

Microsoft Exchange 2003 – SP1 Recover Mailbox Data Feature

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Abstract

In this article I will give you an overview about the new Mailbox Recover Feature in Exchange 2003 SP1. This article will also give an explanation about the “old” method prior Exchange 2003 SP1.

Let's begin

What is the Microsoft Exchange Server Mailbox Recovery Data Feature?

With Exchange 2003 Microsoft introduced a new feature to quickly recover a damaged or lost Exchange Mailbox. This Feature is called the Exchange Server Recovery Storage Group. The Recovery Storage Group is a fifth Storage Group in Exchange 2003 which can only be used to recover Exchange Mailboxes from Backup.

The highlevel steps are the following:

- ? Regularly Backup your Informationstore
- ? Create a Recovery Storage Group in Exchange System Manager under the Server object
- ? Choose a Mailbox for Recovery
- ? Restore an Backup of the Informationstore where the Mailbox to recover exists
- ? Use EXMERGE to restore the Mailbox to the original Informationstore

The Recovery Storage Group reduces the time dramatically to recover a lost or damaged Mailbox. Before the Recovery Storage Group you had to deploy a Recovery Server in a “Recovery Forest”.

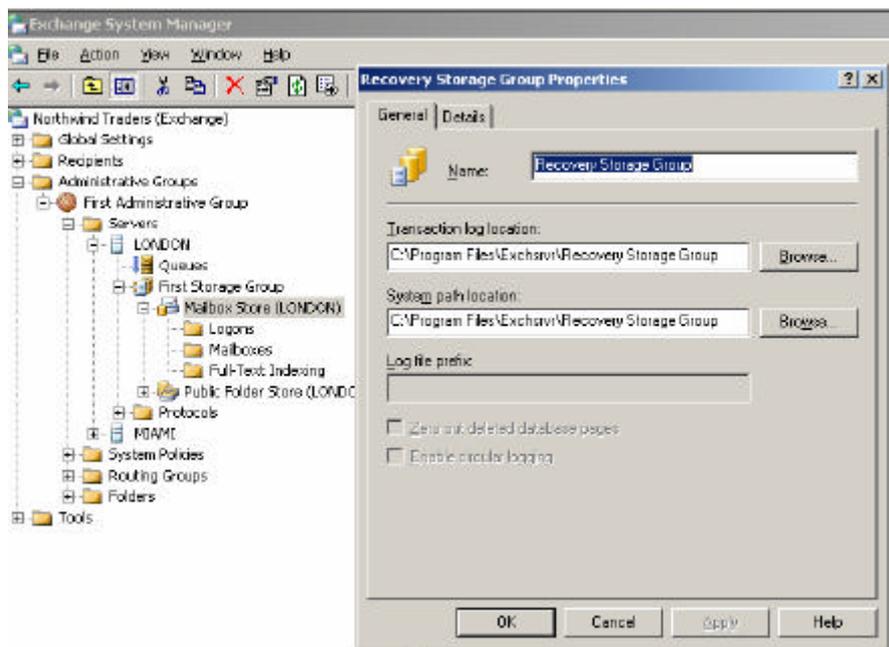


Figure 1: Recovery Storage Group

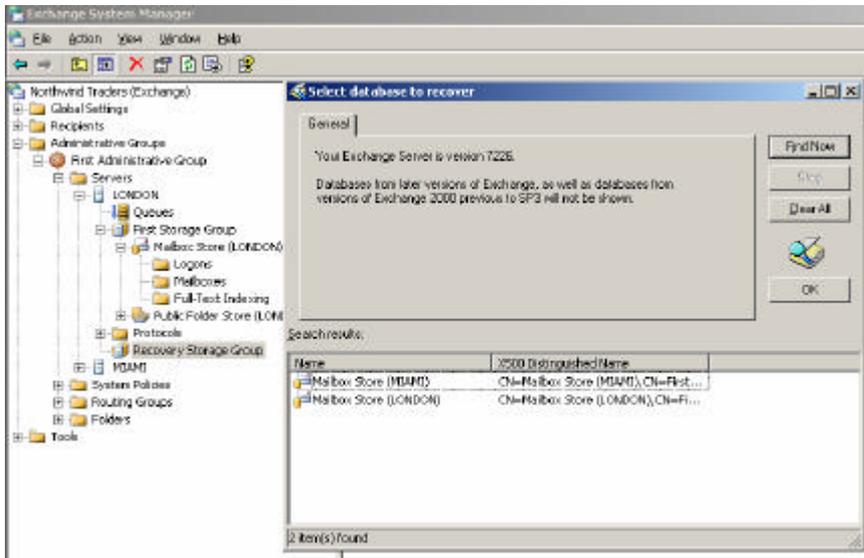


Figure 2: Select database to recover

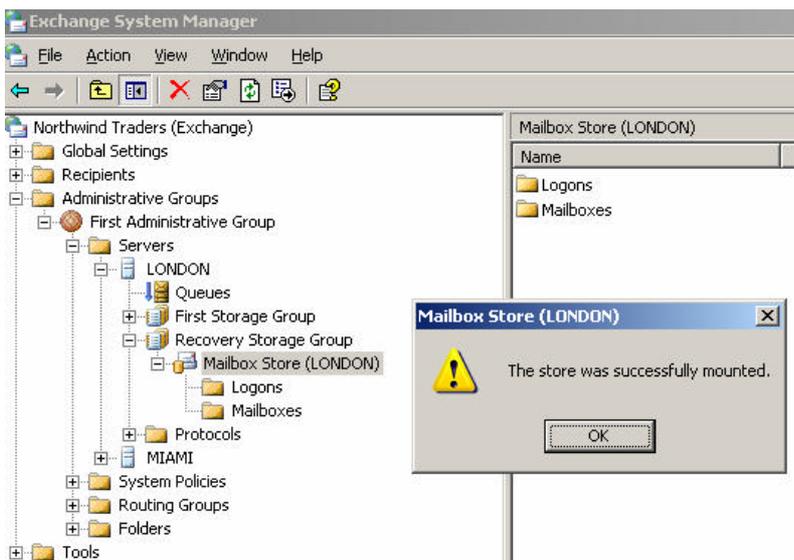


Figure 3: Successful mounted database

New Recovery Storage Group Features in Exchange 2003 SP1

With Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 Service Pack 1, you no longer need to use EXMERGE to move restored mailbox data from the Recovery Storage group to the original Storage Group after you have restored a Mailbox Store to the Recovery Storage Group. The Recover Mailbox Data feature in Exchange 2003 SP1 Exchange System Manager Replaces EXMERGE. The EXMERGE process is now integrated into the GUI of the Exchange System Manager.

Target of the new Recover Mailbox Data Feature:

- ? Copying of data to another mailbox
- ? Merging Mailbox data
