Tweaking Windows XP Services

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Most Windows XP computers run close to 80 services. You'll be amazed how many extraneous services are running on a typical Windows XP computer that aren't necessarily required for day-to-day operations. The list of services required on a Windows XP corporate client will differ from the services required on a home PC. On an average Windows XP computer you may only need to run about 20 services. Running fewer services will conserve memory and other system resources which will result in better performance, faster speeds, and more reliable operating system.

Here's a list of various services running on a typical Windows XP computer and some advice on how you can tweak your system by properly configuring the services. For simplicity, we will only discuss Windows XP Professional (and not the Home edition of Windows XP). If you have a choice between running the Home edition or Professional, always choose the Professional edition.

There are lots of articles on the Web that document the type of Windows XP services tweaks listed in this article. Be cautious when you start implementing suggestions listed in any article, including the one you are reading. What works for me and for someone else may not work for you. If you are unsure, leave the service to its default setting. I've seen several articles on tweaking XP services but I do not agree with several of the recommendations listed elsewhere, so I came up with my own recommendations. One Web site called blkviper.com has devoted a lot of material to this topic and the information is much more accurate than the other Web sites. Even though his suggested actions may not totally agree with mine, you'll find lots of additional useful information on his Web site, including XP Home Edition and gaming configurations.

Before we look at the services and discuss any details, you should document the status of all your current services. If you get unexpected results after tweaking your system, you should set the settings back to the original configuration. If you don't feel comfortable with the description and the purpose of a service, consider modifying one service at a time and observe the system behavior before making massive changes to your operating system. You can access the Services Console either by typing services.msc at Start, Run or through the Administrative Tools folder.

You should be aware that when you disable certain services you may get errors in the Event Viewer. If the errors bother you, consider either setting the service to Manual or to Automatic until the error disappears. Along with the name of the service, the description, and the recommended action, you will also notice the short name for the service. This can be useful if you decide to script to disable or stop certain services. For example, create a script that disables all the unnecessary services on your corporate Windows XP clients. You may also stop, start, pause, or continue a service using the "net" command at the command prompt.

Caution! You should always backup your Windows XP computer before making any changes to the services. For more information check out the article Automated System Recovery and System Restore in Windows XP.

Alerter

Description: Notifies selected users and computers of administrative alerts. If the service is stopped, programs that use administrative alerts will not receive them. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. This is not like the WinPopUp service in earlier versions of Windows. Usually you can disable this service.

Service short name: Alerter

Action: Disable it.

Application Layer Gateway Service

Description: Provides support for 3rd party protocol plug-ins for Internet Connection Sharing and the Internet Connection Firewall. This service is used for ICS.

Service short name: ALG

Action: Disable it.

Application Management

Description: Provides software installation services such as Assign, Publish, and Remove. You may need this service for modifying certain software installations. If so, instead of disabling it, put this service in either automatic or manual mode. For home use you can usually disable this service.

Service short name: AppMgmt

Action: Disable it for home use. Try switching to manual in corporate environment, if you encounter problems with software installation, switch to automatic.

Automatic Updates

Description: Enables the download and installation of critical Windows updates. If the service is disabled, the operating system can be manually updated at the Windows Update Web site. If you enable this service then the Cryptographic Services must also be running.

Service short name: Wuauserv

Action: Disable it but make sure you check for updates manually.

Background Intelligent Transfer Service

Description: Uses idle network bandwidth to transfer data. If a file transfer is interrupted for some reason (e.g. during Windows Update), the transfer will continue where you left off. There are several third-party tools that may use this service so it is best to set it to Manual.

Service short name: BITS

Action: Set it to Manual.

ClipBook

Description: Enables ClipBook Viewer to store information and share it with remote computers. If the service is stopped, ClipBook Viewer will not be able to share information with remote computers. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. This service requires NetDDE. You probably don't share your ClipBook with others so there's no need to waste valuable RAM.

Service short name: ClipSrv

Action: Disable it.

COM+ Event System

Description: Supports System Event Notification Service (SENS), which provides automatic distribution of events to subscribing Component Object Model (COM) components. If the service is stopped, SENS will close and will not be able to provide logon and logoff notifications. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. If you have any COM+ applications installed in "C:\Program Files\ComPlus Applications" folder then you may need this service. Most users do not have any COM+ applications installed on their systems.

