TOP 10 TIPS TO IMPROVE TERMINAL SERVER PERFORMANCE AND EFFICENCY

1.) Sort your profiles out…
Profiles are the biggest cause of slow logons and many other issues in Terminal Server environments. Keeping these to a minimum size, deleting when unnecessary and generally managing them is a great place to start. There are various tools about such as UPHClean, delprof, as well as the Flexprofile kit. Other things to assist are the mandatory and roaming profile options available in the Windows server operating systems.

2.) Use Windows Group Policies…
Windows group policies are comprehensive and versatile. They can be tailored to make your Terminal server environment secure and user friendly. Using loopback policies is a great idea in Terminal Server environments as they allow you to specify policies that only apply when a user logs onto a Terminal server (for example disable the shutdown command). If they logon anywhere else such as to their laptop a different set of policies can be applied.

3.) Don’t store data on your Terminal Servers…
Of course this isn’t always possible if you have a very small amount of servers but generally speaking it’s best not to have any data on your Terminal Servers where possible. Policies, drive mappings and other tools can all be utilised to ensure that files are where they should be - on file servers.

4.) Image your Terminal Servers…
Once you have a newly built Terminal server configured the way you want it with no extra data on it it’s a great time to image your server. A third party tool such as Symantec’s ghost used in conjunction with other tools such as Newsid means you can have a server rebuilt and back in the farm within minutes. Likewise, if you buy a new server in of identical specification to your existing servers this too can be serving your users within minutes of it arriving on site. For detailed instructions on how to image a Citrix server click here.

5.) Test those applications…
Bunging an application on without testing is a sure fire way to get yourself in trouble. Even if you get away with it a few times you’re sure to come a cropper if you always take that approach. Thoroughly testing an application before deployment is a necessity in a live environment. Ideally a test lab using live users or tools like Loadrunner if you have the budget but failing that digging an old server or PC out and testing on that could save you a red face (or your job) later on.

6.) Reboots and Sessions…
Not everyone agrees with this one but I feel regular rebooting is a good thing. The fact that scheduled reboots are an available option in Citrix Presentation server suggests someone else does too. If applications do have a memory leak it will get progressively worse and hold onto resources until rebooted. Also set your sessions as you want them.
It’s frustrating for users if they are disconnected if they don’t move their mouse for two minutes but making sure there sessions are completely logged off when not in use frees up system resources.

7.) Pagefile size and location…
The pagefile on your Terminal servers should be off the system drive where possible. Also, set it to twice the amount of physical RAM in the server.

8.) Printing…
Printing in a Terminal server environment has always been a huge headache. A few simple tips can help keep your environment stable.
Keep the amount of drivers to a minimum, if particular print drivers are causing issues use the Universal driver where possible and try and ensure all your Terminal servers have the same drivers on to keep the users experience the same wherever they logon. This site is an excellent resource for Terminal Server Print problems:
http://www.printingsupport.com/

9.) Monitor your servers…
There are plenty of tools available to you. Citrix 4.5 Presentation Server now has health monitoring which alerts you of services not starting etc but regularly using tools like Citrix’s Resource Manager, Microsoft’s performance monitor and Server Performance advisor can help you stay alert and ahead of the game if used correctly.

10.) Load balance your servers…
In Citrix there are many different options other than the default load evaluators which people largely ignore. It’s usually not until an event such as several servers going down at one that you find they are configured incorrectly. For example if two of your servers go down and those users then try logging on to your one remaining server chances are it’s going to get overloaded and crash as well.

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