- ? Ability to get data from disconnected mailboxes from the Recovery Storage Group only

Note:

The Recover Mailbox Data feature do not require “send-as” and “receive-as” rights. ExMerge requires these special rights for the interactive logon account.

There are some reasons why EXMERGE is still useful because the new feature in SP1 does not address the following:

- ? Merging or copying of rules and permissions. This means that rules and permissions in the recovery storage group database can potentially be lost after the merge is completed. This does not affect users who swap the dial-tone (blank) database into the recovery storage group prior to merging.
- ? The Recover Mailbox Data feature doesn't allow data to be filtered by date, subject and so on. EXMERGE has this feature.

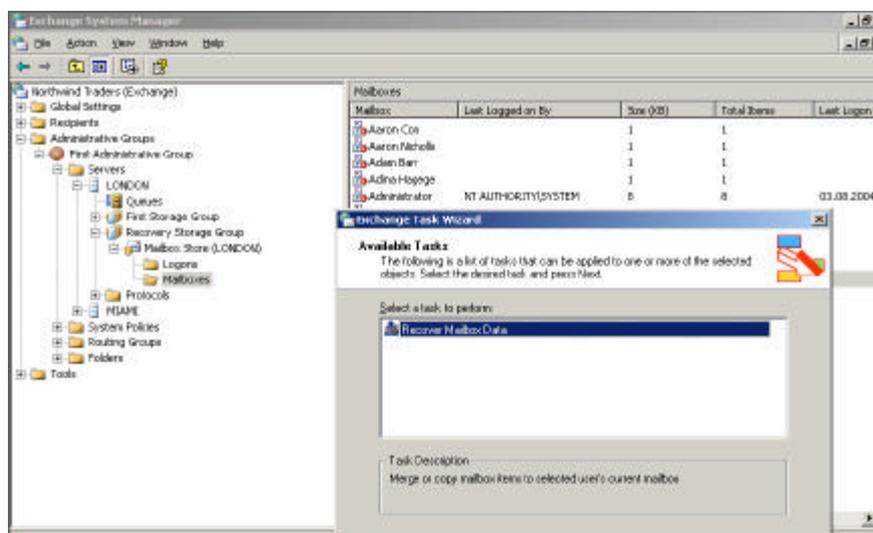


Figure 4: New RSG feature

Permissions

The Recover Mailbox Data feature requires that the Account Exchange Administrator role in the administrative group where the source and destination Exchange Server exist.

This account must also be a member of the Administrators group on the local client computer from where you start the Exchange System Manager to create a MAPI profile and on the server.

Note:

This process uses the administrator's permissions but gets past the “receive-as” permission being denied to local administrators.

Prerequisites

In order to use the Recover Mailbox Data feature, the environment must contain at least one Exchange 2003 SP1 Exchange System Manager console to expose the Recover Mailbox Data Wizard and at least one Exchange 2003 (or newer) server to host the recovery storage group.

Note: Databases can be merged from the recovery storage group into a storage group on the same server or into a different server as long as the servers are in the same administrative group. This behavior is unchanged from Exchange 2003 recovery storage group.

Process Walk-Through

Select the mailbox from the store restored into recovery storage group through Exchange System Manager. Users can be bulk-selected or single-selected for recovery.

