

Microsoft Exchange 2003 – Configuring Outlook 2003 for Offline use with Exchange 2003

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Introduction

When you use Outlook 2003 with Microsoft Exchange Server 2003, you can configure some folders in your mailbox for offline use, that is, you can use the contents of a folder without a Network connection.

Offline folders are only available in combination with Exchange Server.

Offline folders are the quickest and easiest way to work offline with Exchange Server. Offline folders make it possible to work with the contents of an Exchange Server folder while you are not connected to the network (as an example mobile workers), and then when you are connected to the network, you can synchronize the Offline folders.

This article explains in details how you can create, use, and synchronize offline folders.

This article is based on Microsoft Office Outlook 2003 (Build 11.4508.5606) and Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 (Build 6944.4).

Let's begin

Offline folders are stored in an offline folder (.ost) file. You can specify the path to store the OST file. OST files in Outlook 2003 are not limited to 2 GB size - be sure you have enough capacity on your hard drive. Like personal folders (.pst files), the .ost file can be compacted in three steps to save space on your computer.

What is the difference between Offline folders and personal folders?

The difference between an offline folder file and a personal folder is that the offline folder file is an exact replica of your folders on the Exchange Server 2003, and is updated by the server during client initiated synchronization. A set of personal folders, on the other hand, is simply a storage location on your hard disk or a server other than the Exchange Server 2003.

When you are working offline, you work with the contents of an offline folder exactly as you do with a folder that is part of your mailbox on the Exchange 2003 Server. For example, you can change and move items in your offline Inbox and send messages that are placed in your offline Outbox. When you connect your computer to the network you can manually or automatically synchronize the offline folders. Your message in the offline Outbox will be transmitted to the exchange server.

The first step is to configure the desired Address lists for offline use for Microsoft Outlook. The standard configuration makes the Global Address List available for offline use. You can specify the update interval of the Address List and the Address List compatibility for Exchange 4.0 and 5.0 servers (only necessary when you have Exchange 4.0 and 5.0 servers in your organization).

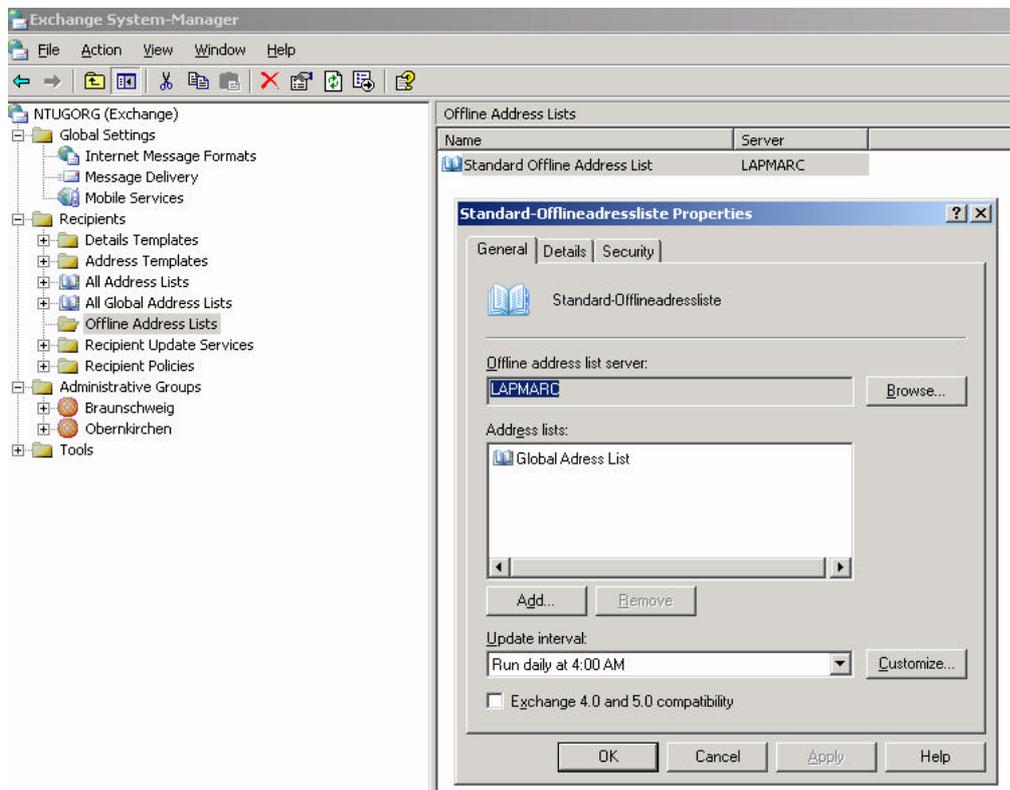


Figure 1: Configuring Exchange Address Lists for offline use

The next step is to configure an Outlook profile for Offline folder use. In this example we create a new Outlook profile. You have to click on “E-mail Accounts”.