Service short name: EventSystem

Action: Set it to Manual. If an application uses COM+ service it will automatically start this service.

COM+ System Application

Description: Manages the configuration and tracking of Component Object Model (COM)+-based components. If the service is stopped, most COM+-based components will not function properly. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. If you have any COM+ applications installed in "C:\Program Files\ComPlus

Applications" folder then you may need this service. Most users do not have any COM+ applications installed on their systems.

Service short name: COMSysApp

Action: Set it to Manual. If an application uses COM+ service it will automatically start this service.

Computer Browser

Description: Maintains an updated list of computers on the network and supplies this list to computers designated as browsers. If this service is stopped, this list will not be updated or maintained. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. This service is not used to browse computers on the network or to connect to other computers using a browser. It's used to participate in browser elections.

Service short name: Browser

Action: Disable it in a home environment. In a corporate environment, disable this service after making sure you have at least two computers on each subnet that are able to participate in browser elections so one will become a master and the other a backup browser.

Cryptographic Services

Description: Provides three management services: Catalog Database Service, which confirms the signatures of Windows files; Protected Root Service, which adds and removes Trusted Root Certification Authority certificates from this computer; and Key Service, which helps enroll this computer for certificates. If this service is stopped, these management services will not function properly. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Among other services, Windows Update depends on this service. It's best to leave this service configured to start automatically.

Service short name: CryptSvc

Action: Leave this set to Automatic.

DHCP Client

Description: Manages network configuration by registering and updating IP addresses and DNS names. Most corporate networks run DHCP servers to dynamically assign IP addresses to DHCP clients. Even at home you may be using a Cable/DSL router that assigns IP addresses to your DHCP clients. ISPs also usually use DHCP servers to configure your DHCP

clients for Internet access. If you are using a static IP address then you can disable this service.

Service short name: Dhcp

Action: Leave this set to Automatic unless you are using a static IP address and are convinced you have no use for this service.

Distributed Link Tracking Client

Description: Maintains links between NTFS files within a computer or across computers in a network domain. Most people don't create shortcut links to files on other computers that get moved around. Therefore, it's best to disable this service and save memory.

Service short name: TrkWks

Action: Disable it.

Distributed Transaction Coordinator

Description: Coordinates transactions that span multiple resource managers, such as databases, message queues, and file systems. If this service is stopped, these transactions will not occur. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start.

Service short name: MSDTC

Action: Disable it.

DNS Client

Description: Resolves and caches Domain Name System (DNS) names for this computer. If this service is stopped, this computer will not be able to resolve DNS names and locate Active Directory domain controllers. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. This is an important service, even though it's not required for DNS lookups. I would leave this service as is to ensure smooth operation.

Service short name: DnsCache

Action: Leave this set to Automatic.

Error Reporting Service

Description: Allows error reporting for services and applictions (sorry, this is the way Microsoft spelled applications in the service description so I'll leave it like that) running in non-standard environments. This service phones home to Microsoft.

Service short name: ERSvc

Action: Disable it.

Error Log

Description: Enables event log messages issued by Windows-based programs and components to be viewed in Event Viewer. This service cannot be stopped. Any service that cannot be stopped is obviously too important and you should not mess with it.

Service short name: Eventlog

Action: Leave this set to Automatic.

Fast User Switching

Description: Provides management for applications that require assistance in a multiple user environment. If you use Remote Desktop, this service is especially beneficial. Most users at home use Fast User Switching so it's best to set this to manual. At work, you can disable this if you have no use for multiple users logging on to the same computer. If you leave this to manual, the service will only start if you use the Fast User Switching feature on your computer.

Service short name: FastUserSwitchingCompatibility

Action: Set this to Manual.

Fax

Description: Enables you to send and receive faxes, utilizing fax resources available on this computer or on the network. Unless you are using fax, disable this service.

Service short name: Fax

Action: Disable it unless you use your computer to send faxes.

Help and Support

Description: Enables Help and Support Center to run on this computer. If this service is stopped, Help and Support Center will be unavailable. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start.

