



By Rick Vanover

We all have them: Stupid default configurations that we either have to change or live with. Some of them may seem pointless and irritating, although there's usually some situation where they make sense. Regardless, when configurations are wrong for us, they get under our skin more often than they help us get on our way. Here are 10 of the default configurations that aggravate me the most.

1 Keyboard failure, press F1 to continue

I know it has been fixed for a long time, but all former Compaq server administrators will remember this one. How silly of a message that the server would sit there with its tongue hanging out waiting for us to acknowledge this error with the object of the error. Truth be told, this was my motivation for writing the top 10 irritating defaults.

2 Windows Server 2008 interactive installation name

For Windows administrators who perform an interactive installation (where you boot from the CD), the default computer name is less than intuitive. To be fair, it is a standard name associated with boot environments, but the interactive installation removed the ability to set a computer name. I think we'll have to get used to names like WIN-IU7JC1B15RI. However, this can be configured with an installation answer file or [Windows Deployment Services](#).

3 Microsoft Office Recently Used File List value of 4

There is nothing more irritating than using a new installation of Word, Excel, or PowerPoint (2003 or earlier) and seeing a deprived recent file list on the File menu. I change this right away by going to Tools | Options | General to access the option to increase the number of recently used files -- but the maximum is 9. Office 2007 finally loosened up this restriction, and you can set those apps to list as many as 50 of your most recently used files. The option is a little harder to find, though: Click the Office button and select Advanced in the left pane. Then scroll down to the Display section and enter the setting you want for Show This Number Of Recent Documents.

4 Windows Server 2008 using IPv6 and IPv4

I'm glad it's available for use in the product, but does anyone know anyone actually using IPv6? It surely is not a mainstream protocol in use. I believe it will be adopted sooner in other regions of the world, but I don't think it should be enabled by default yet. One good tool to get started in managing Windows Server 2008's network stack is the [Netsh tool](#).

5 Folder does not exist. Do you want to create it?

This technically a safety step, but how frequently do we select no to this question? Further, this is usually not the last question of a Windows installation wizard, so there is an opportunity to go back in the installation and change the installation path. As a side note, it's a good practice to keep all of your installed applications in a designated area. For example, installing all applications and components not part of the operating system to a drive other than the C drive can manage the system drive space better. By using a different drive letter to contain the third-party installed software, storage provisioning for the C: drive can be standardized easier.

6 Voice-prompt-only service phone numbers

This one never ceases to amaze me. My previous job required quite a bit of travel. During weather or flight interruptions, I would often call the airline directly from my mobile phone rather than wait in the line equal to three aircraft's worth of passengers when I needed re-accommodation. The service numbers were usually voice-prompt driven, which makes no sense in an airport, as there are incredible amounts of background noise. I became an expert of saying "Yes" and "No" very loudly and gaining the awkward attention of my fellow passengers. Number entry dialing is often possible but hard to find if it is not mentioned.

7 The Windows beep device

This is annoying for many reasons. For one thing, it doesn't adhere to Windows sound volume settings for default configurations. This is especially irritating for administrators like me, who connect to multiple systems through tools like Remote Desktop and have the beep transferred as well. But the beep can be disabled. Simply go into Device Manager, choose Show Hidden Devices from the View menu, go to the Non-Plug and Play Drivers section, double-click Beep, and choose Do Not Use This Device (Disable) from the Device Usage drop-down list in the Beep Properties dialog box. After the next boot, beep is no more!

8 The entire default Internet Explorer browser configuration on Windows Server

Is it just me, or is the default installation useless? Even adding sites to the trusted sites list and local policies for the trusted sites doesn't allow proper behavior of some legitimate sites. Ironically, Windows Update will work with all of the installations required. I find myself installing an alternative browser, such as [Opera](#), [Firefox](#), or [Safari](#). To be clear, I don't install it on every server -- simply on those where browsing functions are required and it makes sense to do so. As a side note, this is a good trick to getting [crude Explorer functionality](#) in Windows Server 2008 Core installations.

9 Windows Server 2008 default folder view

I sure love the folder view in Windows Server 2003, XP, and prior editions. But Vista and Windows Server 2008 have really messed with my mind. I'd like to get a show of hands: Who actually uses Documents, Pictures, and Music as favorite links? My favorite link is the folder and computer. Just let me see my file system. I know what I am doing, most of the time!

10 VMware vCenter Server's certificate store

The default installation of VMware's vCenter Server product is two years. For many people, there are quite a few surprises on day 730 of their server virtualization bliss. The good news is that you can correct this situation before it gets you. There are plenty of topics on the [VMware Communities forums](#), as well as this [whitepaper from VMware](#) on the replacement process.

Additional resources

- TechRepublic's [Downloads RSS Feed](#) **XML**
- Sign up for the [Downloads at TechRepublic](#) newsletter
- Sign up for our [10 Things Newsletter](#)
- Check out all of TechRepublic's [free newsletters](#)
- [Save your sanity with these fixes for Windows XP multimedia annoyances](#)
- [How do I... Turn off overtyping with the Insert key in Word permanently?](#)
- [The 10 most annoying programs on the Internet](#)

Version history

Version: 1.0

Published: April 19, 2009

Tell us what you think

TechRepublic downloads are designed to help you get your job done as painlessly and effectively as possible. Because we're continually looking for ways to improve the usefulness of these tools, we need your feedback. Please take a minute to [drop us a line](#) and tell us how well this download worked for you and offer your suggestions for improvement.

Thanks!

—The TechRepublic Content Team