

Explaining the Exchange 12 Toolbox

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Abstract

In this article I will give you some information about the Exchange Server 12 Toolbox. With the help of the Exchange 12 Toolbox it is possible to analyze the performance of your Exchange Servers and to view the Mail Queues of your Exchange Servers. This article is based on the Exchange 12 Beta 1, available for download at the Microsoft Developer Network. As you will see in this article the Toolbox owns well known Tools from Exchange 2003 and Windows Server 2003 but the Exchange 12 Queue Viewer has substantially changed. Please note that all information in this article is subject to change.

Let's begin

The Exchange 12 Toolbox owns three Analysis tools:

- Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer
- Exchange Server Performance Monitor
- Exchange Queue Viewer

To use the Tools in the Toolbox start the new Exchange 12 System Manager and navigate to the Toolbox container. At the right site you will find the Analysis tools that are available in Exchange 12 Beta 1. I expect that Microsoft will enhance the Toolbox in the final Exchange 12 version but there is no guaranty for doing that.

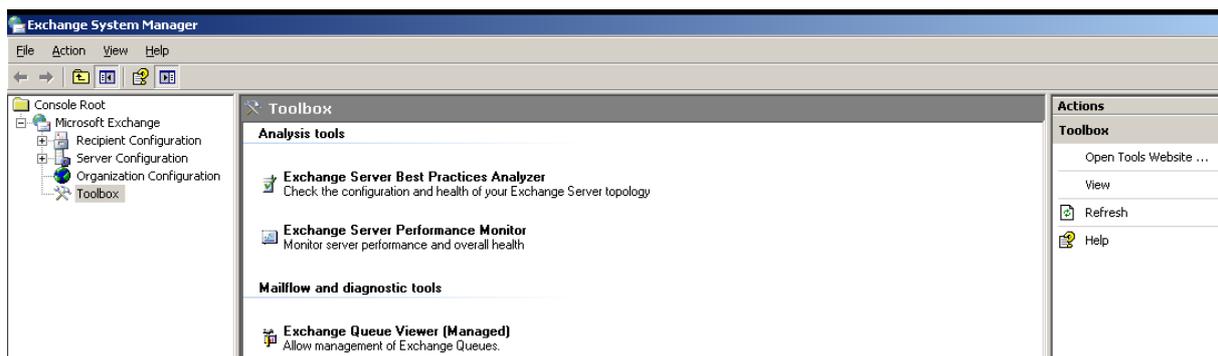


Figure 1: Exchange Toolbox Container

Exchange Tools Website

Microsoft has linked the Exchange Tools Website into the Exchange System Managers Toolbox. On the Actions Pane click "Open Tools Website" and you will be linked to the Exchange Server 2003 Tools Website. There are some well-known tools like Exmerge, Microsoft Searchadmin and many more. At the time I wrote this article

there are no public available Exchange 12 tools. For an overview of the Exchange 2003 Web Tools read my article [here](#).

