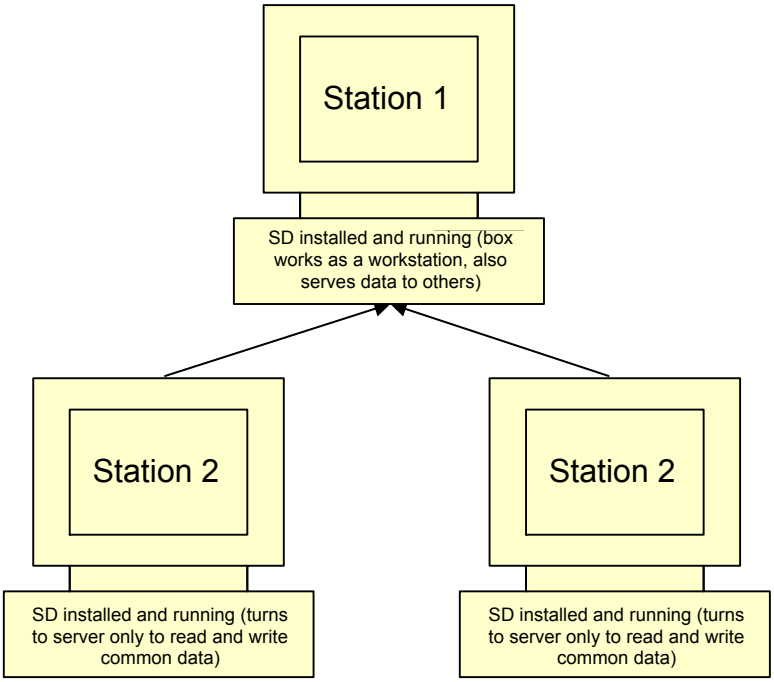
# How to Configure ServiceDesk as a Thin-Client System

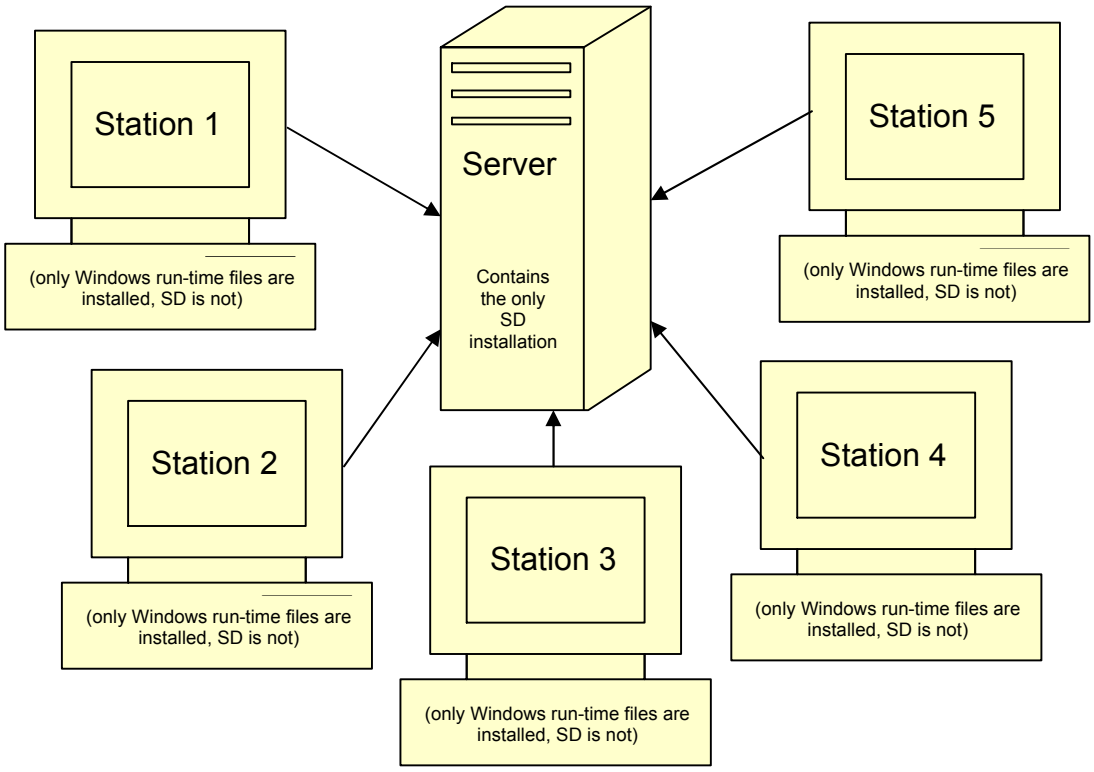
As of mid-2008, the ServiceDesk manual continues to describe an install setup where ServiceDesk is installed at every station. Only data is shared at the server (in other words, other than the shared data, each station operates independently). In the last few years, we've come to think that an alternative setup has overall advantages, at least for operations that have more than just a few desks. This alternative involves installing ServiceDesk at just the server, with all stations operating off that single installation. Thus, in this setup both data and the installed program are shared.

