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Introduction

Significant progress has been made in the working methods in moving towards electronic working. During the last few SA plenaries we have had reports from the MCC showing the increase in use of wired and wireless LAN equipment. We now have recommendations on the 3GPP website at <http://www.3gpp.org> as to how to set up a LAN at a TSG or working group meeting.

Problems

However we are still experiencing some problems at some meetings:

1. People open documents directly from the server
2. Network congestion sometimes causes significant problems
3. Every meeting has different instructions on how to gain access
4. Documents deleted from the server are unwittingly put back there by users synchronising

At these TSGs#12 we have access to the documents via ftp and http for the first time. This allows all kinds of useful information to be disseminated via user's web browsers using simply <http://server>. Whilst it might not be possible to make things this simple at every meeting, it should be possible to provide FTP and HTTP access using something like <http://10.10.10.10/>. It is suggested that all delegates try this out before the end of the meeting - using HTTP to download individual documents and FTP (FTP client) to download in bulk or upload.

A shift from using Microsoft Network sharing to using HTTP and FTP has many attractions including the following:

1. Opening documents directly from the server is no longer a problem, as a local copy is made by HTTP and FTP clients before opening.
2. It is less likely that someone could inadvertently add a virus to an exe file on the server - with open network drives and drive sharing this is a risk and we have had a few cases of viruses appearing on servers.
3. Using Microsoft Network sharing can cause individual PCs to lock up particularly in network congestion situations. Shared drives may also be adding to network congestion problems
4. Access to the network should be much simpler, no need to log into network or network drives, just use automatic IP address allocation and then you should be able to use FTP and HTTP immediately if you know the IP address of the server.
5. FTP synchronising tools allow one-way synchronisation which stops the effect of putting documents back on the server which were deleted earlier by the meeting administrators.

In addition, it would be useful for the Wireless LAN users to be given the names (ESSIDs) of the Access Points which are running in the meeting rooms as not all configurations work well without knowing the appropriate name (ESSID).

Examples

For setting up a meeting, it is advisable for hosts to check the meeting suggestions on <http://www.3gpp.org>.

For a small meeting, a wireless only solution can be provided using just an access point in the room. This was done, for example at the User Profile adhoc 11-12 June in Kista. The configuration used for the server (one delegate's PC) was:

Windows 95

VDHCP to assign IP addresses <http://www.pcsc.co.uk/>

IP address of server: 10.10.10.10

IP address pool: 10.10.10.21 to 10.10.10.254

Xitami http and ftp server <http://www.imatix.com/>

This was very simple to set up, especially as the software was already on the PC in question. All that was needed was some minor reconfiguration (IP address) to the server, placing the Access Point in the room and powering it up.

Virtually all delegates with PCs have HTTP browsers and some form of FTP client. However the following two programs have synchronisation functions which are useful to download documents both before the meetings and at the meetings:

FTP sync (see tools\ftpsync on the server or <http://www.fileware.com>)

FTP voyager (see temp\ftpvsetup.exe on the server or <http://www.rhinosoft.com>)

These tools both allow one-way sync (i.e. download from the server to the client only)

Conclusion

There are some steps we can take to improve the user experience and TSG-SA should move forwards and adopt those mechanisms which provide the most robust, resilient service which enables the work to take place easily.