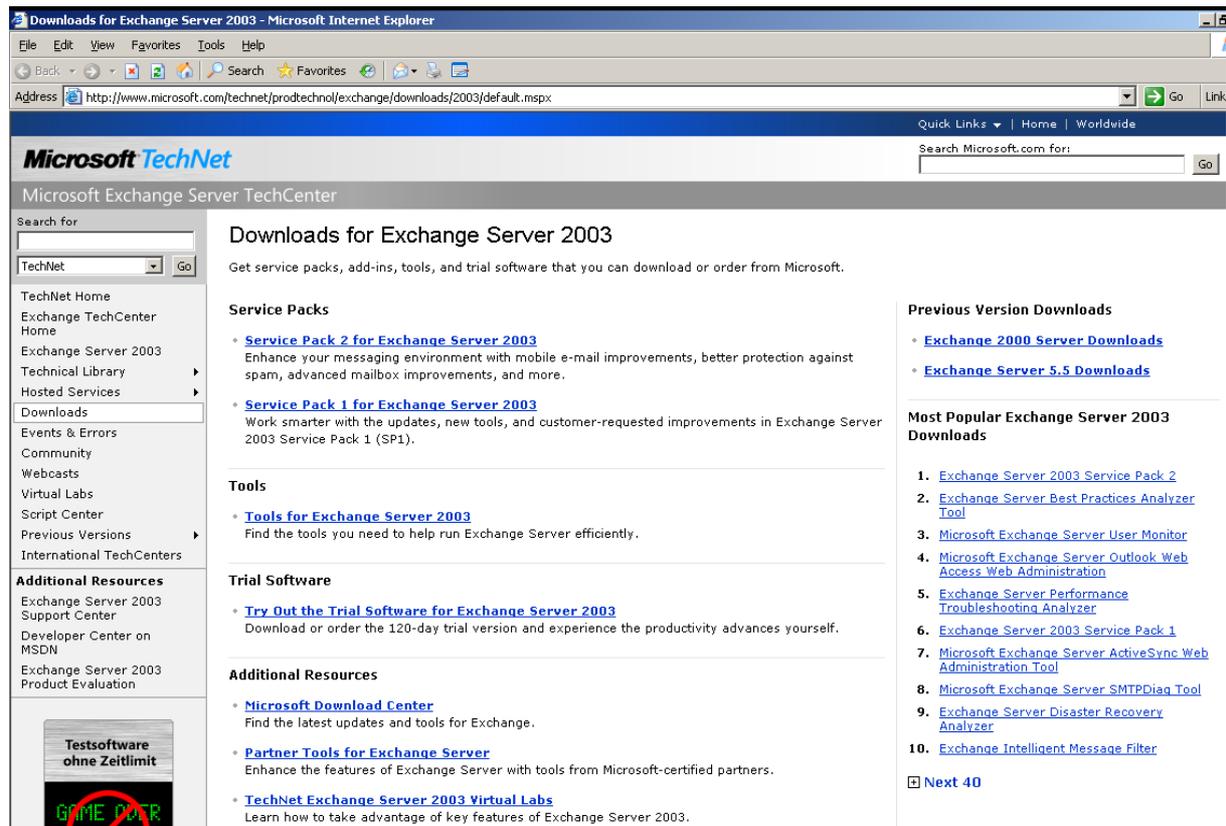


Figure 2: Exchange (2003) Tools Website

I think that Microsoft will update the Website or change the Link to the Exchange Tools in the E12 toolbox after the first Exchange 12 tools are available. Until now we can only use the Tools for Exchange 200x. Some of the tools should also work with Exchange 12 but I don't test every tool with Exchange 12.

Exchange Best Practice Analyzer

The Microsoft Exchange Best Practice Analyzer is now tightly integrated in Exchange 12, so it is no more necessarily to download and install the Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer manually. The Update mechanisms will be the same. The Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer can update itself at start up or at the time you had specified in the ExBPA tool.

The Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer in the Beta I release of Exchange 12 is older than the Exchange Best Practice Analyzer on the Microsoft Exchange Website so it seems for me that this not a special version for Exchange 12.

The Version number of the Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer on the Microsoft Website is 2.6.7812.0 at the time I wrote this article.

The Microsoft Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer Version that comes with Exchange 12 Beta I is 2.5.462.19.



Figure 3: Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer Version from Exchange 12

But this is not a problem. Try to run the Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer against Exchange 12 and you will see some interesting points. There are some differences to Exchange 12 that the ExBPA is not aware of but the most of ExBPA seems to be working. I'm sure that Microsoft will update the Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer Tool for Exchange 12 specific configuration as fast as possible.

Exchange Server Performance Monitor

The second tool in the Exchange Server 12 System Manager Toolbox is the well-known Exchange Server Performance Monitor. Yes, we are talking about the Windows Performance Monitor. The Exchange Server Performance Monitor in Exchange 12 comes with some predefined counters related to Exchange 12.

