

Technology Accountant

Overview

This column review recent technological developments/ trends/ usages/ Tips n Tricks/ Applications for Accountants/ Highlights/ IT Funda/ IS Audit Funda.

This month IT Funda is on Sharing files on the network - the tips and tricks thereof. Continuing with this theme, we have also reviewed the IS Audit Funda regarding security issues and how to resolve them. Details of Router contribution are provided in the section on IT Quiz. Salient features of MS-Office 2003 (dubbed as Office 13) have been covered under is

IT Developments Pace and Outlook

Last month we mentioned about the slow down in the pace of IT developments and the need to keep moving ahead. Now, we are talking about the release of Beta Version of MS-Office 2003, the most popular Office Suite today, by Microsoft. Yes, things are moving ahead! Please do see the highlights on the said software in a subsequent section.

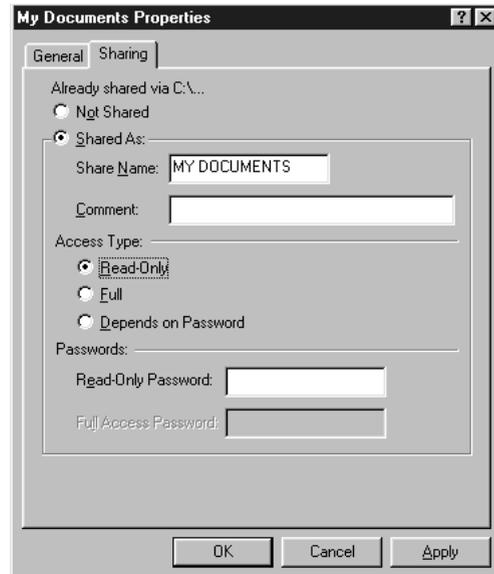
IT Funda - Sharing Snares

An interesting trend in India and abroad is to towards networking (LAN) and sharing files amongst users, particularly in Accounts Department. The CEO of an organization was surprised to see important Accounts Needless to say that all hell broke loose and everyone was told to set their house right immediately! Files were available for viewing and changing on the LAN/ intranet! One could not only see but also modify payment, budget, payroll and other files! Many share all their work files in 'My Documents!' The process is rather simple

- Click at 'My Computer' icon
- Click at C:\ Drive
- Select 'My Documents' by clicking at it
- Right Click on the mouse
- Select Sharing
- Click at "Shared As"
- Click at "Ok".

The following is the screen display when you share

a directory on your computer:



Voila, everyone on the network can now see the files. If 'Access Type' is full, they can also change file contents (increase salary by Rs.1,000/-) and add files there! This only highlights the need to implement a suitable policy within the office prohibiting such a practice and listing out the do's and don'ts regarding it. Critical issues and the ways/ means thereof have been discussed in subsequent parts of this article.

Suppose, you have a directory named SHARED on your desktop and you share it on your computer. How do you know that it is shared? One simple way is to look at the folder name. If it has the picture of a hand below it, it means that it is shared and users on the network can access contents therein..



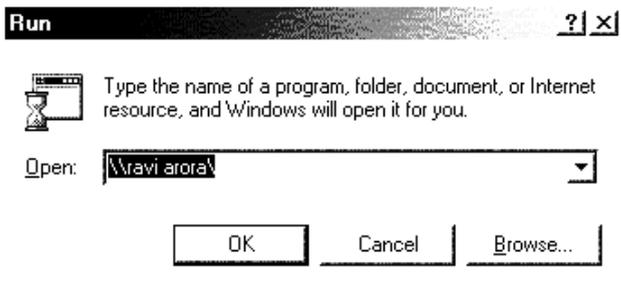
The above IT Funda has some Merits & De-Merits. The advantage is in making available files for review and modification within the department without redundancy and associated problems in copying of files on floppy, physical transfer, copying on other computers. The major disadvantage is security flaw of unauthorized access/ modification. This would be covered under the IS Audit Funda section.

IS Audit Funda

Sharing of files on LAN is good but others snooping

at it and making unauthorized changes therein is not. It may appear that the whole process of sharing is not acceptable considering IS Audit considerations! Well, here are some controls and checks that you may like to consider and implement:

- **Windows NT / 2000/ 2003 Server Login:** This process enforces login and authentication of users on the network. Hence, only authorized users are allowed on the network and we can ensure access thereby. Share level access to members of a group is one way. Another is to have a file server, which grants access to authorized personnel only.
- **Passwords for files:** It is possible to issue passwords to files made using the popular word processing (MS-Word) and spreadsheet (MS-Excel) software components of MS-Office software by M/s. Microsoft. This would prevent unauthorized personnel from accessing or changing the contents of files protected by password.
- **Hiding Network Shares:** Adding the dollar sign (\$) after the share name hides the share name. So, only people who know that such a share exist can access it. Let us assume that you know that a directory named ravi exists on proxy computer. To access this directory, you have to issue the command Start - Run - \\proxy\ravi and click at <Ok>. Alternatively, if you wish to see directories shared on the network with a computer named raviarora, you can issue the following command from screen that you get by clicking at Start and then selecting run screenshot of this is as follows:



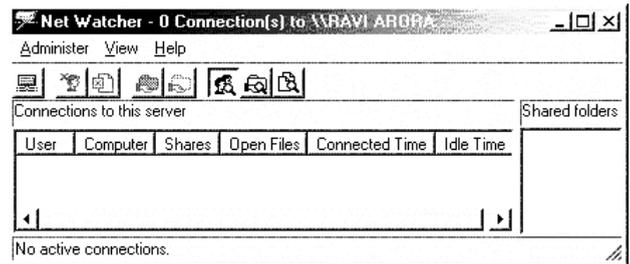
This would open the window with this share as follows:



- **Shared Directory Passwords:** Users can give password to provide READ access or FULL access to directories on their computer. If a directory has

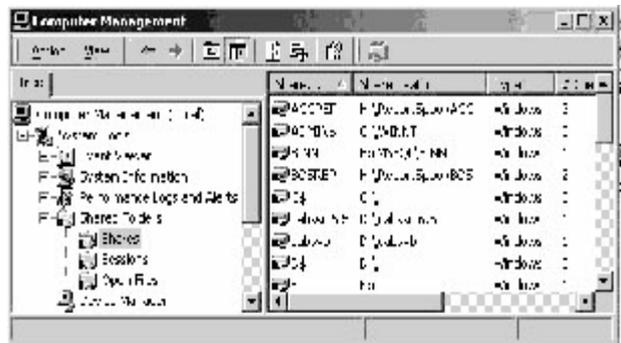
been shared with READ password, it can only be viewed by users if they provide the requisite password for this. If they provide the FULL password, they can not only view, but also change or add files to directories thus shared. We may incidentally mention that assigning password to a share is an integral part of sharing a directory, and is available as an option. Once you provide a password for READ or FULL access, you are asked to type them again, and confirm.

- **Net Watcher:** Windows 98/ 2000/ ME have a utility named Net Watcher to manage your shares and also see



who is sharing them! This is available under Start - Programs - Accessories - System Tools - Net Watcher. If you are not able to find it there, it is because it is not installed. To install Net Watcher, you have to go to My Computer - Control Panel - Add/ Remove Programs and click at Windows Setup tab and go to System Tools; then click at Details and select Net Watcher. You would have to reboot to activate this option.

- **Net Watcher in Windows XP/ 2000:** Net Watcher functionality is available under Setup - Control Panel —Administrative Tools - Computer Management - Shared Folders.



The above screen shows the shares available. You can choose to disable some of the shares. This would immediately stop them from looking at or making changes to your files. The following screen shows currently open sessions.

Term	What it is	What it is NOT
ISDN	It Still Does Nothing!	Integrated Services Digital Network
DOS	Defective Operating System!	Disk Operating System
IBM	I Blame Microsoft	International Business Machines
WWW	World Wide Wait!	World Wide Web
MIPS	Meaningless Indication of Processor Speed!	Million Instructions Per Second
COPY	What we have to do for H.W. & Tests as most of our time is used on the computer.	Command that enables you to replicate an item on the computer.
ERROR	The first and last mistake we did in getting involved with computers.	A computer condition caused by wrong command.
MENU	What we may never ever see after buying a computer!	A set of options on computer to choose from.
PROGRAMS	Those interesting things we used to see on television before we got hooked to the computer.	A set of instructions to achieve a specific task / objective.
WINDOW	Something you look for, to throw the computer, you loose important programs or data collected after days/ weeks/ months of effort!	Name of popular an operating system.

Well Well! There is always something interesting to learn or unlearn, discover or rediscover, forget and learn in more useful terms, view under candid camera! Please do share interesting real life situations by sending contributions to this column.

Flight Worthy Software - This story is about a group of computer engineers boarding a flight for an important assignment. The flight commander greeted them with his customary remarks and added that the

flight guidance and control auto pilot supplied by their company was being tested on this flight! Everyone on the flight was surprised and demanded an explanation. His reason for staying on for the flight was rather simple - he did not expect the plane to reach the runway! Where is the danger? Fortunately NOW, times are changing and software reliability is on the increase. But, an important lesson is learnt - you are prepared for the worst!

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