The above description of this service (as provided by Microsoft) is not exactly correct. Even if this service is stopped Help and Support Center is still available because it will automatically start the service. In fact, try disabling this service and then stop it. Go to Start, Help and Support and you'll notice that it will start the service and configure it back to start automatically. It is best to disable this service. If you ever decided to use Help and Support, it will automatically start the service for you.

Service short name: Helpsvc

Action: Definitely disable this service in all environments.

Human Interface Device Access

Description: Enables generic input access to Human Interface Devices (HID), which activates and maintains the use of predefined hot buttons on keyboards, remote controls, and other multimedia devices. If this service is stopped, hot buttons controlled by this service will no longer function. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start.

Service short name: HidServ

Action: Disable it unless you are using one of those multimedia devices mentioned above.

IIS Admin

Description: Allows administration of Web and FTP services through the Internet Information Services snap-in. IIS is not installed by default. If you have installed it and are not using Web or FTP sites any more, disable it. For security reasons you should avoid running Web or FTP services on your Windows XP computer.

Service short name: IISADMIN

Action: Disable it unless you are running Web or FTP sites on your computer.

IMAPI CD-Burning COM Service

Description: Manages CD recording using Image Mastering Applications Programming Interface (IMAPI). If this service is stopped, this computer will be unable to record CDs. If

this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Set this service to Manual. If an application needs this service it will automatically start it.

Service short name: ImapiService

Action: Set it to Manual.

Indexing Service

Description: Indexes contents and properties of files on local and remote computers; provides rapid access to files through flexible querying language. This service is notorious for using a lot of system resources. In case you haven't already discovered, this service can be a pain in the neck. There's more pain and less to gain with this service.

Service short name: Cisvc

Action: Definitely disable this service in all environments.

Internet Connection Firewall (ICF) / Internet Connection Sharing (ICS)

Description: Provides network address translation, addressing, name resolution and/or intrusion prevention services for a home or small office network. If you are using ICF at home (which is a good idea, unless you have some other kind of firewall) then you will need this service. It is also required if you are using one computer at home that acts as a "gateway" to the Internet. If not, you can disable this service. At work you will rarely need this service. However, some companies require you to use ICF if you want to use remote access to connect to the corporate network. For example, Microsoft requires their employees to use ICF and anti-virus software on their computers before they can make a connection from home to their corporate network.

Service short name: SharedAccess

Action: Set it to Manual.

IPSec

Description: Manages IP security policy and starts the ISAKMP/Oakley (IKE) and the IP security driver. Most likely you are not using IPSec at home. Even at work only enable this if you know for sure that you are using IPSec.

Service short name: PolicyAgent

Action: Disable it.

Logical Disk Manager

Description: Detects and monitors new hard disk drives and sends disk volume information to Logical Disk Manager Administrative Service for configuration. If this service is stopped, dynamic disk status and configuration information may become out of date. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. If you set this to Manual and then use Disk Management tool, both the Logical Disk Manager and the Logical Disk Manager Administrative Service will be started for you.

Service short name: Dmserver

Action: Set it to Manual.

Logical Disk Manager Administrative Service

Description: Configures hard disk drives and volumes. The service only runs for configuration processes and then stops. I would set this to Manual. If you are using dynamic volumes (most people are not) then you may need this service to manage your disk. If you set this to Manual and then use Disk Management tool, both the Logical Disk Manager and the Logical Disk Manager Administrative Service will be started for you.

Service short name: Dmadmin

Action: Set it to Manual.

Messenger

Description: Transmits net send and Alerter service messages between clients and servers. This service is not related to Windows Messenger. If this service is stopped, Alerter messages will not be transmitted. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Since it has nothing to do with MSN Messenger, Windows Messenger, or the likes, you should disable it. You won't be able to send "net send" messages but most people don't use that feature anyway.

Service short name: Messenger

Action: Disable it.

MS Software Shadow Copy Provider

Description: Manages software-based volume shadow copies taken by the Volume Shadow Copy service. If this service is stopped, software-based volume shadow copies cannot be

managed. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. You might want to disable it but if you encounter some problems with the Backup program, go ahead and enable it. If you want to play it safe, set it to Manual.

Service short name: SwPrv

Action: Set it to Manual.