Select Merge Data to:

- Merge data back into its corresponding folders.
- Recover data to mailboxes after a dial-tone mailbox store recovery.

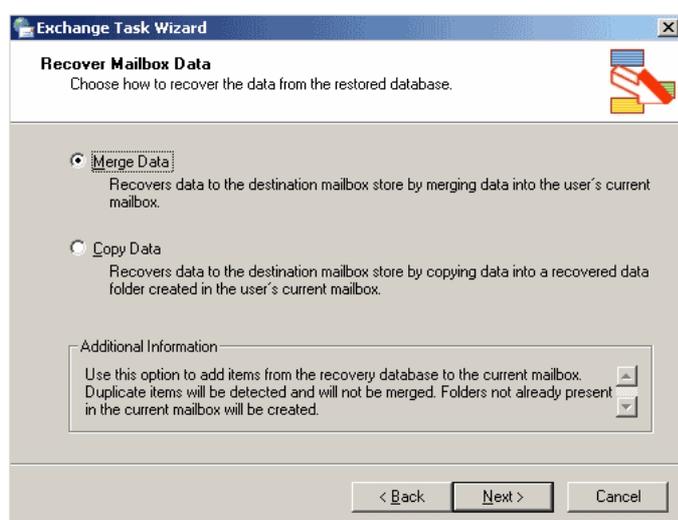


Figure 5 Merge or copy data

Note:

If a message in the target has been moved from its original folder in the source, a duplicate message will be created. This is because the source copies the message to the folder in the target that matches the source.

The last modification time is used to decide if the source message is newer and thus should replace the target message.

Select Copy Data to:

Copy all data into a folder in the user's mailbox. This folder name is localized and is located in the root of the user's Inbox.

This process doesn't impact existing messages in their mailboxes.

Note:

This process determines localization based on destination mailbox LocaleID.

You can schedule the actual copy or merge process like in the move mailbox process in ADUC. If any corrupted items are encountered during the merge, they are logged into the detailed log and the merge continues uninterrupted. There is no way to set a maximum number of corrupted items like the normal move mailbox process.

Reporting

If the check box is checked on the summary screen, a detailed report can be generated after the wizard finishes. This report will be placed in the user's My Documents\Exchange Task Wizard Logs directory.

The detailed report contains information on successes, errors, and warnings.

The report creates an XML document.

Event Logging

There are several event log entries that can be produced during the merge. There is no way to control Diagnostic Logging level to adjust logging on Recover Mailbox Data.

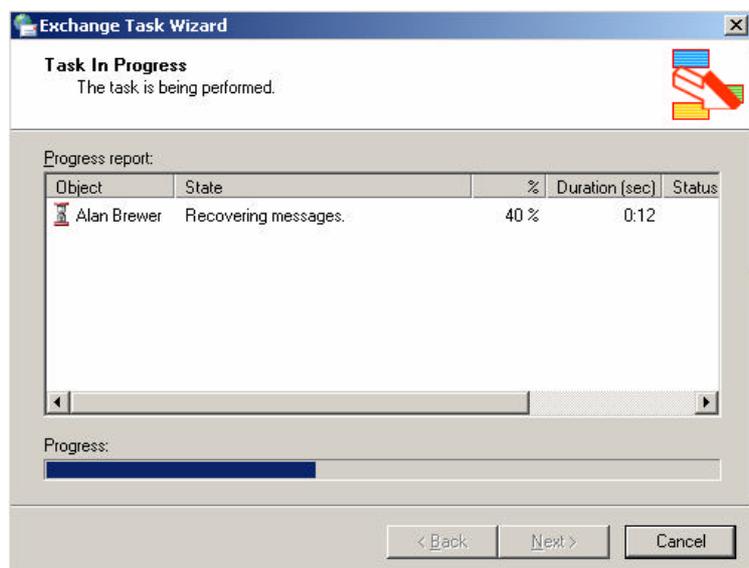


Figure 6: Recover Mailbox status

Conclusion

The Recovery Storage Group Feature provides a fast method for Exchange Mailbox recovery without expensive Third Party Software.

With Exchange 2003 SP1 Microsoft has made this solution a little bit smarter because they have the separate EXMERGE process integrated into the GUI.

You should have a look at these new features if you don't have a Third Party solution for Exchange Mailbox Restore.

Related Links

Article 824126, How to Use Recovery Storage Groups in Exchange 2003

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;%5bLN%5d;824126>

Using Exchange Server 2003 Recovery Storage Groups

<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/prodtechnol/exchange/2003/library/ue2k3rsg.mspx>

Exchange Server 2003 SP1 Recover Mailbox Data Feature

<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/prodtechnol/exchange/2003/rmd.mspx>

Exchange 2003 Mailbox Recovery from Markus Klein

http://www.msexchange.org/tutorials/Exchange_Server_2003_Mailbox_Recovery.html

Using ExMerge to recover a Single Mailbox or Mailbox Item

<http://www.msexchange.org/tutorials/ExMerge-Recover-Mailbox.html>