For convenience, we are using the term "Thick-Client" to reference the traditional setup, and "Thin-Client" for the alternative (the terms might have somewhat different meanings in other contexts).

## Typical "Thick-Client" Scenario



# Typical "Thin-Client" Scenario




Advantages of the Thin-Client setup consist, in general, of easier administration. There's only a single install of ServiceDesk to worry about updating and maintaining. This is true in respect to both the program itself, and the set of CstmrDbase Indexes which otherwise (i.e., in Thick-Client mode) must be updated daily at each station. The primary[1] disadvantage is that, when ready to update ServiceDesk at the central server, it's essential that ServiceDesk be closed at every station (otherwise, since the program is in use, Windows will not permit its replacement).[2]

[1] One of our clients pointed out another small disadvantage. If your server crashes and you're in thick-client mode, it's very easy to have ServiceDesk quickly up and running again. Based on the fact that SD-Backup has maintained a current copy of the data on one or more of the stations (or, at least it will have, *assuming* you've had it running as you should), all you have to do is copy that backup data into the \netdata folder on such a station, make it your new (and perhaps temporary) server, re-map the stations to point to it instead of the now defunct server, and you're back in operation (the whole task, say in a 5 station network, could be performed in less than five minutes). If you're in thin-client mode, by contrast, you're going to have to create the whole folder and file structure on your new/temporary server—which, assuming a knowledgeable operator, is likely to consume closer to 15 minutes worth of work. We don't think this is a huge issue, since the likelihood of server crash is relatively small, and making a new/temporary server out of one of your stations is not a huge task, regardless.

[2] Even that's minor, however, because the ServiceDesk update dialog will offer to close all such stations for you.

To go Thin-Client (and assuming that you're doing an initial, new setup), refrain from installing ServiceDesk at all stations except the server. Instead (and for each station), go to the ServiceDesk downloads page at the Rossware website (http://rossware.net/downloads) and run the program called "System Files Installer." This puts in some simple Windows operating files that are needed on the local box (i.e.,, even when the program is being run from the server).

If you're converting from Thick- to Thin-Client (and therefore already have ServiceDesk installed at each station, you can simply remove each station's c:\sd folder, plus any shortcuts (within the Programs menu or on the Desktop) that point to programs within it.

Next, if ServiceDesk is not already installed at the server, please do so.

At this point (and assuming you've shared the \sd folder on the server and mapped to it at each station, which is a task that's common to either setup), the next step is, at each station, to create a Desktop shortcut to the ServiceDesk program file as found on the server.

This is easy.

Begin by assuring you're logged into Windows in exactly the same manner as will be the particular person for whom you're setting up this station. Open your Windows My Computer utility. Find the letter drive that you've used for your mapped path to the \sd folder on the server. Within that folder, find the Servdesk.exe program file. Make a Desktop shortcut by clicking down on the file reference with your right mouse button, then dragging to an open space on your desktop. When you release the button, you'll see a popup menu from which you should select the option: Create shortcut here. That places a shortcut on the Desktop, which may then be used to start the program.[3]

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[3] There is one added and little frustration you'll encounter in most systems. Specifically, when you go to run *any* program file that resides on another computer's drive (as will be done when following the procedure as here described), you'll get a little Windows security warning, asking for confirmation that you do, indeed, want to run the program (this simply doesn't happen if you're running from a program that's on a local drive). We've discovered that many offices are getting this warning at every station, every time someone starts ServiceDesk. Though it's a small annoyance, it's not one you should have to cope with. To correct, you just have to tell Windows that the server computer in your network is a trustworthy source. To do so, please follow these steps: (1) Open Internet Explorer and click on *Tools* from its menu bar. (2) From the dropdown, pick *Internet Options*. (3) From the tabs at top of the form that now appears, pick *Security*. (4) In the Security page, look for the zone selection area, and pick *Local intranet*, then click on the *Sites* button immediately below. (5) In the new box that now appears, click the *Advanced* button. (6) In the *Local intranet* form that now appears, look for the box labeled "*Add this Web site to the zone*"; in that box, type the name of your server, then click on the *Add* button. (7) Confirm your choice by clicking on *OK*, then work your out from the remaining chain of forms you've loaded.

With the above done, you should no longer that annoying Windows security warning.

BTW, if you need help determining your server's name, you can find it (along with other useful information) near the top-right corner of ServiceDesk's *About* form (available under *File Functions* in ServiceDesk's Main Menu).

