New Features in Microsoft Exchange 2003

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Abstract

In mid 2003 Microsoft will release the new Version of Exchange 2003 (codename Titanium) to manufacturing (RTM). This article explains the new features and enhancements of Microsoft's Messaging- and collaboration and workflow system.

This article is based on public Beta 2 available at http://www.microsoft.com/exchange.

Introduction

Exchange 2000 is Microsoft's Messaging and collaboration platform. Exchange 2003 is a member of the .NET Backoffice family. One of the primary goal of Exchange 2003 is the integration in the new Version of Microsoft's Operating System Windows 2003 (formerly Windows .NET Server).

New Features in Exchange 2003

- 8-node Cluster (min. one passive node)
- Volume Shadow Copy
- Virtual Disk Service
- RPC over HTTP Protocol
- Support for the Active Directory enhancements in Windows Server 2003
- Enhanced Outlook Web Access Interface
- Enhanced Message Tracking Center
- Mailbox Recovery Center
- Internet Connection Wizard
- Restore Storage Group
- Wireless Services for Mobil Access
- Public folder – send hierarchy
- Optimal integration with Office 11 (available as Beta at the time of article)

Note: Not all of the new features are explained in this article.

Missing features in Exchange 2003

Instant Messaging Server

There is no Instant Messaging Server available in Exchange 2003 because Microsoft has outsourced this features to a upcoming new software available for Exchange 2003 in the future.

Microsoft Chat Server

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Key Management Server (KMS)

Exchange 2003 uses the Windows Server 2003 PKI environment to provide secure E-Mail and certificate services.

Exchange 2003 interoperability / compatibility list

The following table explains the possible upgrade paths / recommended ways to deploy Exchange 2003 in an existing / new network environment with Windows 2000 / Windows Server 2003.

Exchange Version	Exchange with ... Windows 2000 SP3+	Exchange with ... Windows Server 2003	AD support for ... Windows 2000 SP3+	AD support for ... Windows Server 2003
Exchange 5.5 with SP3	YES	NO	YES	YES
Exchange 2000 with SP2	YES	NO	YES	YES
Exchange 2000 with SP3	YES	NO	YES	YES
Exchange 2003 (Titanium)	YES	YES	YES	YES

Figure 1: Interoperability

Overview of the Exchange 2003 System Manager

The Exchange 2003 System Manager provides the well known Interface from Exchange Server 2000 with some new graphical enhancements.
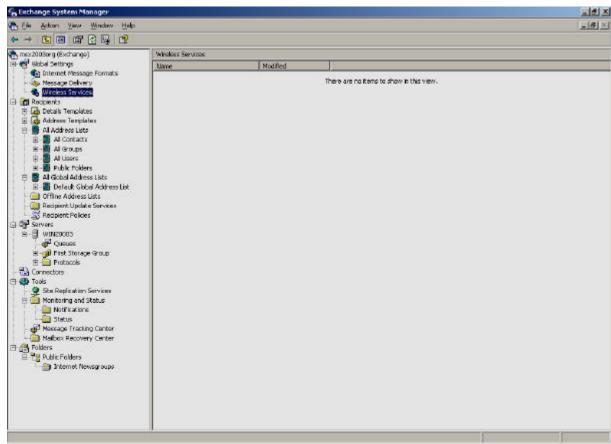

Figure 2: Exchange System Manager

Wireless Services Properties

One of the new features of Exchange 2003 is the support for wireless devices like some kind of PDAs and mobilphones. This feature provides enhanced integration with the Microsoft Mobile Information Server (also a member of the .NET Backoffice family). This feature provides built in remote synchronization support for windows powered mobile devices. xHTML (WAP 2.0), cHTML and HTML-browser based devices and mobile devices that enable access in exchange 2003.
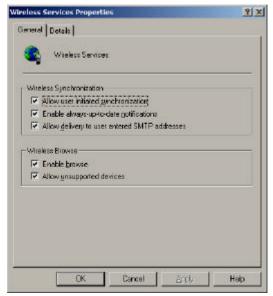

