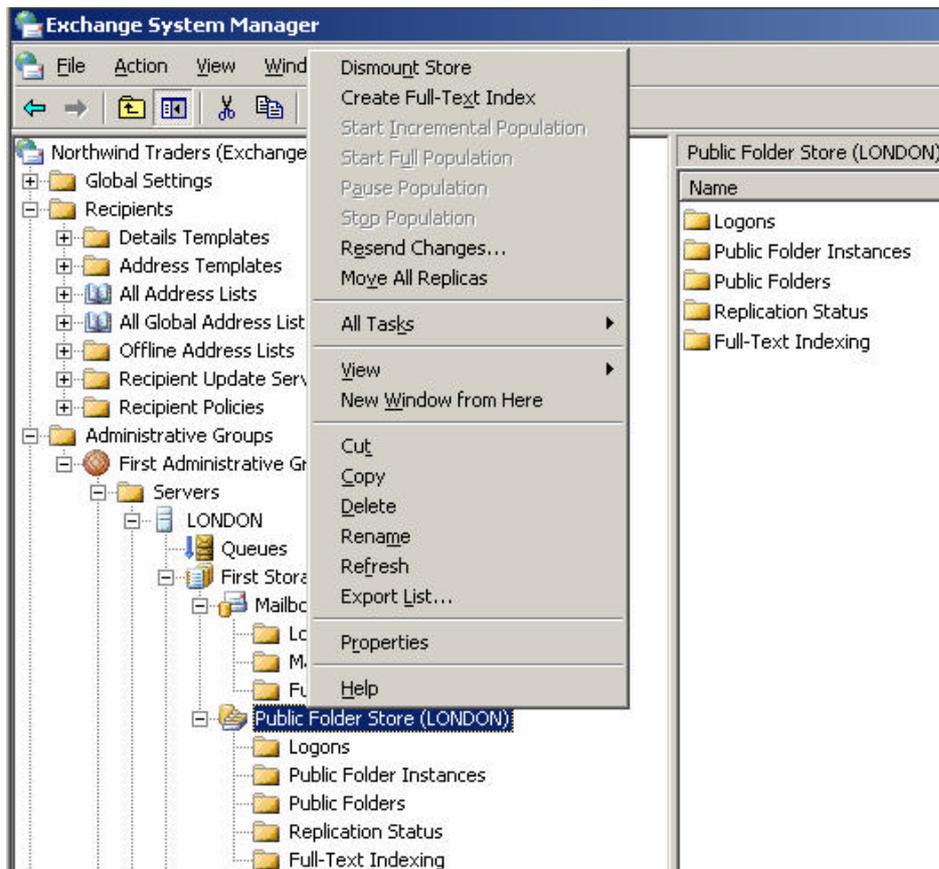


Figure 6: Move All Replicas Dialog Box

Now you can select the server to which you want to move all the public folder replicas in this Public Folder Store.



Figure 7: Select the server to which you want to move all public folder replicas

Some of the last Public Folder enhancements in Exchange Server 2003 SP2 includes the logging of public folder deletions, and the option of stopping and resuming Public Folder content replication (Figure 8).

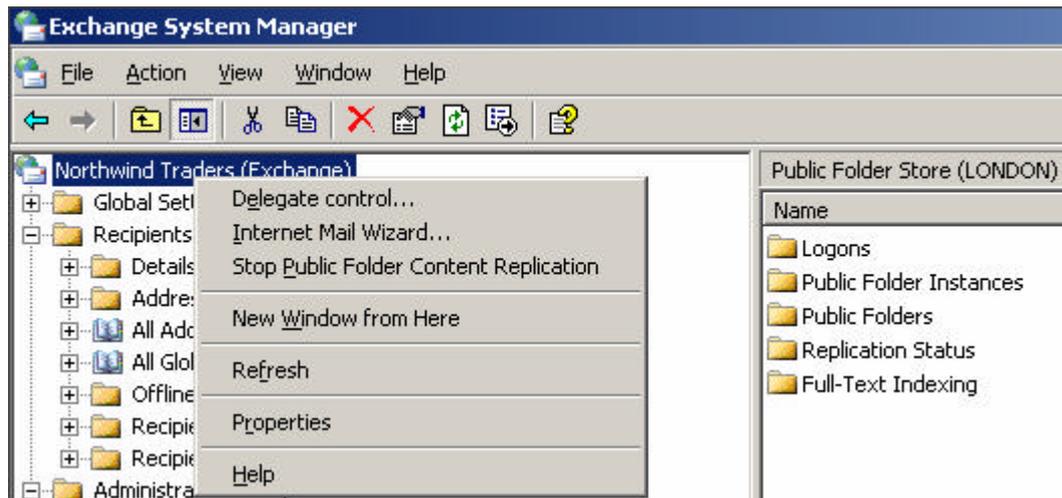


Figure 8: Stop Public Folder Content Replication

Conclusion

Exchange Server 2003 SP2 offers great enhancements for Exchange Server 2003 systems and many improvements in Public Folder Management.

Related Links

Frequently Asked Questions about Exchange Server 2003 Service Pack 2

<http://www.microsoft.com/exchange/downloads/2003/sp2/faq.msp>

Exchange Server 2003 Service Pack 2 Overview!

<http://www.microsoft.com/exchange/downloads/2003/sp2/overview.msp>

Exchange 2003 SP2 Public Folder Administration Changes

<http://www.windowsitpro.com/Windows/Article/ArticleID/46482/46482.html>