



Is Your Business Ready for a Server?

A guide for businesses with 2–50 computers



Is Your Business Ready for a Server?

If you're a small business owner with two or more computers, you may have considered using a server system to help you run your business more efficiently, keep your data more secure, and communicate more professionally and effectively with your customers.

If you haven't set up a server in your business, perhaps you're overwhelmed by the idea of researching the subject. Or, maybe you have limited staff to help you accurately determine your technology needs. At one time, servers were used only by large companies because of their high cost and complexity. But today, there are affordable and easy-to-implement server systems designed for small businesses.

This guide provides a short overview of server technology and the benefits of client/server networking. The guide also introduces you to Microsoft® Windows® Small Business Server 2003, which brings the power of a complete network solution to small businesses like yours.

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Server Overview for Small Businesses

A server is a single, specialized computer that is used to centralize information and resources. This computer is loaded with server software that is designed to perform specific tasks such as file sharing, print processing, and Internet connectivity for each of the network's "clients"—which include individual computers, mobile devices, and printers.

In this type of network environment (client/server), your business can achieve dramatic time- and cost-savings over a peer-to-peer network (connecting multiple individual computers together). With a server, you can:

- Share equipment (fax machines, printers) and resources (Internet access) to reduce costs.
- Back up your company information to help prevent data loss and to save time.
- Enhance security by controlling access to sensitive data (financial records, personnel information).
- Provide a central access point for information instead of housing information on individual computers.

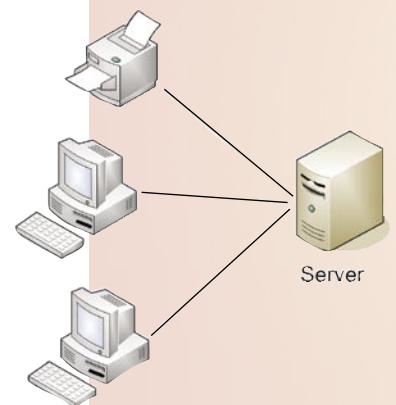
A server with the right software can bring you and your employees these additional benefits:

- Find, store, and share company information in one central, secure location to save time.

- Access business information—quickly and easily—whether you're working in the office or on the road.
- Streamline the distribution of e-mails and faxes, especially when targeting large audiences.
- Improve the security of your network by allowing you to determine the individuals and devices that have access to your information and systems.

If your business has several computers but you're still connecting them to each other in a peer-to-peer network, consider creating a client/server network to help save time and money and to increase employee productivity.

For a refresher on networking and client/server networks, see the guide *Networking Basics for Small Businesses*.



If your small business has several computers, adding a server is a cost-effective way to meet your current demands.

Stay Better Connected with Your Customers

Do you need a better way to manage your company's customer communications? Windows Small Business Server 2003 (SBS 2003) helps you communicate more effectively and efficiently with your customers.

Here are some questions to consider as you think about how a server might help your business.

Can you respond quickly to customer inquiries?

Have you ever missed a sale because you couldn't locate the correct customer information quickly, or because you were away from the office and didn't have access to your information?

That can happen with a peer-to-peer network where only one person at a time can access information stored on a single computer in the office. With a client/server network, your customers' information is always at your fingertips because you can store, share, and update customer information in one central place that's accessible by several people simultaneously.

When you are away from the office, with SBS 2003 you can access important business information such as e-mail, contacts, customer records, company

files, and documents on your network, so you will always have the resources you need to respond to sales leads, contact customers, and keep your business moving forward.

Are you communicating with your customers and suppliers efficiently and effectively?

Do your employees spend time sending identical e-mail messages one at a time to a number of recipients, or standing at the fax machine sending faxes one by one? SBS 2003 comes with a shared fax service that enables your staff to receive faxes in e-mail messages or from the printer. Everyone in the office has the ability to send a group e-mail or fax right from their desktops or from any computer on the network. By making it easier to contact your customers and prospects, SBS 2003 provides a tool you can use to keep people informed about new products and important company news to generate more sales.

Using a server with Windows Small Business Server 2003 software, you can host your own company Web site and e-mail service, which helps you build your business image and communicate more effectively and professionally with your customers.



Do you need to present a more professional appearance to your customers?

No matter what the size of your business, a company Web site and e-mail are essential tools for communicating professionally with your customers. With SBS 2003, you can host your own company Web site and provide companywide e-mail service, giving you direct control of your business's image.

With a company Web site, you can make your information readily accessible to a broader audience: Anyone connected to the Internet can view what your company has to offer, which is a cost-effective way to establish round-the-clock service and attract new customers. Your company may be smaller than others, but you can make a big-company impression with a well-designed Web site.

SBS 2003 can help you create that professional image.

Do you need the tools to manage evolving customer relationships?

SBS 2003 enables you to use powerful line-of-business applications, including accounting programs and software such as Microsoft CRM, which helps you track leads, sales prospects, and customer data to easily manage and convert qualified sales prospects through the sales cycle.