Figure 3: Wireless Services

Message Delivery Properties

In Exchange 2003 the message delivery options are enhanced to provide the administrator with the ability to define Connection Filter and Recipient Filter.
A Connection Filter can filter incoming mails based on the senders domain address and will block all incoming E-Mails from the senders domain. This feature is helpful to avoid incoming Spam mails.
A Recipient Filter can filter mails from internal Exchange users to prohibit the sending of mails outside the Exchange organisation. Recipient Filtering provides also the possibility to filter recipients that are not listed in Active Directory.
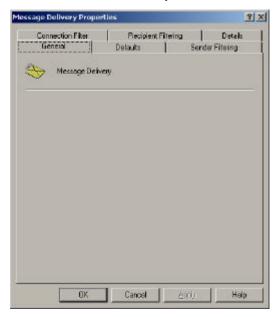

Figure 4: Message Delivery

Message Tracking Center

The Message Tracking Center is not a new Feature of Exchange 2003 but it provides some new enhancements like more search performance robustness and greater search flexibility .
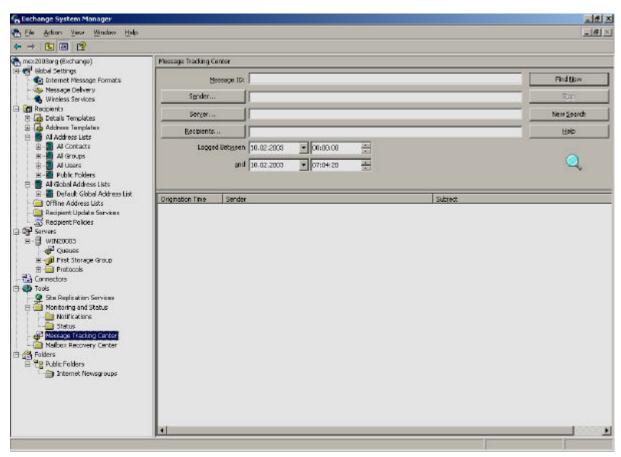

Figure 5: Message Tracking Center

New Mail-Queues-Viewer

The new Mail Queues Viewer in Exchange 2003 provides a single user interface over all Mail-Queues in Exchange 2003. In Exchange 2000 the administrator must search for E-Mails in every Mail-Queue individually. One other new feature is the possibility to disable the delivery of outbound Mail with a single mouseclick.
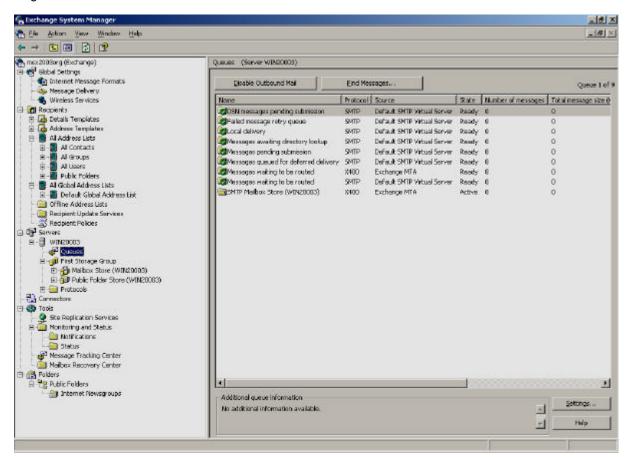

Figure 6: Queue Viewer

Mailbox Recovery Center

Exchange 2003 provides a new Mailbox Recovery Center. This new feature allows an administrator to recover and reconnect Exchange mailboxes within a single user interface.

RPC over HTTP Protocol

This new Feature provides the ability for Outlook Users to use the HTTP-Protocol to transfer secure data with RPC. This feature is a native feature of Windows Server 2003.
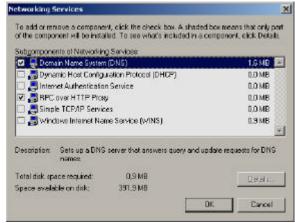

Figure 7: RPC over HTTP

Internet Mail Wizard

Exchange 2003 provides a new Feature called "Internet Mail Wizard". This wizard provides the ability to connect the exchange organisation with the internet. This wizard is much like the Internet Mail Connection Wizard in Exchange 5.5. Many customers have missed the feature to easily create an Internet Mail connection.