Figure 2: Creation of a new Outlook profile

The next step is to click “Add new e-mail account”

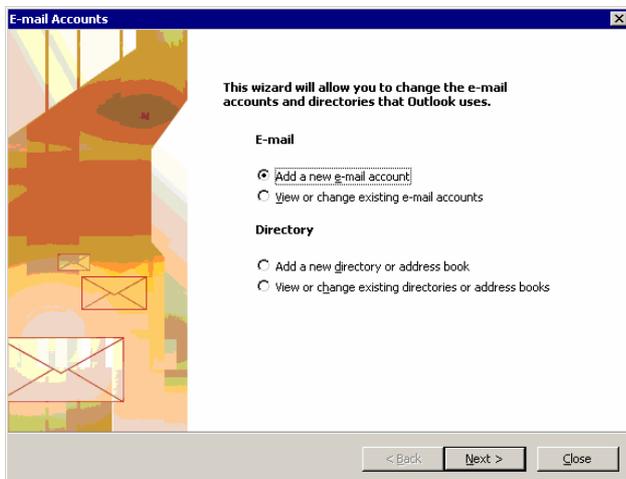


Figure 3: New e-mail account

Now we have to configure the Server Type – Click “Microsoft Exchange Server” and then click “Next”

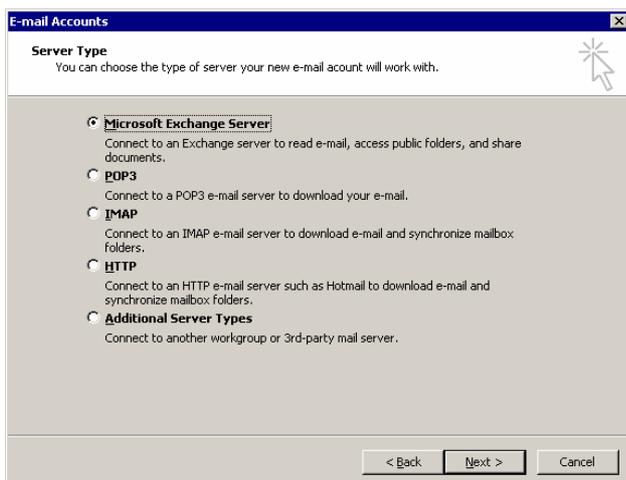


Figure 4: Select the Server Type

Type the Exchange Server Name (NetBIOS name or DNS name). Type the name of the mailbox name. The mailbox name is usually your user name.

In our example it is important to deselect “Use Cached Exchange Mode”. Cached Exchange Mode is a new feature of Outlook 2003 something similar with offline folders.

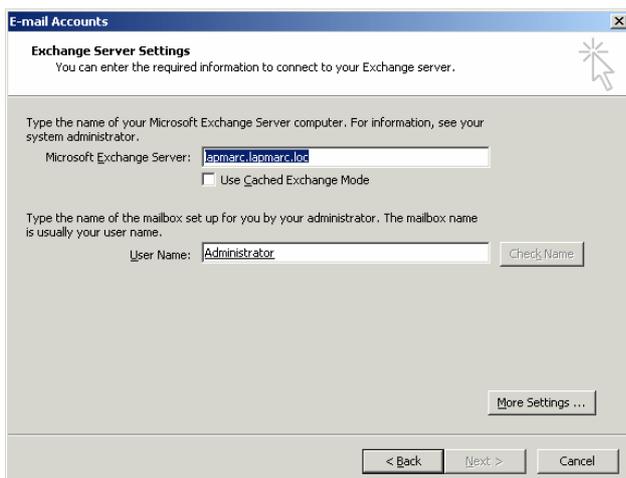


Figure 5: Specify Server and Mailbox Name

Next click “Advanced” than “Offline Folder File Settings” to specify the path to the .OST File