Netlogon

Description: Supports pass-through authentication of account logon events for computers in a domain. At home your computer is most likely not part of a domain so you won't need this service. At work, set this to manual. If you join a domain then this service will be used.

Service short name: Netlogon

Action: Disable it at home. Set it to Manual at work.

NetMeeting Remote Desktop Sharing

Description: Allows authorized people to remotely access your Windows desktop using NetMeeting. Most people don't need this service and it could be a security risk.

Service short name: Mnmsrvc

Action: Disable it.

Network Connections

Description: Manages objects in the Network and Dial-Up Connections folder, in which you can view both local area network and remote connections. If you have no network and don't ever dial out with a modem to another network you can disable this service. Otherwise, set to Manual so the service starts whenever it is needed.

Service short name: Netman

Action: Set it to Manual.

Network DDE

Description: Provides network transport and security for Dynamic Data Exchange (DDE) for programs running on the same computer or on different computers. If this service is stopped, DDE transport and security will be unavailable. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Most likely you won't use this service. If you set this service to Manual and play certain games, or use ClipBook it will automatically start the NetDDE service. In the older versions of Windows, the game Hearts also used NetDDE. Hearts doesn't require NetDDE anymore.

Service short name: NetDDE

Action: Disable it.

Network DDE DSDM

Description: Manages Dynamic Data Exchange (DDE) network shares. If this service is stopped, DDE network shares will be unavailable. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. If you use and manage DDE network shares in ClipBook you will need this service, most people don't.

Service short name: NetDDEdsdm

Action: Disable it.

Network Location Awareness (NLA)

Description: Collects and stores network configuration and location information, and notifies applications when this information changes. You may need this service if you are using ICS. Set this to Manual so the service will get started if it is needed.

Service short name: Nla

Action: Set it to Manual.

NT LM Security Support Provider

Description: Provides security to remote procedure call (RPC) programs that use transports other than named pipes. You may need this if you are using a Telnet server, otherwise disable this service. Most people won't need this service but if you want to play it safe set this service to Manual.

Service short name: NtLmSsp

Action: Disable it.

Performance Logs and Alerts

Description: Configures performance logs and alerts. Unless you are really using this feature (most people don't) you should disable it.

Service short name: SysmonLog

Action: Disable it.

Plug and Play

Description: Enables a computer to recognize and adapt to hardware changes with little or no user input. Stopping or disabling this service will result in system instability. This is an important service needed by all users so leave it as is.

Service short name: PlugPlay

Action: Leave it set to Automatic.

Portable Media Serial Number

Description: Retrieves the serial number of any portable music player connected to your computer. If you are using such a device (most people don't) then you'll need this service. Otherwise, disable it.

Service short name: WmdmPmSp

Action: Disable it.

Print Spooler

Description: Loads files to memory for later printing. The spooler service spools your print jobs to a folder on your local hard drive and then passes it to the spool folder on the print server for later printing. Unless you never print, you should leave this service set to Automatic. Disabling the print spooler service will save you memory but your printers will disappear from the Printers folder.

Service short name: Spooler

Action: Leave it set to Automatic.

Protected Storage

Description: Provides protected storage for sensitive data, such as private keys, to prevent access by unauthorized services, processes, or users. This service is essential if you want to save passwords in Outlook or other applications such as dial-up networking. For security reason you may be tempted to disable this service but then you will have to constantly enter passwords in dialog boxes. You might want to experiment with this because once you stop this service, the option to remember passwords will no longer be available to you. If you can live with that, disable it. Otherwise, set it to either Manual or Automatic. If you use MSN you may need to set this to Automatic. On most computers this should be set to Automatic.

Service short name: ProtectedStorage

Action: Set it to Automatic.

QoS RSVP

Description: Provides network signaling and local traffic control setup functionality for QoS-aware programs and control applets. Most people won't need this service. Unless you have implemented Quality of Service (QoS), disable this service.

Service short name: RSVP

Action: Disable it.

Remote Access Auto Connection Manager

Description: Creates a connection to a remote network whenever a program references a remote DNS or NetBIOS name or address. This service may be required if you access the Internet through your ISP using a cable or DSL connection. If you are not sure, set it to Manual. If the service is required it will automatically start if set to Manual.