Figure 8: Internet Mail Wizard

Volume Shadow Copy

Exchange 2003 can use the new Volume Shadow Copy Feature from Windows Server 2003. VSC provides the ability to create a Shadow Copy of the partition data to ensure that all data can be backuped and are not open. The NTBACKUP program uses the shadowed data for Backup. Exchange 2003 can use this feature to provide a faster restore of deleted data.

Virtual Disk Service

Virtual Disk service (VDS) enables multivendor storage devices to interoperate in Windows. VDS has APIs to storage hardware and to management programs that manages the storage hardware. Administrators can discover multivendor storage devices and configure those resources with a unified interface. Without VDS, each vendor provides his own management interface. With this new feature the use of NAS and SAN for Exchange database storage is even simpler.

Recovery Storage Group

In case of emergency Exchange 2003 provides a new feature called "Recovery Storage Group". It is possible to create an extra Storage Group for recovery purposes. This feature dramatically enhances the downtime of an Exchange Server Storage group while it will be recovered.
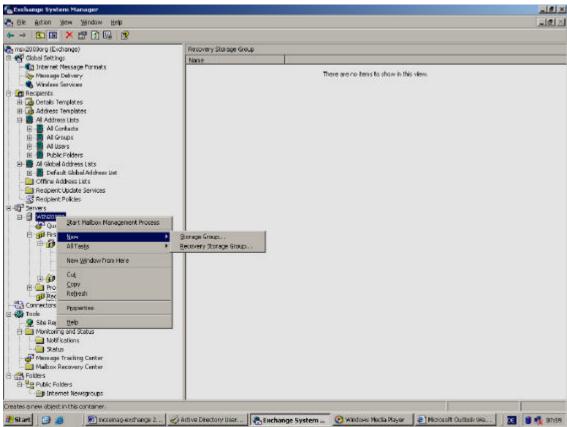

Figure 9: Recovery Storage Group

The new Outlook Web Access Interface

One of the most impression feature is the new Outlook Web Access Interface. It comes with a redesigned interface and looks like it big brother Outlook 11.
Some missing feature in Exchange 2000 OWA like spell checking, calendar, out of office notice, protection against junk e-mail messages, cache mode and many more are now available in Outlook Web Access.
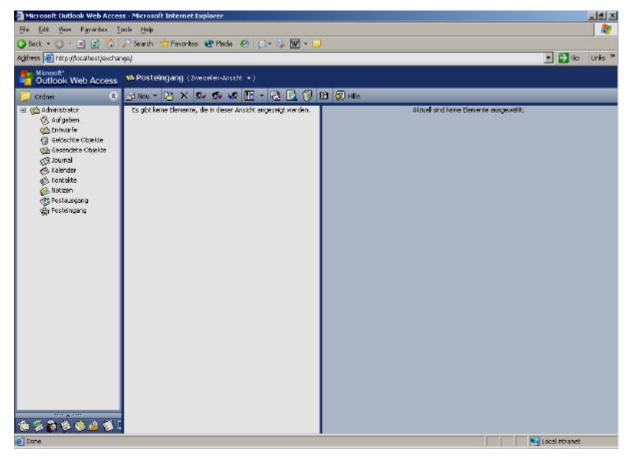

Figure 10: Enhanced Outlook Web Access

Conclusion

The new Features of Exchange 2003 are marginal. There are a lot of nice enhancements and new features but the authors meaning is that Microsoft could put this features in a new Exchange 2000 Service Pack or Feature Pack. Most of the new features are related to the enhancements and new technologies in Windows Server 2003.

Related Links

Microsoft Exchange 2000 / 2003 Homepage
http://www.microsoft.com/exchange

Most visited Exchange Server site
http://www.exchangeserver.org

German Exchange 2000 / 2003 Website from Frank Carius
http://www.msexchangefaq.de