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## Lesson 5: Managing Special Folders Using Group Policy

Microsoft Windows 2000 allows you to redirect the folders containing a user's profile to a location on the network using the Folder Redirection extension in the Group Policy snap-in. This lesson introduces special folder redirection and walks you through the steps for setting up folder redirection using group policy.

### After this lesson, you will be able to

- Redirect special folders

**Estimated lesson time: 15 minutes**

### Folder Redirection

You use the Folder Redirection extension to the Group Policy snap-in to redirect certain Windows 2000 special folders to network locations. Special folders such as My Documents and My Pictures are located in C:\Documents and Settings (where C:\ is the name of your system drive).

Windows 2000 allows the following special folders to be redirected:

- Application Data
- Desktop
- My Documents
- My Pictures
- Start Menu

The Folder Redirection extension is located under User Configuration, Windows Settings in the Group Policy snap-in.

### Advantages of Redirecting the My Documents Folder

The following benefits pertain to redirecting any folder, but redirecting My Documents can be particularly advantageous because this folder tends to become large over time.

- Even if a user logs on to various computers on the network, his or her documents are always available.
- When roaming user profiles are used, only the network path to the My Documents folder is part of the roaming user profile, not the My Documents folder itself. Therefore, its contents do not have to be copied back and forth between the client computer and the server each time the user logs on or off, and the process of logging on or off can be much faster than it was in Windows NT 4.0.
- Data stored on a shared network server can be backed up as part of routine system administration. This is safer because it requires no action on the part of the user.
- The system administrator can use group policy to set disk quotas, limiting the amount of space taken up by users' special folders.
- Data specific to a user can be redirected to a different hard disk on the user's local computer from the hard disk holding the operating system files. This makes the user's data safer if the operating system needs to be reinstalled.

### Default Special Folder Locations

The default locations for special folders that have not been redirected depend on the operating system that was in place previously (see Table 12.7).

**Table 12.7** *Default Locations for Special Folders*

Operating System	Location of Special Folders
Windows 2000 new installation (no previous operating system), Windows 2000 upgrade of Windows 95, or Windows 98 with user profiles disabled	C:\Documents and Settings (where C:\ is the name of your system drive); for example, C:\Documents and Settings
Windows 2000 upgrade of Windows NT 4.0 or Windows NT 3.51	<i>systemroot</i> \Profiles; for example, C:\WinNT\Profiles
Windows 2000 upgrade of Windows 95 or Windows 98 with user profiles enabled	<i>systemroot</i> \Profiles; for example, C:\Windows\System\Profiles

## Setting Up Folder Redirection

There are two ways to set up folder redirection:

1. Redirect special folders to a location according to security group membership.
2. Redirect special folders to one location for everyone in the site, domain, or OU.