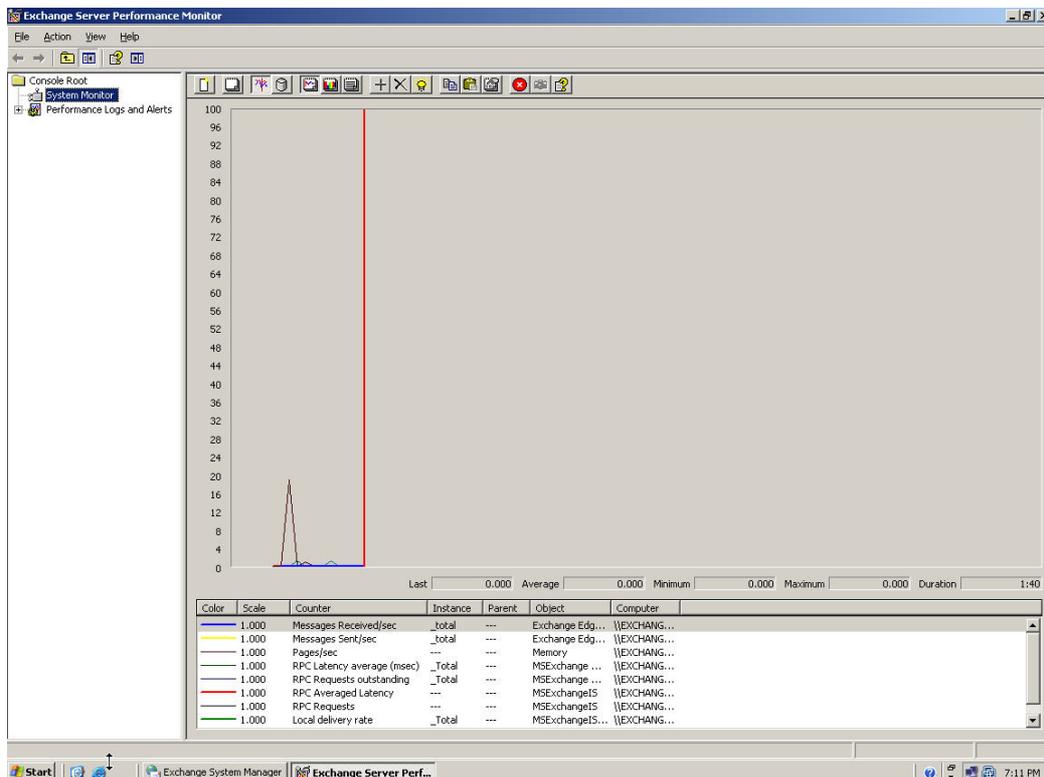


Figure 4: Exchange 12 Performance Monitor Counters

Explanation of some Exchange Performance counters

There are two counters that are related to the number of Messages Received and Sent per Second.

Four other counters are specific to the RPC traffic. As all of you might know, Exchange uses RPC for several components and the main E-Mail Client Outlook uses RPC to communicate with the Exchange Server.

On highly utilized Exchange Servers or Exchange Servers with moderate Hardware many of us has seen a high Rate of RPC traffic in Perfmon or the notice in Outlook that Messages are transferred to and from the Exchange Server and the connection is delayed. For this Problem Microsoft has released the Exchange Server Best Practice Performance Troubleshooting Analyzer which you can download [here](#). You can read [here](#) more about this helpful tool.

Exchange 12 has been optimized to reduce the RPC workload but you should carefully monitor some of the RPC counters.

Exchange Queue Viewer

The Exchange 12 Queue Viewer is not new, but the component in the Toolbox that has the most changes and improvements.

The Exchange Queue Viewer opens in a separate Window and remains open when you close the Exchange System Manager.

The reason is that the Exchange 12 Queue Viewer is now built into a Standalone MMC SnapIn.

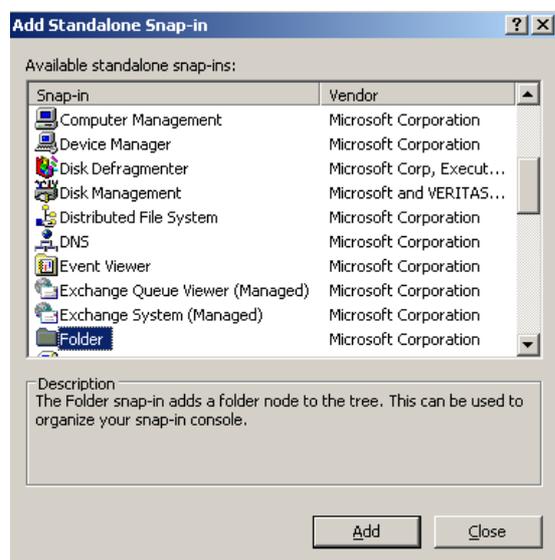


Figure 5: Exchange 12 Queue Viewer MMC SnapIn

Like in Exchange 2003 it is possible to show you the Messages in the different Exchange message queues. It is possible to Freeze messages or to remove messages from the Queue with or without generating a NDR (Non Delivery Reports).

