

# File sharing in Windows XP

## Advantages

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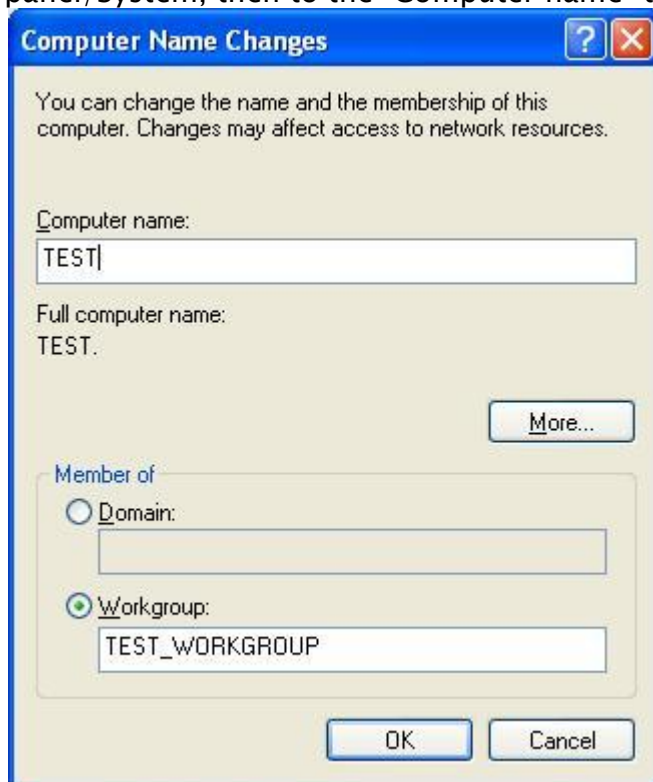
**File sharing** involves making the content of one or more directories available through the network. All Windows systems have standard devices making it easy to share the content of a directory. However, file sharing may lead to security problems since, by definition, it gives other users access to the content of a part of the hard drive.

As a result, it is essential that you share only directories for which it would not be extremely important if their content were revealed (or destroyed), Furthermore, you are strongly advised against sharing a whole partition of your hard drive. This operation is **strongly discouraged if you do not trust the other network users!**

## Machine names

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Firstly, you need to give a specific machine name. To do so, simply to go Control panel/System, then to the "Computer name" tab and then "*Change...*".



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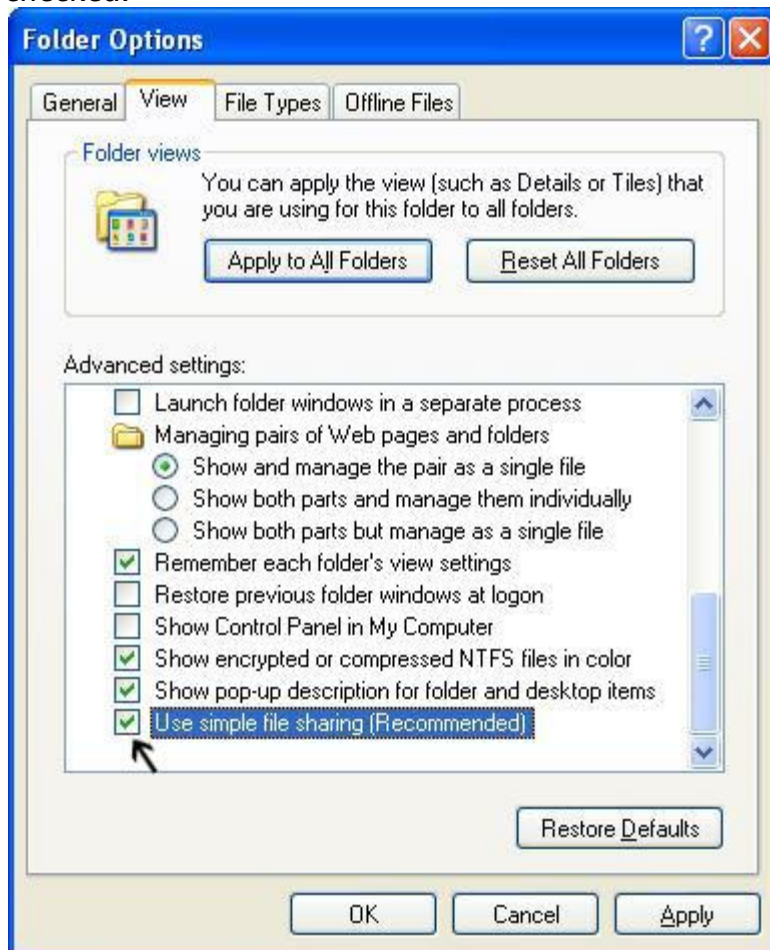
You need to have administrator privileges to perform this operation.

## Simple file sharing

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Simple file sharing is the sharing mode that is activated by default (and the only mode available in Windows XP Home, or Windows XP family edition). It makes it possible to globally share, for the whole workgroup, a directory's files, with no restrictions or passwords.

It is simple to use. In Windows XP however, you need to enable simple file sharing by opening My computer then *Tools/Folder options... /View..* At the bottom of the scrollable list, make sure the *Use simple file sharing (recommended)* option is checked.