Run an Efficient, Cost-Effective Business

If your business has two or more computers, you can achieve significant time- and cost-savings, while increasing the efficiency and productivity of your employees, by using a client/server network and the right software. Consider these scenarios faced by businesses like yours.

Do you want to centralize and organize your data because you can't always find the right information when you need it?

If you've ever needed access to a file on an employee's computer, and that person wasn't in the office, you know first-hand that trying to maintain files on separate computers in a peer-to-peer network can be a frustrating challenge. A client/server network offers a solution. A server with Windows Small Business Server (SBS 2003) software includes a preconfigured internal company Web site, or "intranet," so you and your employees can store, update, and share all your vital business information in one central location. So the next time one of your employees is on vacation or out ill, and someone else needs to locate one of this person's documents, you can go to one source for that file. This improves productivity because information is better organized and easier to find.

Can you efficiently share ideas and information with your colleagues?

One of the best ways to keep your business running efficiently is to make sure everyone in your company has the necessary tools for communication. SBS 2003 helps build teamwork through centralization and sharing of files, and includes a system for managing and organizing e-mail messages, schedules, contacts, and other personal and team information—which improves productivity. It also provides remote access to business information and resources from any computer with Internet access, so you can access your e-mail, contacts, internal company Web site, files on your network, and more when you are away from the office.

A server can increase efficiency and lower costs by centralizing data and streamlining processes, which allows you and your employees to focus more time on business-critical issues.



Do you need access to e-mail, data, and files while you are away from the office?

With SBS 2003, you can access business information and resources, including company files, business applications, and even your desktop, from any PC with Internet access. And you can access your e-mail, calendar, contacts, and more from a Windows Mobile™-based device, so you can stay productive at home or on the road.

Can your employees share equipment and resources such as printers, fax machines, and Internet access?

A client/server network allows businesses to share equipment and resources. The ability to have many computers share a single printer can save your business money. Similarly, with a client/server network you have one central access point for the Internet, which gives you more control of what comes in and out of your network. Also, client computers can be updated—with anti-virus software, for example—from the central server, saving you time and effort.

Do you need better protection for your data?

If your computer crashes and it's on a peer-to-peer network, you risk a permanent loss of data. With a client/server system, that data can be stored on the company network, so you can access files from any computer on the network even if one or more of your computers crash. SBS 2003 can automatically back up your data on a regular basis, further reducing the risk that your company would lose critical data.

Do you have limited in-house information technology (IT) resources?

In the past, installing server software required several hours for an IT professional to complete. But SBS 2003 was designed to be easier to install and manage, and a Microsoft technology partner can get your server up and running, quickly and easily.



Keep Your Business Running and Your Data More Secure

A server helps you minimize the risk of losing important data to technical problems, accidental deletion, or malicious hacking. Here are some questions to consider when deciding how to protect your data.

Do you have a plan for creating backup copies of important information?

If you've ever lost critical documents, you know how important it is to back up the data on which your business relies. SBS 2003 provides a way to protect your business information through a streamlined, automated backup process.

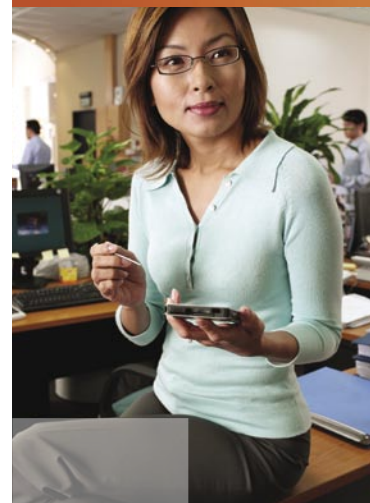
Do you have a way to restore accidentally deleted files or previous versions?

