

Terminal Services and Roaming Profiles

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Q. Can roaming profiles be used to keep profiles uniform across all terminal servers in the server farm? Are there any restrictions on the use of roaming profiles?

A. Terminal Services Roaming Profiles are almost a necessity with a server farm. By storing profiles in a central location and loading the profile when logging in, the same desktop displays and the same settings are kept (including Agvance settings) regardless of what server is logged into. This helps to keep load balancing transparent.

To set up Terminal Services Roaming Profiles, first decide where to store the profiles. Map each user to the location of the profiles then use this information to fill out the *Terminal Services Profile* tab in *Active Directory Users and Computers*. This profile will only be used when logging into a terminal server. The Profile tab may be left blank.

Remember Agvance requires each user to have a unique profile and full rights over their profile (this includes the location where the profiles are stored).

Very Important: It is critical to ensure profiles are not shared between the local workstation and the Terminal Services/Citrix session. If both roaming profiles and Terminal Services Roaming Profiles are employed at the same time, ensure they are stored in separate places. Likewise, do not implement Terminal Services Roaming Profiles unless all the terminal servers users have access to are homogenous.

Other Considerations:

- It is advisable to use group policies to point each user's *My Documents* folder to the home folder on a file server. This will reduce logout times since the profile is uploaded back to the file server every time a user logs out and *My Documents* can become quite large. It will also keep servers from filling up with very large profiles.
- The constant loading and offloading of profiles on servers will cause fragmentation problems which will be especially noticeable if the profiles are stored on the system partition. Be sure to schedule regular defragmentations to combat this. If it becomes a problem, consider moving each server's *Documents and Settings* folder to a different partition.
- If the farm contains many servers, consider applying a group policy to delete cached profiles on those servers. Most of the cached profiles will not be up to date so there is little point in keeping them. A profile (minus the *My Documents* folder) is not huge, but if there are 100 or more users, it will add up to a lot of wasted space on each server. In a farm with just two or three servers, it is likely that the cached profiles on each server are nearly in sync with the roaming profiles and leaving them could save time at login.