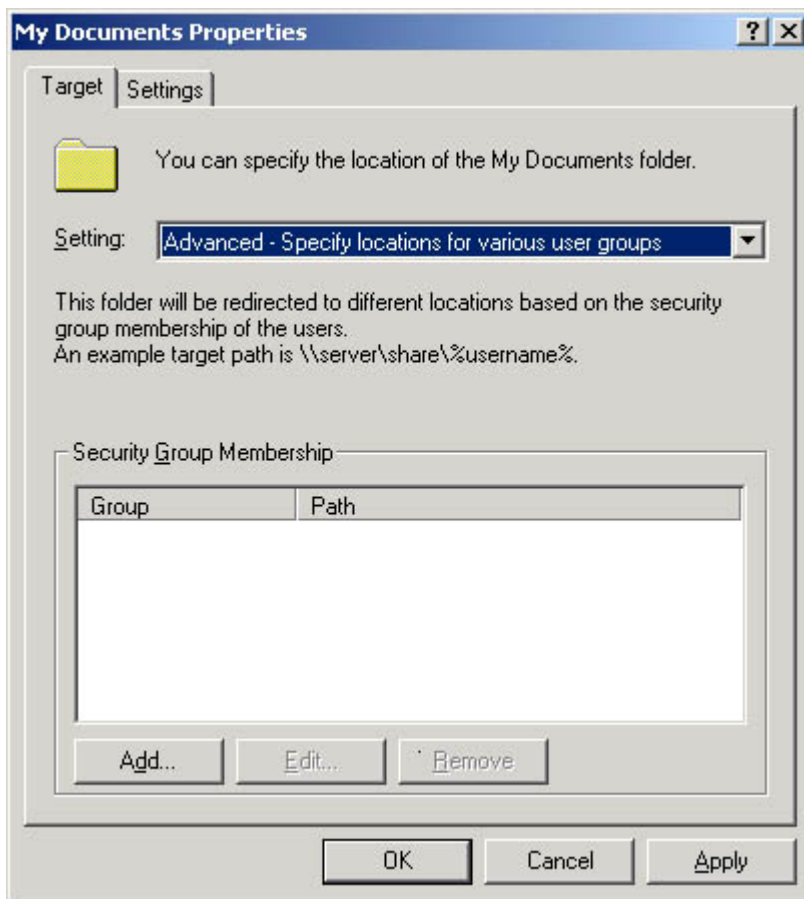
In addition, you can also direct the My Pictures folder to follow the redirection of the My Documents folder (to remain as its subfolder whenever My Documents is redirected, as it does by default).

### NOTE

The default (My Pictures following My Documents) is recommended unless you have a specific reason (such as file share scalability) for separating My Pictures from My Documents. If they are separated, a shortcut takes the place of the My Pictures folder in My Documents.

#### • To redirect special folders to a location according to security group membership

1. Open a GPO linked to the site, domain, or OU containing the users whose special folders you want to redirect to a network location.
2. In User Configuration, open Windows Settings, then double-click the Folder Redirection node to show the folder you want to redirect.
3. Right-click the folder you want (such as Desktop, My Documents, and so on), then click Properties.
4. In the Target tab in the Properties dialog box for the folder (see Figure 12.25), in the Setting list, select Advanced-Specify Locations For Various User Groups, then click Add.



**Figure 12.25** Target tab in the Properties dialog box

5. In the Specify Group And Location dialog box (see Figure 12.26), in the Security Group Membership box, click Browse.
6. In the Select Group dialog box, click the security group for which you want to redirect the folder, then click OK.
7. In the Specify Group And Location dialog box, in the Target Folder Location box, click Browse.
8. On the Browse For Folder dialog box, select the redirect location you want for this security group, then click OK.

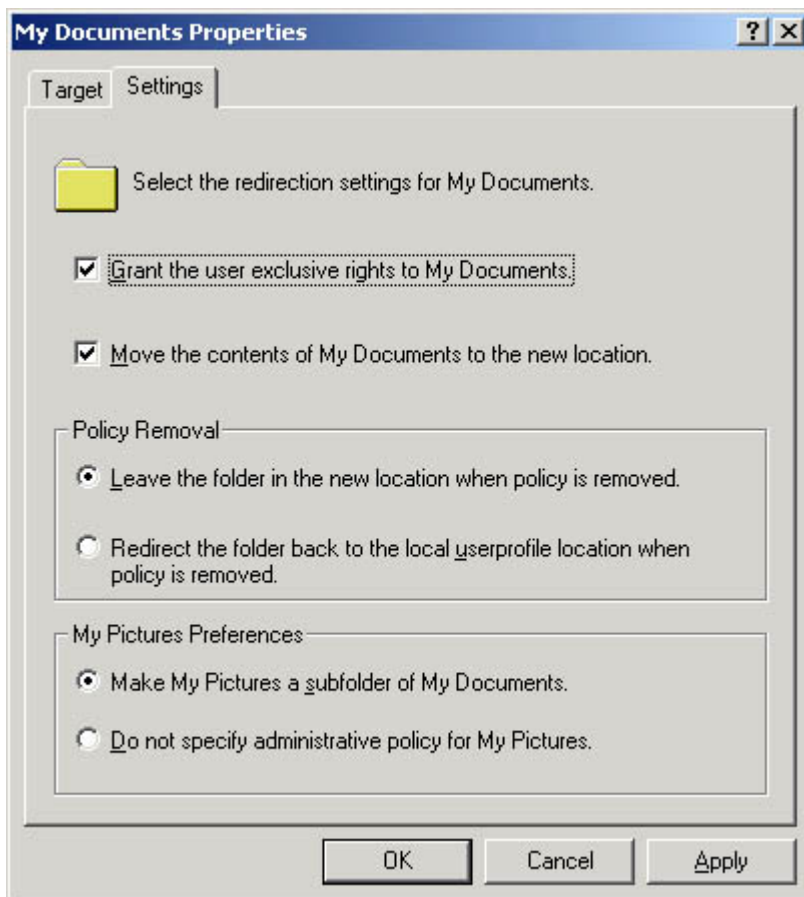
If you enter a drive letter, such as D:\, then this must represent a valid path on the user's local computer. It is recommended that you enter a full universal naming convention (UNC) path.