Service short name: RasAuto

Action: Set it to Manual.

Remote Access Connection Manager

Description: Creates a network connection. This goes hand in hand with the above service. This service may be required if you access the Internet through your ISP using a cable or

DSL connection. If you are not sure, set it to Manual. If the service is required it will automatically start if set to Manual.

Service short name: RasMan

Action: Set it to Manual.

Remote Desktop Help Session Manager

Description: Manages and controls Remote Assistance. If this service is stopped, Remote Assistance will be unavailable. Before stopping this service, see the Dependencies tab of the Properties dialog box. Most people don't use this feature. If you have implemented this feature then leave it to Manual. Otherwise, disable it and save yourself precious memory.

Service short name: RDSessMgr

Action: Disable it.

Remote Procedure Call (RPC)

Description: Provides the endpoint mapper and other miscellaneous RPC services. This service is extremely important so don't mess with it. In fact, Microsoft doesn't even give you the ability to stop this service because this is a "must have" service. If you are having problems on your network, make sure this service is running.

Service short name: RpcSs

Action: Leave it set to Automatic.

Remote Procedure Call (RPC) Locator

Description: Manages the RPC name service database. If you are bold enough you could experiment by disabling this service. However, I recommend you leave it set to Manual.

Service short name: RpcLocator

Action: Leave it set to Manual.

Remote Registry Service

Description: Enables remote users to modify registry settings on this computer. If this service is stopped, the registry can be modified only by users on this computer. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Most people rarely modify registry remotely. If you need to modify registry remotely you can use Remote Desktop.

Service short name: RemoteRegistry

Action: Disable it.

Removable Storage

Description: Manages removable media, drives, and libraries. You will need this service only if you have removable devices such as tape or zip drives. It doesn't seem to have any affect on the CD-ROM or DVD drives.

Service short name: NtmsSvc

Action: Disable it.

Routing and Remote Access

Description: Offers routing services to businesses in local area and wide area network environments. An average user doesn't need this service. You will need this service if you dial into your computer with a modem, or you require a virtual private connection (VPN) to your local computer from another location.

Service short name: RemoteAccess

Action: Disable it.

Secondary Logon

Description: Enables starting processes under alternate credentials. If this service is stopped, this type of logon access will be unavailable. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. At home most users really don't need this service. At work, an average user won't need this service but if you have a need to start an MMC or connect to another computer with differential credentials, you can use the secondary logon service by using the "Run As" option. If you feel that you may occasionally need this service then configure it as Manual. If you ever use the Run As feature it will automatically start the service. For more information on the Run As feature check out the article Using Windows 2000's Run As Command.

Service short name: Seclogon

Action: Disable it.

Security Accounts Manager

Description: Stores security information for local user accounts. This service is important enough that Microsoft doesn't give you the ability to stop or pause this service. Among other things, this service is required by Group Policy Editor and IISAdmin service.

Service short name: SamSs

Action: Make sure this is set to Automatic.

Server

Description: Supports file, print, and named-pipe sharing over the network for this computer. If this service is stopped, these functions will be unavailable. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. This service is required if others need to connect to your computer (the workstation service is required for you to connect to others). The Computer Browser service depends on this service. If you usually don't connect to either the shares or printers that are attached to your computer from other computers then set this to Disable or Manual. Disabling this service won't affect your ability to connect to any other network resources because that requires workstation service.

Service short name: Lanmanserver

Action: Set it to Manual.

Shell Hardware Detection

Description: Shell Hardware Detection is used for auto play feature on CD-ROMs, DVDs, etc. Unless you are running into some problems with your laptop's docking station, set this to Disable. You will no longer see the Window that gives you the options to either open the file, browse the CD, or play the music but I am sure you could live without that feature. If not, set this to Automatic.

Service short name: ShellHWDetection

Action: Disable it.

Smart Card

Description: Manages access to smart cards read by this computer. If this service is stopped, this computer will be unable to read smart cards. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Unless you are using a smart card you should disable this service.

Service short name: SCardSvr

Action: Disable it.

Smart Card Helper

Description: Enables support for legacy non-plug and play smart-card readers used by this computer. If this service is stopped, this computer will not support legacy reader. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Unless you are using a smart card you should disable this service.

