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Windows[®] Home Server

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Woody Leonhard

*Bestselling author of Windows Vista[™]
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Windows Home Server For Dummies

by Woody Leonhard



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About the Author

Curmudgeon, critic, and perennial “Windows Victim,” **Woody Leonhard** runs a fiercely independent Web site devoted to delivering the truth about Windows and Office, whether Microsoft likes it or not. With up-to-the-nanosecond news, observations, tips, and help, AskWoody.com has become the premier source of unbiased information for people who actually use the products.

Starting at the dawn of Windows 3.0, Woody has written more than 40 books, drawing an unprecedented six Computer Press Association awards and two American Business Press awards. Woody was one of the first Microsoft Consulting Partners and is a charter member of the Microsoft Solutions Provider organization. He’s widely quoted — and reviled — on the Redmond campus.

Woody moved to Phuket, Thailand, seven years ago. He lives in Patong with his wife, Duangkhae (better known by her Thai nickname “Add”); his father, George; and his ornery all-American beagle, Chronos. Add and a crew of 30 run Khun Woody’s Bakery and three Sandwich Shoppes in Phuket — one each in Patong, Laguna, and Chalong. If you’re ever in Phuket, feel free to drop by for the best bagels in Asia.

Dedication

To Duangkhae T. Leonhard. May our future be as happy
as our past. August 26, 2007, Le Meridien, Phuket,
Thailand

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Introduction

When I first heard that Microsoft was working on a new, supposedly dumbed-down version of Windows Server for use by mere mortals, I let out a groan. Literally. Years ago, Windows Small Business Server had the same original premise that Windows Home Server has today — a trimmed-down version of Windows Server for people who don't wear white lab coats. I worked on the first beta versions of Small Business Server, and I carry emotional scars about it to this day. So it was with great trepidation, and more than a little skepticism, that I installed an early beta test copy of Windows Home Server on my own home network. I came away more than a little amazed.

Windows Small Business Server rates as a snarly, Byzantine, overwhelming glob of software that any sane person avoids like anopheles mosquitoes. Installing a gigantic Windows Server program like Exchange Server on your home network is like parking the *QE II* in your driveway. The average home user needs the fancy Windows Server Web hosting (and its ubiquitous security holes) like a jogger needs a wheelbarrow. Windows Server in *my* home? No way. I've got better ways to waste my time, ya know?

Fortunately, Windows Home Server is different. Way different. In fact, the only similarity I can find between Windows Server and Windows **Home** Server is the name.

If you have a network at home or in your small office, and you haven't yet tried Windows Home Server, you're in for a treat. It's the first Microsoft product I know about that goes in slick, with very little fuss, and performs useful tricks right out of the box. You don't need a Ph.D. in Windows Server Arcana. In fact, if you never do anything more than stick the WHS box on your network and forget about it, you can sleep better at night, knowing that your data's backed up. And you needn't lift a finger.

About This Book

This book shows you how to get Windows Home Server to peacefully coexist with your network — and what to do with WHS once it's in. In usual *For Dummies* fashion, I show you how to accomplish what you want to do with a minimum of fuss and a maximum of clarity — one very straightforward step at a time — and I promise I won't put you to sleep in the process.

In addition to showing you what you need to know today, in this book I also try to lay the groundwork for your future Adventures in Home Server Land, fully realizing that new killer applications could arrive any day. That's because Windows Home Server rates as more than an operating system — it's a *platform*. (At least, that's what Microsoft's marketing department calls it.) I fully expect that WHS will take on a life of its own as more and more software developers discover that a home network can

do more than turn on the Jacuzzi every afternoon and warn you when you're running out of milk. We're just beginning to see applications appearing that are designed specifically for Windows Home Server — the nascent platform is just beginning to, uh, plat. These are exciting times, and WHS is an exciting product!

The Cheat Sheet at the beginning of the book lists my choices as the most important things you need to know about WHS. Tear it out, tape it to your monitor, pass it around to other folks with home networks, and be sure to tell 'em Woody shares their pain.

Foolish Assumptions

I assume that you already have a home or small office network, and that you know how to use either Windows XP or Windows Vista — possibly both — depending on what kind of computers inhabit your network.