If you want each user in the specified security group to have his or her own subfolder at this location, then you can incorporate %username% into the UNC path, such as \\server\share\%username%. Including %username% in the path is recommended. For example, SecUser, member of the Users security group could have My Documents redirected to \\server1\share\secuser\My Documents when using \\server1\share\%username%\My Documents.



**Figure 12.26** *Specify Group And Location dialog box*

9. In the Specify Group And Location dialog box, click OK.
10. If you want to redirect folders for members of other security groups, repeat steps 4 through 9 until all the groups have been entered.
11. In the Properties dialog box for the folder, click the Settings tab (see Figure 12.27), and then set each of the following options (the default setting is recommended):
  - **Grant The User Exclusive Rights To** (the special folder type) to allow the user and the local system full rights to the folder, and no one else, not even administrators, has any rights. If this setting is disabled, no changes are made to the permissions on the folder. The permissions that apply by default remain in effect. Enabled by default.
  - **Move The Contents Of** (the user's current special folder) **To The New Location** to redirect the contents of the folder to the new location. Enabled by default.
12. Choose one of the following options in the Policy Removal area (the default setting is recommended):
  - **Leave The Folder In The New Location When Policy Is Removed** to leave the folder in its new location even though the GPO no longer applies. Enabled by default.
  - **Redirect The Folder Back To The Local User Profile Location When Policy Is Removed** to move the folder back to its local user profile location when the GPO no longer applies.



**Figure 12.27** Settings tab of the Properties dialog box

#### IMPORTANT

See the section on Policy Removal Considerations for details on selecting a policy removal option.

13. Available for the My Documents folder only, choose one of the following options in the My Pictures Preferences area:
  - **Make My Pictures A Subfolder Of My Documents** to redirect My Pictures automatically to remain a subfolder of My Documents.
  - **Do Not Specify Administrative Policy For My Pictures** to remove My Pictures as a subfolder of My Documents and have the user profile determine the location of My Pictures.

#### NOTE

You can also specify if you want the My Pictures folder to follow the My Documents folder by setting the folder redirection properties for My Pictures. See the "[To direct the My Pictures folder to follow the redirection of the My Documents folder](#)" procedure for details.

14. Click OK.

- **To redirect special folders to one location for everyone in the site, domain, or OU**

1. Open a GPO linked to the site, domain, or OU containing the users whose special folders you want to redirect to a network location.

2. In User Configuration, open Windows Settings, then double-click the Folder Redirection node to show the folder you want to redirect.
3. Right-click the folder you want (such as Desktop, My Documents, and so on), then click Properties.
4. In the Target tab in the Properties dialog box for the folder (see Figure 12.25), in the Setting list, select Basic-Redirect Everyone's Folder To The Same Location, then click Browse.
5. On the Browse For Folder dialog box, select the redirect location you want for this GPO.

If you enter a drive letter, such as D:\, then this must represent a valid path on the user's local computer. It is recommended that you enter a full UNC path.