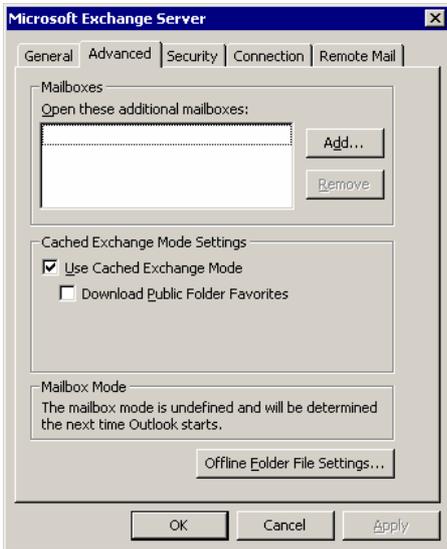


Figure 6: Click “Offline Folder File Settings”

Specify the path to the .OST file and select the Encryption Setting. Default is “Compressible Encryption. Note: When you select “High Encryption” you don’t have the possibility to compact the .OST File.

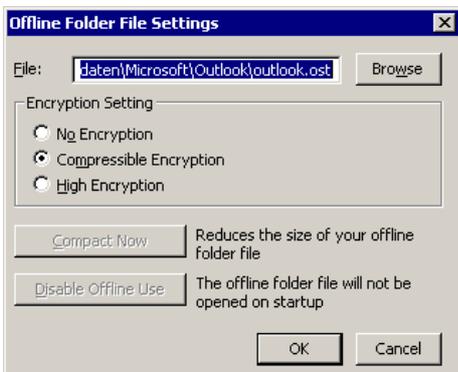


Figure 7: Specify the path to the .OST file

After the successfully creation of the outlook profile you can start Outlook. The next step is to go into the properties of the folder for offline use and specify a “Filter” for the content to synchronize.

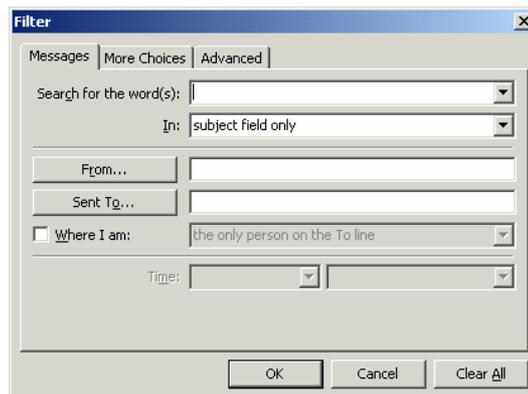


Figure 8: Filter settings for Offline folders Figure 9: Advanced Filter configuration

Select the offline address book

In Outlook go to Tools – Send/receive – Download address book.

Now we have to specify the settings for the Microsoft Exchange Server offline address book. The default is to download “Full Details”.

You also have the chance to choose the address book for offline use.

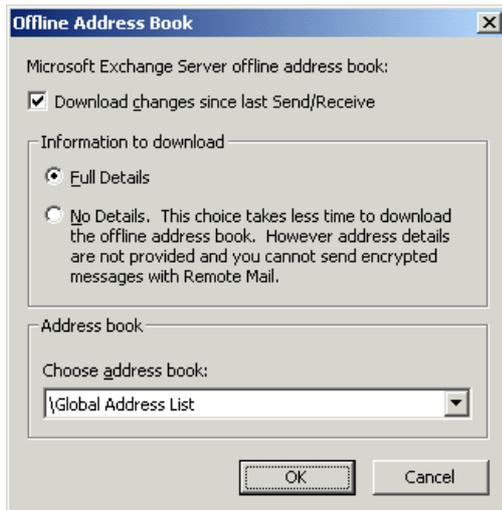


Figure 10: Select Download details and address books to download

To configure the offline settings in more details you can “Define Send/Receive Groups”.

With the help of Send/Receive Groups you can specify send/receive schedules (Figure 12) and Account options (Figure 13) where you can select to download “offline address books”, the availability of home pages offline, and the folders to be available offline. You can also specify how to download items. “Download headers only” or “Download complete item including attachments” are the options.