To share a folder, simply right-click the directory you want to share, then select the *Sharing and Security...* option



## Administrative shares and hidden shares

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When the name of a shared resource ends with the character "\$", that means it is hidden, or that it doesn't appear in the list of resources.

By default, Microsoft Windows systems have hidden administrative shares to let the administrator of a machine access the machine's resources through the network.

The default administrative shares, which can be accessed only by the administrator, are as follows:

- **C\$**: Access to the root partition or volume. The other partitions are also accessible by their letter followed by the "\$" character;
- **ADMIN\$**: Access to the %systemroot% directory, making it possible to manage a machine on the network.
- **IPC\$**: Enables communication between network processes.
- **PRINT\$**: Remote access to printers.

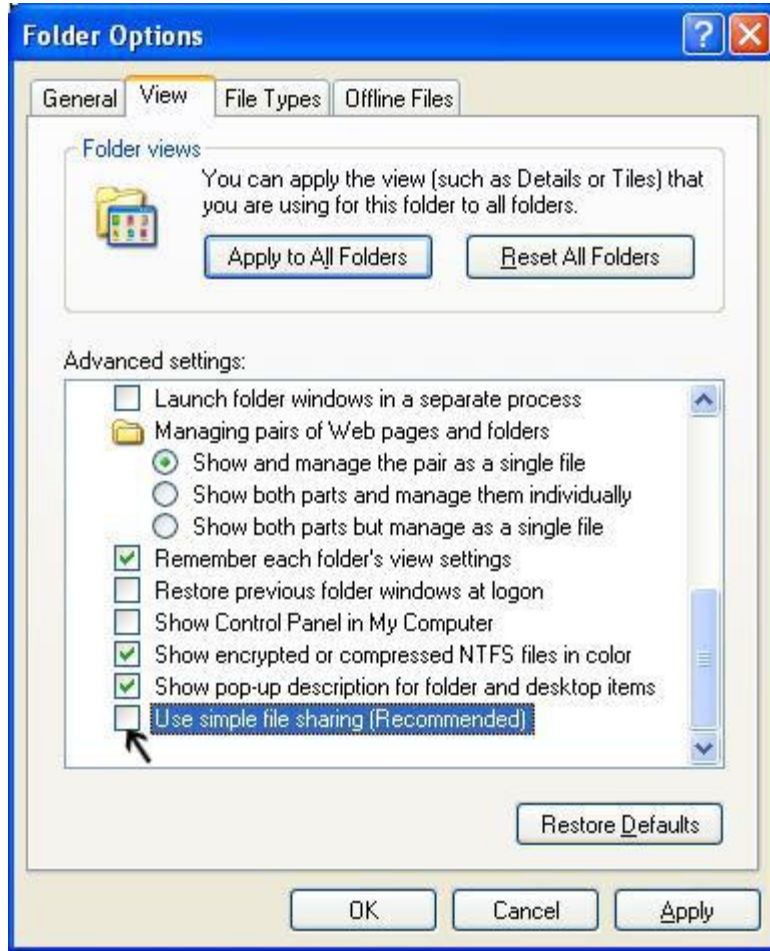
To view and manage the computer's administrative shares, simply go to *Control panel/Administrative tools/Computer management/Shared folders/Shares*. An alternative is to right-click My computer and select *Manage*.

## Advanced file sharing

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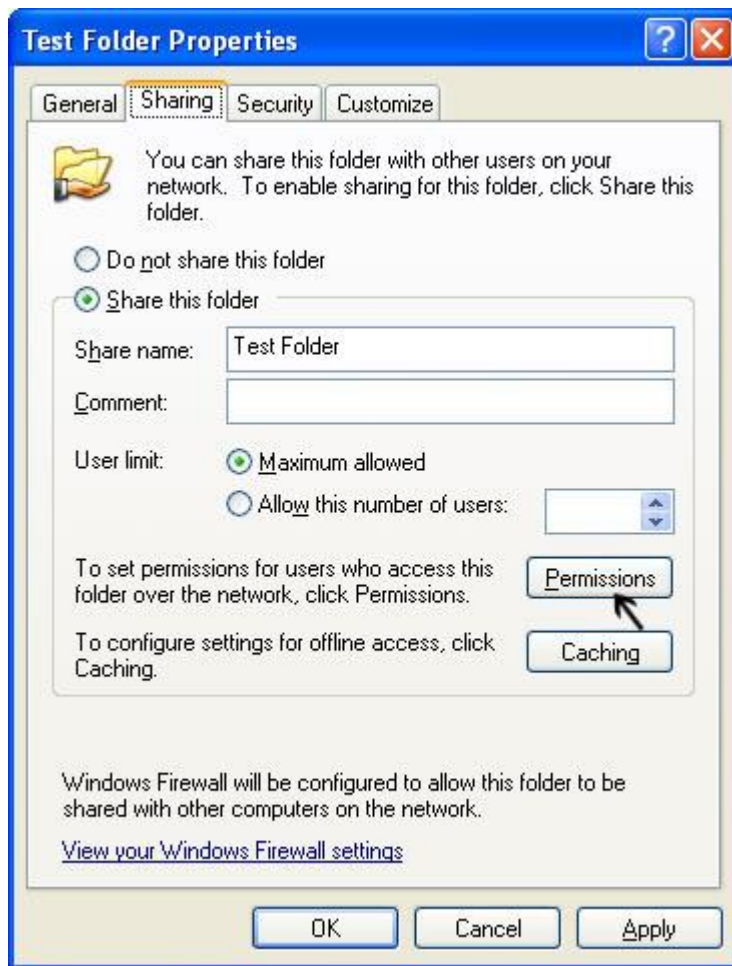
Advanced file sharing, available only in Windows XP and higher, involves defining access permissions to shared resources by user or group of users. Unlike simple file sharing, users have to be identified before shared resources can be accessed.