Service short name: SCardDrv

Action: Disable it.

SSDP Discovery Service

Description: Enables discovery of UPnP devices on your home network. This service is used to connect to network devices such as printers and scanners that use TCP/IP. Do not confuse Universal Plug and Play (UPNP) with Plug and Play (PNP). Most likely you won't need this service but you will require the PNP service. If you are not sure, set this service to Manual.

Service short name: SCardDrv

Action: Set it to Manual.

System Event Notification

Description: Tracks system events such as Windows logon, network, and power events. Notifies COM+ Event System subscribers of these events. An average user won't need this service.

Service short name: SENS

Action: Disable it.

System Restore Service

Description: Performs system restore functions. To stop service, turn off System Restore from the System Restore tab in My Computer->Properties. This service is useful if you need to roll back your system to a previous configuration. If you've been creating System Restore points for a long time but have rarely restored your system to a previous configuration you might want to consider disabling this service. If you are a developer or an administrator who experiments with different software packages, you should leave this service enabled. If you disable this service, all your previous system restore points will be deleted. For more information on this topic, check out the article [Automated System Recovery and System Restore in Windows XP](#).

Service short name: Srservice

Action: Disable it.

Task Scheduler

Description: Enables a user to configure and schedule automated tasks on this computer. If this service is stopped, these tasks will not be run at their scheduled times. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. An average user doesn't use the scheduler service but it is required for automatic updates, such as antivirus updates that are downloaded automatically via the Internet. If you know for sure that you don't have a need for this service, disable it. Otherwise, leave it set to Automatic.

Service short name: Schedule

Action: Disable it if you don't need automatic updates and have not scheduled any tasks.

TCP/IP NetBIOS Helper Service

Description: Enables support for NetBIOS over TCP/IP (NetBT) service and NetBIOS name resolution. If you live in a NetBIOS fee world and don't have any application that use NetBIOS or WINS you may disable this service. We are years away from becoming free from NetBIOS so leave this set to Automatic. If you disable this service, there are lots of functionalities in Windows that will be crippled.

Service short name: LmHosts

Action: Leave this set to Automatic.

Telephony

Description: Provides Telephony API (TAPI) support for programs that control telephony devices and IP based voice connections on the local computer and, through the LAN, on servers that are also running the service. If you use cable modem or DSL, your ISP may require this functionality for logging on to their network. The Remote Access Connection Manager, Remote Access Auto Connection Manager, and Fax service depends on this service. In general, if you use remote access to connect to other networks leave this service set to Automatic.

Service short name: TapiSrv

Action: Leave this set to Automatic.

Telnet

Description: Enables a remote user to log on to this computer and run programs, and supports various TCP/IP Telnet clients, including UNIX-based and Windows-based computers. If this service is stopped, remote user access to programs might be unavailable. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Most users don't have a need for this service. Telnet transmits passwords in clear text and is not secure. Use Remote Desktop service to connect to other computers and make sure this service is disabled.

Service short name: TlntSvr

Action: Definitely disable this service in all environments.

Terminal Services

Description: Allows multiple users to be connected interactively to a machine as well as the display of desktops and applications to remote computers. The underpinning of Remote Desktop (including RD for Administrators), Fast User Switching, Remote Assistance, and Terminal Server. An average user doesn't use this service but most techies do.

Service short name: TermService

Action: Disable it unless you have a need to connect to your computer remotely, or you use Fast User Switching.

Themes

Description: Provides user experience theme management. A desktop theme determines the overall appearance of your desktop by providing a predefined set of icons, fonts, colors, mouse pointers, sounds, background picture, screen saver, and other window elements. If you aren't really into the Windows XP "eXPerience" thing you should disable this service.

This service is a resource hog and I always like to disable it. Disabling it won't prevent you from using screen savers, background wallpapers, or customizing your desktop.

Service short name: Themes

Action: Disable it.

Uninterruptible Power Supply

Description: Manages an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) connected to the computer. If you have a UPS connected to a serial port and want to manage the UPS then you may need this service. Otherwise, just to use the UPS you don't require this service. I have a serial UPS connected to my Windows XP computer but I don't use this service so I have this service disabled. Typically, on a server you are more likely to manage your UPS and use this service but on a workstation you are less likely to need this service.