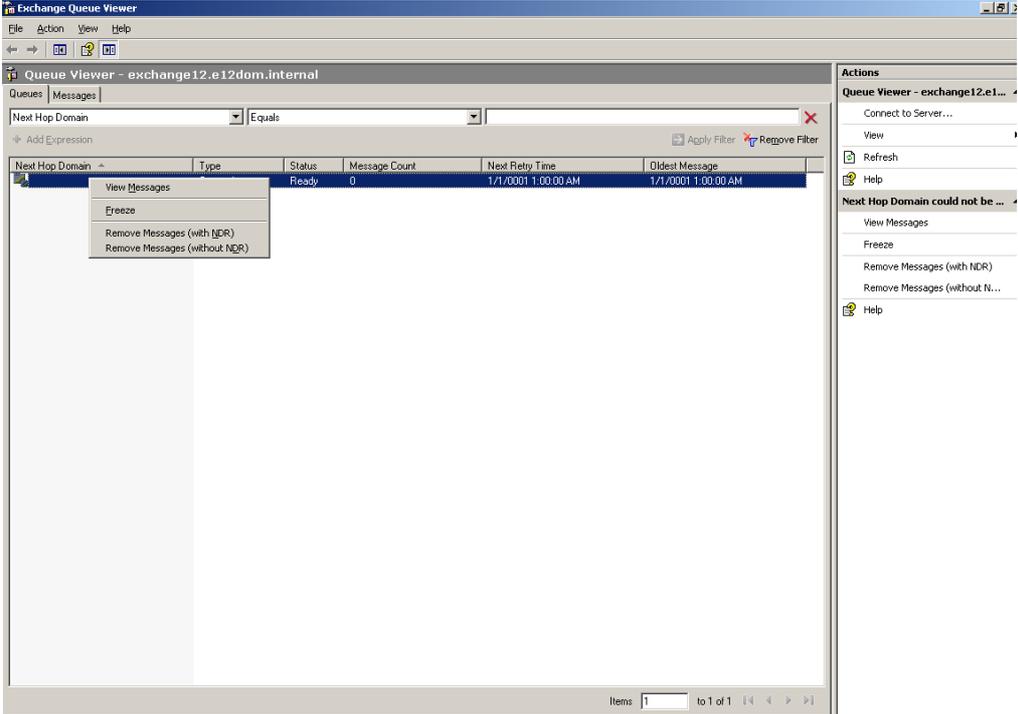


Figure 6: Overview of the Exchange 12 Queue Viewer

You can filter messages by several variables and criteria's. New in Exchange 12 for example the possibility to filter by extended criteria like SCL (Spam Confidence Level) from Microsoft Exchange IMF (Intelligent Message Filter). To create a Filter click *Create Filter*.

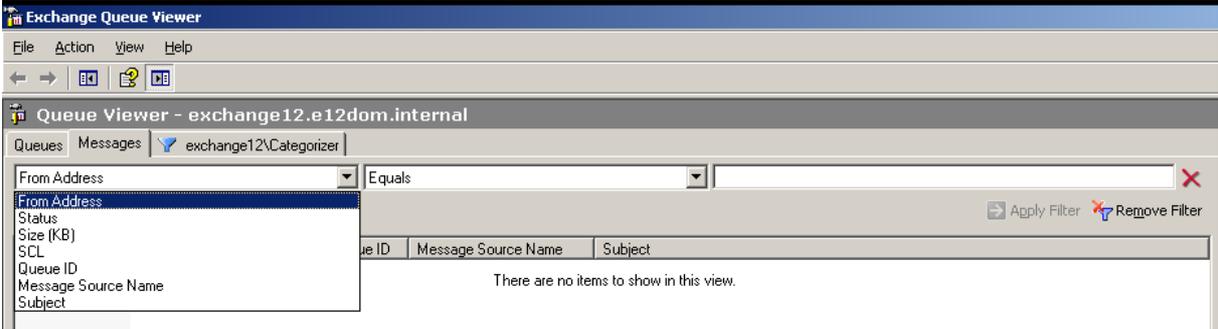


Figure 7: Exchange 12 Filter selection

In the Actions pane on the right side it is possible to save the created filter as Default or to set the Limit of the number of items to display.

Conclusion

In this article I gave you an overview about the Exchange 12 Toolbox and how to use each of the Tools. All of you should be familiar with this tool. The Performance Monitor is not new to Exchange and Windows and the Toolbox only links to the Windows Performance Monitor. Nothing new on the Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer. The version that ships with E12 Beta 1 is older than the Exchange Server Best Practice Analyzer on the web but I recommend using ExBPA to see what the tool reports about E12. You should also spend some time on the E12 Queue Viewer. This tool has some enhancements.

Related Links

Introducing Exchange 12

<http://www.microsoft.com/exchange/preview/default.mspx>

Exchange 12 Overview

<http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=4735035>

Frequently Asked Questions about Exchange 12

<http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=4735036>