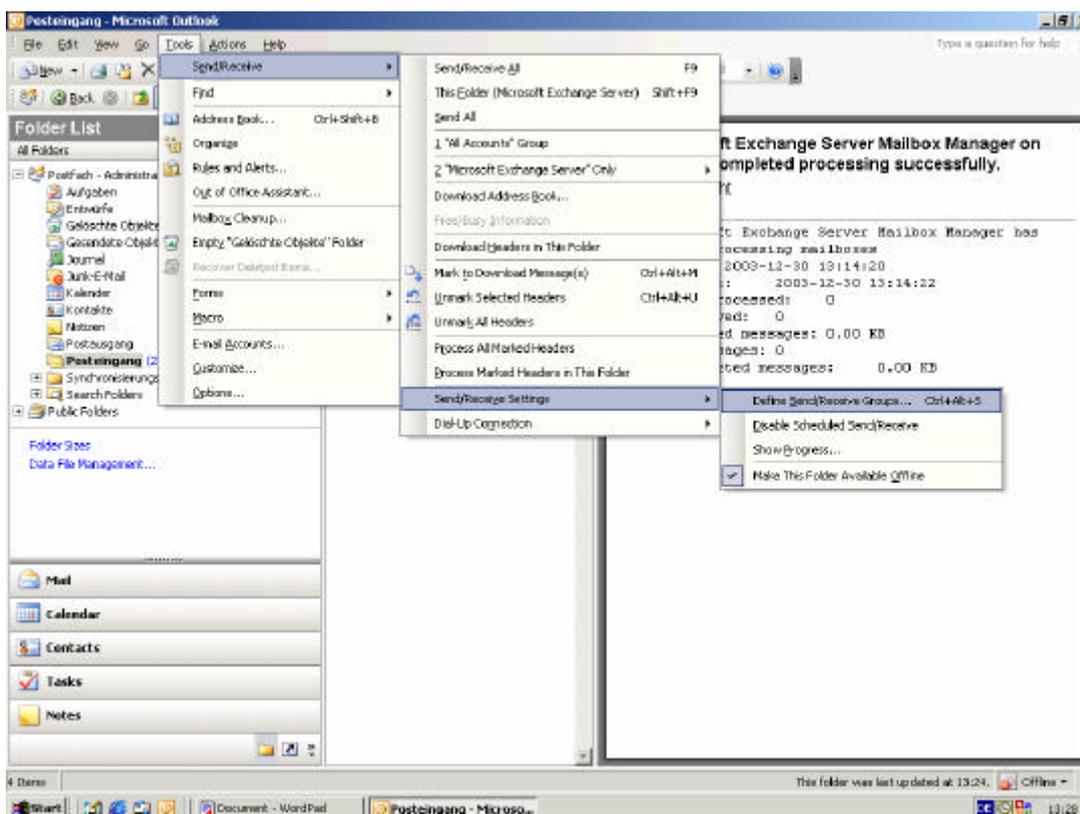


Figure 11: Define send/receive Groups

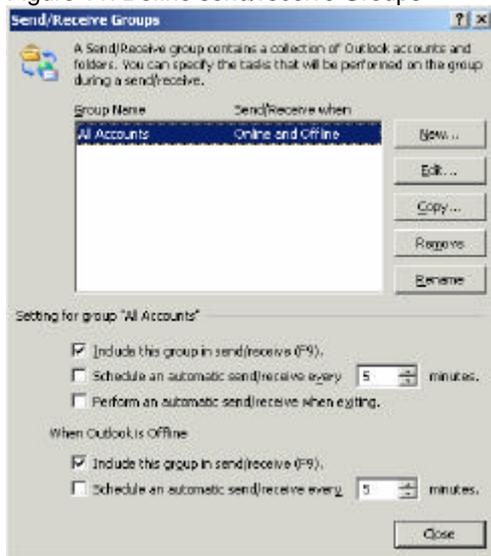


Figure 12: Specify send/receive Groups

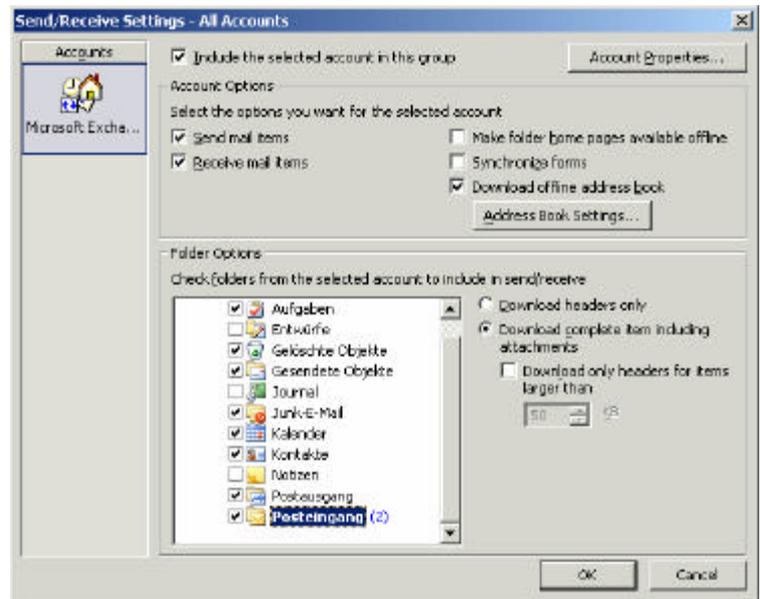


Figure 13: Account options

Now you are ready. You have configured Outlook and Exchange for Offline folder use. You have to wait a few seconds or more until Outlook has synchronized the content of the folders with the .OST file. You can see the increasing of the .OST file in the Windows Explorer where the file exists.

You can simulate an Outlook connection without network connectivity when you disable the network connection or disconnect the network cable.