If you want each user in the site, domain, or organizational unit to have his or her own subfolder at this location, then you can incorporate %username% into the UNC path, such as \\server\share\%username%. Including %username% in the path is recommended. For example, SecUser, member of the Users security group could have My Documents redirected to \\server1\share\secuser\My Documents when using \\server1\share\%username%\My Documents.

6. In the Browse For Folder dialog box, click OK.
7. In the Properties dialog box for the folder, click the Settings tab (see Figure 12.27), and then set each of the following options (the default setting is recommended):
  - **Grant The User Exclusive Rights To** (the special folder type) to allow the user and the local system full rights to the folder, and no one else, not even administrators, has any rights. If this setting is disabled, no changes are made to the permissions on the folder. The permissions that apply by default remain in effect. Enabled by default.
  - **Move The Contents Of** (the user's current special folder) **To The New Location** to redirect the contents of the folder to the new location. Enabled by default.
8. Choose one of the following options in the Policy Removal area (the default setting is recommended):
  - **Leave The Folder In The New Location When Policy Is Removed** to leave the folder in its new location even though the GPO no longer applies. Enabled by default.
  - **Redirect The Folder Back To The Local User Profile Location When Policy Is Removed** to move the folder back to its local user profile location when the GPO no longer applies.

#### IMPORTANT

See the section on Policy Removal Considerations for details on selecting a policy removal option.

9. Available for the My Documents folder only, choose one of the following options in the My Pictures Preferences area:
  - **Make My Pictures A Subfolder Of My Documents** to redirect My Pictures automatically to remain a subfolder of My Documents.
  - **Do Not Specify Administrative Policy For My Pictures** to remove My Pictures as a subfolder of My Documents and have the user profile determine the location of My Pictures.

#### NOTE

You can also specify if you want the My Pictures folder to follow the My Documents folder by setting the folder redirection properties for My Pictures. See the "[To direct the My Pictures folder to follow the redirection of the My Documents folder](#)" procedure for details.

10. Click OK.

- **To direct the My Pictures folder to follow the redirection of the My Documents folder**

1. Open a GPO linked to the site, domain, or OU containing the users whose My Pictures folders you want to direct.
2. In User Configuration, open Windows Settings, then double-click the Folder Redirection node.
3. Right-click My Pictures (a folder located in My Documents), then click Properties.
4. In the My Pictures Properties dialog box, in the Setting list, select Follow The My Documents Folder, then click OK.

## Policy Removal Considerations

Table 12.8 summarizes what happens to redirected folders and their contents when the group policy object no longer applies.

**Table 12.8** *Policy Removal Considerations*

<b>When the Move The Contents Of (special folder type) To The New Location Setting Is</b>	<b>And the Policy Removal Option Is</b>	<b>Results When Policy Is Removed Are</b>
Enabled	Redirect The Folder Back To The User Profile Location When Policy Is Removed	The special folder returns to its user profile location. The contents are copied, not moved, back to the user profile location. The contents are not deleted from the redirected location. The user continues to have access to the contents, but only on the local computer.
Disabled	Redirect The Folder Back To The User Profile Location When Policy Is Removed	The special folder returns to its user profile location. The contents are not copied or moved to the user profile location. <i>Caution</i> If the contents of a folder are not copied to the user profile location, the user can no longer see them.
Either Enabled or Disabled	Leave The Folder In The New Location When Policy Is Removed	The special folder remains at its redirected location. The contents remain at the redirected location. The user continues to have access to the contents at the redirected folder.

## Lesson Summary

In this lesson you learned how to redirect the folders containing a user's profile to a location on the network. Windows 2000 allows the following special folders to be redirected: Application Data, Desktop, My Documents, My Pictures, and Start Menu. You also learned that the Folder Redirection extension in the Group Policy snap-in is used to redirect special folders. Folder redirection can be set up to redirect special folders to a location according to security group membership, or redirect special folders to one location for everyone in the site, domain, or OU.