

Microsoft Windows

- Windows 2003 Server is possibly the most popular NOS in use today. Microsoft introduced Windows NT in 1993 with version 3.1 (about the same time Windows 3.1 was taking off as a desktop graphical interface for DOS).
- Because of its similarity to Windows 3.1 and its powerful networking features, Windows NT gained popularity. Microsoft began to put its significant marketing muscle behind it, and Windows NT started to become a viable alternative in the network operating system market previously dominated by Novell NetWare and the various flavors of UNIX. Windows NT was followed closely by Windows 2000, then 2003 Server, and the Windows platform has become a dominant force in the NOS market.

Features

- The Windows server platform is the first choice of developers because of the similarity in programming for all Windows platforms. Additionally, the installation CD includes a complete Internet server suite (including WWW, FTP, and DNS server programs). Finally, because the look and feel of all Windows platforms is almost identical to that of Microsoft's desktop operating systems, training administrators requires much less time. These features along with many others have skyrocketed Windows Server use in the corporate network infrastructure. Let's take a look at a couple of the more popular features of Windows 2003 Server: **the user interface and third-party support.**

The Windows User Interface

- The Windows Server interface is basically the same as the Windows interface we've come to love (or hate, depending on your view). Windows NT 3.1 and 3.5x use the same basic look and feel as the Windows 3.1 desktop operating system. Windows NT 4 and Windows 2000 use the interface from Windows 95 and Windows 98.

- Although there might be differences between the desktop operating systems and their Server counterparts, the basic look and feel is the same. Because of this, a novice administrator can easily learn to use Windows Server. Analysts refer to this as a shallow learning curve.

Third-Party Support

- Because of its ease of use and relatively inexpensive cost, Windows Server sells well. Third-party vendors write thousands of software titles for Windows. Currently the number of third-party network programs for Windows far surpasses the number for NetWare.

- One reason for the range of software available for Windows Server is that developers can create these programs using many of the development tools they use to write Windows programs. Additionally, Microsoft makes much of the code available to developers for little or no charge. Finally, a program that is certified as Windows Compatible must work on all Windows platforms, both Server and desktop, including Windows 95/98/Me/NT/2000/XP/2003 Server. Because it's so easy to develop programs for all versions and because Microsoft requires it for Windows certification, the number of programs available for Windows Server is constantly growing.

Client Support

- Windows as a server platform mainly supports Windows clients with the majority of its features. (It is possible to support all versions of Windows Operating Systems as clients for all of the Windows Server platforms)
- It is possible to support Mac and UNIX clients, but only with special add-on software, and even then, some client features and security are limited.

Interoperability

- With the vast diversity of client operating systems out there, any network operating system must be able to provide services to multiple clients. Windows Server has many tools for platform interoperability.

- One of the interoperability tools for Windows is Windows Services for Unix (SFU), which provides a framework for UNIX scripts as well as UNIX services like NFS to run on Windows. You can download it from www.microsoft.com.

- In addition, Windows can interoperate with NetWare. When Windows NT Server was first introduced in 1993, NetWare was the primary network operating system available. As a matter of fact, it had more than 75 percent of the installed network operating system base. For this reason, Microsoft created software for Windows that allows it to coexist in a NetWare environment.