Next start Outlook and you will see that you can work with Outlook as with a network connection to the Exchange 2003 Server.

When you connect your Client to the network you can manually or automatically synchronize the offline folders with the Exchange Server.

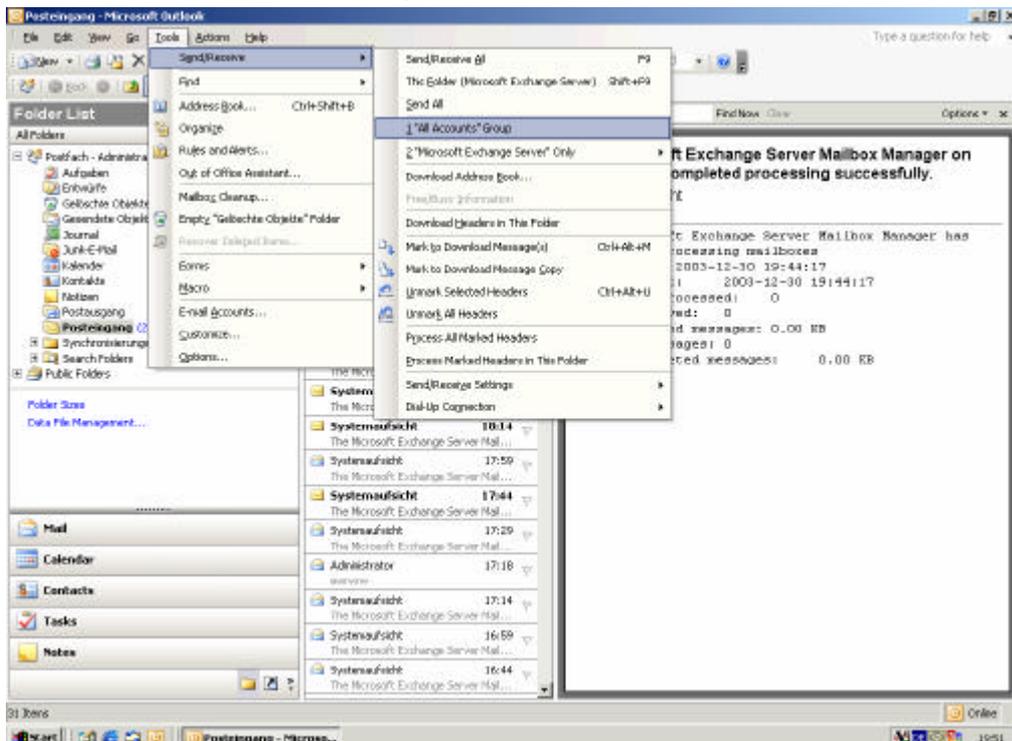


Figure 14: Send/receive – Offline folder synchronization

Conclusion

Offline folders are not new to Outlook and Exchange. Outlook 2003 provides some enhancements for offline use (Unicode format for .OST files, greater size of .OST files, replication enhancements and notifications).

Related Links

[Exchange 2003 Online help](#)