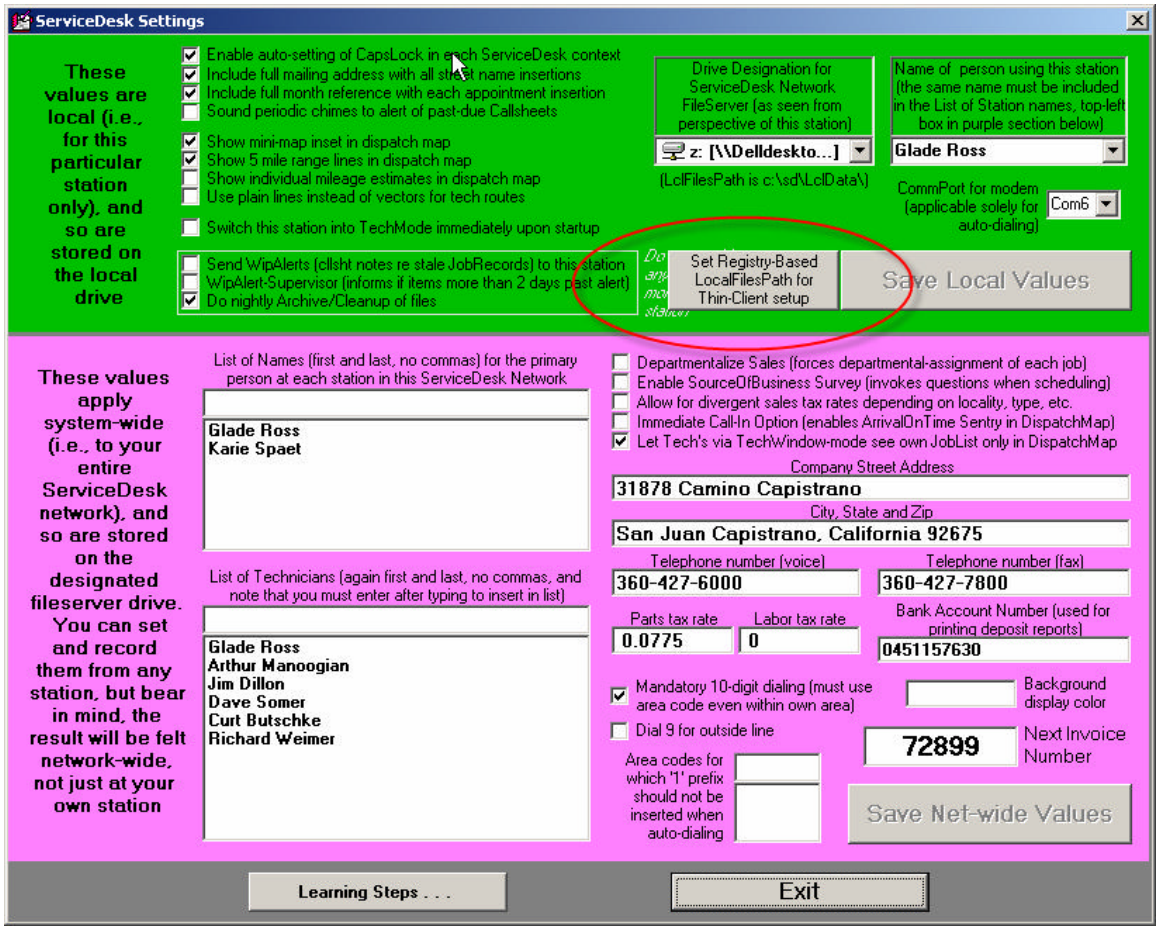
At this point, ServiceDesk will run fine from each station for which you've done this – fine, except for one impediment, and this has directly to do with the fact that you're now in Thin-Client mode.

If you remember, back in Thick-Client mode ServiceDesk uses it's local folder setup to, among other things, store some files that keep track of information that's particular to the local user (such as, for example, that user's name and preferences). Now, in this mode, you have no such local folder setup. In fact, unless you tell it to do otherwise, ServiceDesk is going to assume (erroneously) that the folder setup on the server is local to the user, and put local preferences (including user name) there.

This might be fine if there was only one user in the system, but not when there are more. I might, for example, go to the Settings form and set my name as Wilma Flintstone, and it would stay as that just fine until Betty Rubble went from her station to set hers. Suddenly, I'd find the system thought I was Betty Rubble too.

To overcome this problem, we do one thing special in ServiceDesk to accommodate the Thin-Client setup.

Specifically (again, after assuring that, at a particular station, we're logged into Windows in exactly the same manner as will be the particular person for whom we're setting up the installation), we go to the Settings form. As per normal, in the upper-right box we place the name of the user. But, contra to normal, we don't yet click on the Save Local Values button. Instead, we first hold down the Ctrl button on our keyboard. This causes a normally-not-visible button to appear, as follows:




Simply click on that button, and follow the prompts.

What the above does, simply, is place a folder on the server (as opposed to on the local drive) whose purpose is to hold the files that are particular to the user.

That's all there is to it. Do this at each station (and for each user), and you've fully converted (or perhaps originally setup for) Thin-Client usage.

Congratulations.