To set up advanced file sharing, you firstly need to disable simple file sharing by opening My computer, then *Tools/Folder options... /View..* At the bottom of the scrollable list, make sure the *Use simple file sharing (recommended)* option is unchecked.

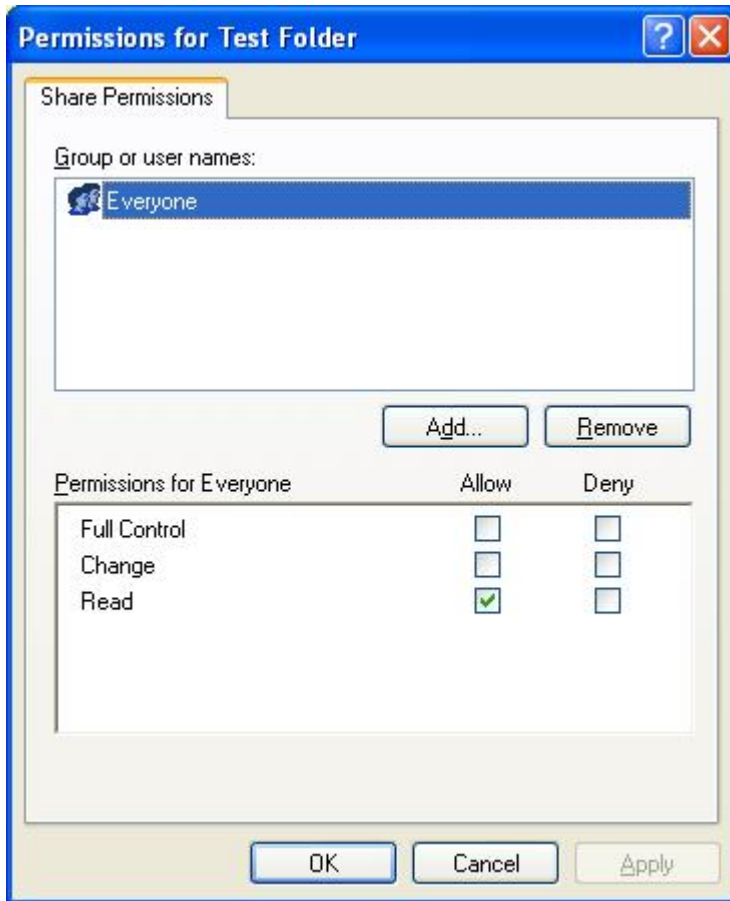


Secondly, you need to create as many user accounts as necessary. To create user accounts, simply click *User accounts* in the control panel, then *Add*. If an identical account (with the same password) exists on the remote machine, used by the user, he will not need to enter his password to access the share.

When sharing a resource (right-click, then *Sharing and security*), simply click the button *Permissions*:



To restrict access to the shared resource, you need to remove access to "Everyone" and then give access only to authorized users. Anonymous access may potentially be created thanks to the "Guest" account.



## Using a shared resource

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There are two methods for using a shared folder:

- Direct use of the resource via its address. The address of a shared resource has the following form:

`\\computer\share_name`

*computer* represents the computer's name or IP address and *share\_name* corresponds to the name given to the shared resource.

- The connection of a network drive, making it possible to link the shared resource to a virtual drive letter. To connect a network drive, simply open the file browser (Start/Run/"browse"), then in the *Tools* menu, select *Connect a network drive...* Choose an available drive letter and enter the folder name.

## Diagnostics

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If access to shared resources doesn't work, it may be due to one of the following reasons:

- The network connection between the machines is incorrect. In this case [diagnose the network](#);
- The users do not belong to the same domain.
- The computers on the local area network must have the same subnet mask. You can easily check this using the [ipconfig](#) command.
- A firewall (or antivirus) on the computer sharing the resource, on the computer accessing the resource or on the network is blocking access. Check the firewall's settings, and if necessary temporarily disable the firewall to find out whether the problem is related;
- The maximum number of users is 5 in Windows XP family and 10 in Windows XP professional. For more information:
  - [Limit the number of input connections in Windows XP – Article F314882 of the Microsoft Knowledge Base](#)
- A special character (such as a space) in the name of a shared resource can block access for older operating systems.
- The rights of the [NTFS](#) file system can interfere with sharing rights since restrictions have priority over permissions.

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