If you have an Xbox 360 and you want to use it with Windows Home Server (believe me, you do!), I assume you know how to get your Xbox cranked up.

If you're running Windows Small Business Server, you can follow along here, too: I won't tell you anything in particular about SBS, but Windows Home Server backs up SBS-connected PCs like ringin' a bell.

How This Book Is Organized

You can read the book from front to back, or you can dive right into the chapter of your choice. Either way works just fine. Any time a concept is mentioned that isn't covered in depth in that chapter, you'll find a cross-reference to another chapter to find out more. If you're looking for something specific, check out either the table of contents or the index.

Part I: Getting Windows Home Server to Serve

If you haven't yet bought a Windows Home Server, look at this part for a few key considerations — and limitations. If WHS didn't come preinstalled on its own box, I show you how to install it. Then I step you through setting up the box and plugging it in.

Part II: Setting Up the Network

Here you find out how to get WHS going for the first time — and you *don't* set up WHS from the WHS computer itself. Discover the art of plugging computers into the grid, adding users, establishing passwords wisely, adding printers, and using the built-in shared folders.

Part III: Making the Most of Multimedia

This is the part that puts the WOW in WHS: getting music, photos, videos, recorded TV, and movies to work across your WHS network. Discover what you can and can't do (Digital Rights Management — what I call “C.R.A.P. music and movies” — will drive ya nuts). This part is also where I explain how to hook up an Xbox to play music and TV shows stored on your Windows Home Server.

Part IV: Sharing in the Wild

Another whiz-bang feature of WHS is shared folders. Here you find out how to control access to the shared folders, and set up Remote Access, so you can log on to your WHS network and any computer on the network, from anywhere in the world.

Part V: Backing Up

B-o-r-i-n-g. Backup elicits snores until the very moment your hard drive dives into the bit bucket. That's when you'll wish you had read this part. WHS contains a remarkably smart, capable, hands-off backup system. Spend a few minutes getting to know it. Then remember this part of the book the next time your computer crashes, or the kids completely screw up one of their machines.

Part VI: Staying Alive and Well

It's 10:00. Do you know where your children are? WHS won't tell you that much, but it will tell you whether their PC has its antivirus programs up-to-date, or if the latest backup failed because the cat chewed the USB cable. This part also talks about getting into the WHS box, adding and retiring hard drives, and the like.

Part VII: The Part of Tens

So you gotta ask yourself, why isn't this Part X? I dunno. Sometimes life doesn't quite turn out the way you planned, eh? This part is my favorite part because it points you in new directions, giving tantalizing glimpses into the new kinds of WHS application software currently being built in a garage near you. Life is short. Eat dessert — and read the Part of Tens — first.

Icons Used in This Book

While perusing this book, you'll notice some icons in the margins screaming for your attention. Each one has a purpose.



When I'm jumping up and down on one foot with an idea so absolutely cool that I can't stand it anymore — that's when I stick in a Tip icon. You can browse through any chapter and hit the very highest points by jumping from Tip to Tip.



You don't need to memorize the stuff marked with this icon, but you should try to remember that this icon indicates something special that you need to know in future WHS endeavors.



Achtung! ¡Cuidado! Anyplace you see a Warning icon, you can be sure that I've been burnt — badly — in the past. Mind your fingers. These situations are really, really mean suckers.



If your hat's propeller doesn't work very well, you can skip these snippets. But if you want to understand the *why* behind the *how*, these icons point the way.



Here's how I call out the inside story — pointed facts that Microsoft might find embarrassing, school-of-hard-knocks advice, the kind of straight (sometimes politically incorrect) talk that shows you what's really happening. Hit my Web site, AskWoody.com, for the latest.

Where to Go from Here

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You can contact me at woody@AskWoody.com. I can't answer all the questions I get — man, there ain't enough hours in the day! — but I take some of the best and post them on AskWoody.com frequently.

Speaking of AskWoody.com, drop by! I bet you'll be pleasantly surprised by the straight story, and coverage of important news items that you can't find anywhere else. And I have hundreds of volunteers who have written more than half a million answers to computer

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