Service short name: UPS

Action: Disable it.

Universal Plug and Play Device Host

Description: Provides support to host Universal Plug and Play devices. This service works with SSDP Discovery Service to configure UPnP devices on your home network. Most likely you won't need this service. If you are not sure, set this service to Manual.

Service short name: Upnphost

Action: Disable it.

Upload Manager

Description: Manages synchronous and asynchronous file transfers between clients and servers on the network. If this service is stopped, synchronous and asynchronous file transfers between clients and servers on the network will not occur. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. If you use Internet Connection Sharing (ICS) or Internet Connection Firewall (ICF) then set this to Manual. This service is usually not required so you should disable it. Your File and Print services are not affected if this service is disabled.

Service short name: Uploadmgr

Action: Disable it.

Volume Shadow Copy

Description: Manages and implements Volume Shadow Copies used for backup and other purposes. If this service is stopped, shadow copies will be unavailable for backup and the backup may fail. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. However, if you ever use Backup utility then set this to Manual. When you start the Backup utility it will automatically start this service.

Service short name: VSS

Action: Set it to Manual.

WebClient

Description: Enables Windows-based programs to create, access, and modify Internet-based files. If this service is stopped, these functions will not be available. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Usually this service is not required. Even if you use WebDAV for Internet-based file sharing, or Microsoft FrontPage to edit your Web sites, this service is not required.

Service short name: WebClient

Action: Disable it.

Windows Audio

Description: Manages audio devices for Windows-based programs. If this service is stopped, audio devices and effects will not function properly. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Most users will need this service. Unless you don't have sound card and speakers, leave this set to Automatic.

Service short name: AudioSrv

Action: Leave this set to Automatic.

Window Image Acquisition (WIA)

Description: Provides image acquisition services for scanners and cameras. You may need this service if you have a Web cam or scanner. Even if you have a camera, set this service to Manual. When you start the Scanner and Camera Wizard it will automatically start this service.

Service short name: Stisvc

Action: Set it to Manual if you have a Web cam or a scanner, otherwise disable it.

Windows Installer

Description: Installs, repairs and removes software according to instructions contained in .MSI files. Leave this set to Manual. Most newer applications use the Windows installer technology which replaces the traditional setup.exe with the .msi files. If you are not planning on installing any applications (which is very unlikely) then you may disable this service. Otherwise, set it to Manual. For more details on .MSI files check out the article Windows Installer Technology.

Service short name: MSIServer

Action: Set it to Manual.

Windows Management Instrumentation

Description: Provides a common interface and object model to access management information about operating system, devices, applications and services. If this service is stopped, most Windows-based software will not function properly. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. This is a crucial service that must be enabled at all times.

Service short name: Winmgmt

Action: Leave it set to Automatic.

Windows Management Instrumentation Driver Extension

Description: Provides systems management information to and from drivers. This service is not as crucial as the Windows Management Instrumentation so it doesn't need to be set to Automatic. I leave mine set to Manual.

Service short name: Wmi

Action: Set it to Manual.

Windows Time

Description: Maintains date and time synchronization on all clients and servers in the network. If this service is stopped, date and time synchronization will be unavailable. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. If you disable this service or set it to manual, you won't be able to synchronize the clock with an Internet time server and you'll get "The RPC server is unavailable" error. Time service is very critical, especially in a corporate environment, so I suggest you leave this set to Automatic at all times.

Service short name: W32Time

Action: Set it to Automatic.

Wireless Zero Configuration

Description: Provides automatic configuration for the 802.11 adapters. You'll only need this service if you are using any wireless devices.

Service short name: WZCSVC

Action: Disable it.

WMI Performance Adapter

Description: Provides performance library information from WMI HiPerf providers. Most users don't need this service.

Service short name: WmiApSrv

Action: Disable it.

Workstation

Description: Creates and maintains client network connections to remote servers. If this service is stopped, these connections will be unavailable. If this service is disabled, any services that explicitly depend on it will fail to start. Just about everyone needs this service to connect to other computers. Leave this set to Automatic.

Service short name: Lanmanworkstation

Action: Leave this set to Automatic.