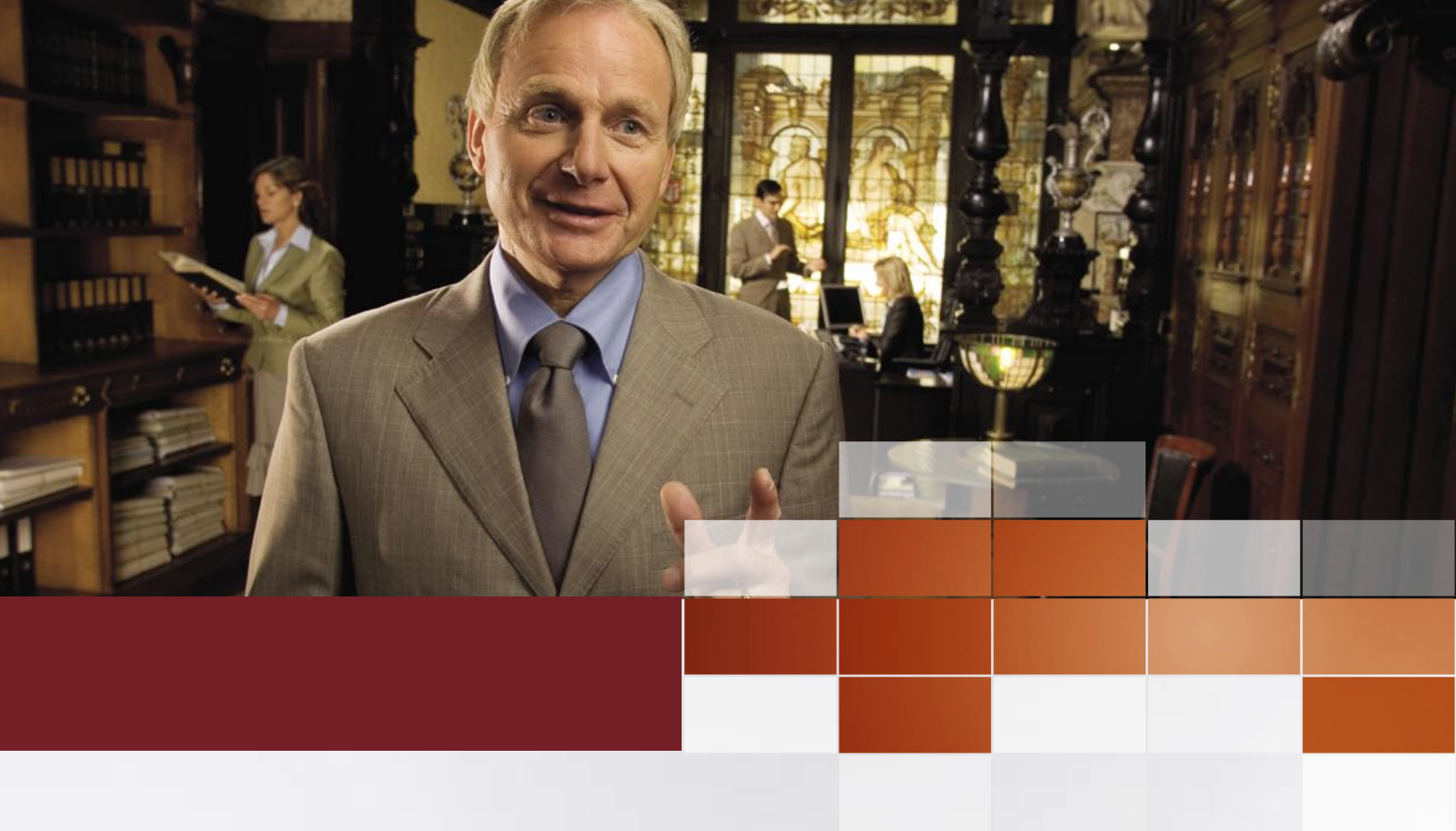
In addition to ensuring that your business has an automated process for backing up data, SBS 2003 can help you recover earlier versions of data that otherwise might have been lost. On individual computers it's all too easy to delete files that you later need to view. With SBS 2003, your employees can restore previous versions, or accidentally deleted files, quickly and easily.

Is your business information protected from unauthorized users?

In any company it's important to limit access to information, keeping sensitive information private. With a server, you can control access to company files by assigning permissions to specific employees. As for hackers from outside your network, SBS 2003 includes built-in firewall technology, secure remote access, and a protected network environment.

You can't afford to lose precious time and data, so make sure your business has a highly secure infrastructure made possible through the addition of a server.





Summary

Windows Small Business Server 2003 provides you with innovative technology that helps bring your business vision to life. It gives you the tools you need to gain a competitive advantage by working more efficiently, safeguarding your company data, and staying connected to your business—and your customers.

A complete, affordable network solution, SBS 2003 enables you to take your business to the next level by hosting your own e-mail and external Web site. And it makes it easy to provide your employees with an internal Web site to find, share, and store information, access your business information and resources from any computer with Internet access, and much more.

Please take a moment to complete the following checklist to see if a server makes sense for your small business.

Here's how you know it's time to buy a server:

Review the following scenarios and make a check mark next to any that apply to your business. If you check more than one, then you should consider adding a server.

- You have two or more computers in your business that you need to connect.
- You need to save money by sharing equipment and resources such as printers, fax machines, and Internet connectivity.
- You need to protect business information and your network from unauthorized users.
- You need to back up information.
- You need to restore accidentally deleted files or previous versions of files.
- You need to access company information and resources while away from the office.
- You need to store, access, and share information in one central location.
- You need to manage different versions of files.
- You need to easily schedule group meetings and communicate efficiently with colleagues.
- You need to a tool to share ideas and information with your colleagues.
- You need to present a professional image by hosting your own Web site and e-mail system.
- You need to communicate more effectively with customers, partners, and suppliers.



Learn More About Windows Small Business Server 2003

Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2003 is a complete, affordable network solution that is designed with your business needs in mind. Add this Microsoft server system to your business, and you get the peace of mind that your data is more secure, you are maximizing your employee productivity while saving money, and you are enhancing your customer communications.

To learn more, visit www.microsoft.com/sbs.

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