

## Networking Rentpro under Windows

How to setup Rentpro to network under Windows:

### Terminology

**Server:** the computer where Rentpro is located.

**Workstations:** computers which operate Rentpro, usually by communicating with a server.

Often we refer to the server as the single computer where Rentpro is located, but a server also can function as a workstation. Technically, a workstation is any computer which operates Rentpro.

In what follows, an example is frequently referred to in which there are 3 computers networked together as a server computer and two other workstations. In this setup, there are 3 workstations total, with one computer being both the server and Workstation 1. Rentpro does not limit the number of workstations you have active but some networking systems do. Also, this example is for running under Windows, but Rentpro supports many networks. The setup is similar, but the switch passed to Rentpro would be different. A key of these switches will be displayed on the screen if you run RPX.EXE without any switches.

The following information assumes you know how to setup a network in Windows and how to map network drives.

### Overview

The Rentpro system usually is set up in a folder called Rentpro. Within the Rentpro folder are files shared by all workstations and also subdirectories which contain files specific for each workstation. For example, if you have a server with two computers attached and you are going to use the server as a workstation, then there should be three workstation folders named WS1, WS2, and WS3. By convention, we normally call the Server Workstation 1. The other two computers you attach to the server would be called Workstation 2 and Workstation 3. When Rentpro is installed as a single user system, only WS1 is created. When changing the system to a network configuration, create WS2 and WS3 folders and copy the contents of WS1 into these folders. In order for the program to know which workstation it is running on, an environment variable would need to be set in the autoexec.bat file. This is done by adding a line to the autoexec.bat file, such as SET WSNR=1 for workstation 1 (the server), SET WSNR=2 for workstation 2, etc. In Windows 2000, set environment variables like this by right clicking on "My Computer" and going to the Advanced Tab.

Each workstation reads a text file which lists the folders that it will use. The file for workstation 1 is workstat.1, for workstation 2 it is workstat.2, etc. Following is an example of the file workstat.2:

```
F:\RENTPRO\WS2  
F:\RENTPRO\WS2  
F:\RENTPRO  
F:\RENTPRO\XPORT
```

The first line is the workstation folder; the second line is the report folder. Usually these are both the same folder, but in some cases you may want the workstation to read reports from the same folder as another workstation. In that case, you could set up that workstation to read a different folder for reports. The third line is the shared folder directory, and the fourth line is the communications folder used for home office communications. You can edit these lines using a text editor so that they have the correct drive letter and path statements. In the example above, the workstation has mapped the server drive as F: Although we usually recommend specifying a drive letter, you do not have to specify a drive. For example, a folder name of \RENTPRO is valid. In such a case, the system will use the default drive of the system and so it would be important that the default drive is the server drive.

The program is loaded by a batch file called RP.BAT This file calls the actual program, which is named RPX.EXE RPX.EXE has an associated memory overlay file called RPX.OVR The line in RP.BAT that calls

RPX.EXE needs to have a switch edited from D (D=DOS Standalone) to M (M=Microsoft Network).

Another consideration in having the program changed to networking is to edit a file called UPDFINIS.BAT. This file is called when an update to the program is run. It should contain some lines which copy any update files designated for the workstations to the appropriate workstation folders. The update files are copied by the update program to the folder called WSUPD. So, for example, if you have 3 computers, have two lines such as "copy wsupd ws2" and "copy wsupd ws3".

## **Printers**

In order to print from Rentpro to a Network printer, a printer port needs to be captured. Rentpro knows printer ports as LPT1, LPT2, LPT3, etc. Therefore, if you want output going to LPT2 to go to a printer elsewhere on the network, you would have that printer capture LPT2.

Which port Rentpro uses for various printer functions is designated in PROFILE.DEF, which is a text file located in the shared Rentpro folder. If another text file called PORTS.DEF exists within the workstation folder, its settings override the settings in PROFILE.DEF. The PORTS.DEF file is used in cases where each workstation needs different output settings from the main settings designated in PROFILE.DEF. All these files are text files and may be edited with a text editor. When editing these files, be careful not to add additional lines at the bottom.

If you mix different types of printers across the network, the setup gets a little more complicated. Within each workstation folder is a file called PRINTER.DEF. This is a printer driver file which is formatted as a text file. If you use different types of printers, you will need to add a printer driver file for each printer used. The way Rentpro does this is by looking for printer drivers designated with a number. If PRINTER1.DEF exists, then any output created for LPT1 will be formatted using printer codes from PRINTER1.DEF rather than PRINTER.DEF. Likewise, output created for LPT2 will use codes for PRINTER2.DEF if that file exists. If reports are being sent to the screen, they use printer codes from PRINTER.DEF. If later these reports are redirected to LPT1, LPT2, or LPT3 by choosing "Reprint Last Report," keep in mind that they are not reformatted with new printer codes. Therefore, PRINTER.DEF is a default printer code file. It should contain the printer codes for the printer used most of the time for reports.

In the workstation folder should be various default printer driver files, such as PRINTER.IBM, PRINTER.HP, PRINTER.EPS, PRINTER.OKI, etc. You may copy these folders over to PRINTER.DEF. For example, if you have an HP laser printer, you could copy PRINTER.HP to PRINTER.DEF and that HP printer driver will be all set up. If you have an IBM compatible dot matrix printer on LPT1 and an HP laser printer on LPT2 (or as a networked printer which captures LPT2), then you would copy PRINTER.IBM to PRINTER1.DEF and PRINTER.HP to PRINTER2.DEF. If your laser printer will be used mostly for reports, you also would copy PRINTER.HP over to PRINTER.DEF so that using the Reprint Last Report option would work properly.

Keep in mind that the printer drivers are located in each workstation directory, so if you setup one workstation and you want the other workstations set up the same way, you must copy what you have done to each workstation directory (WS2, WS3, etc.).

## **Alternate Profiles**

In some cases when computers are networked, there may be situations where you want to have an individualized profile for a workstation. In such cases, you can copy PROFILE.DEF to the appropriate workstation folder (e.g., WS3) and rename it to PROFILEW.DEF. In this case, PROFILEW.DEF will override any settings specified in PROFILE.DEF for that particular workstation. If you do this, please remember to edit the UPDFINIS.BAT file to update this profile during future updates. This is done by adding a line such as, "PROFSET WS3\PROFILEW.DEF" which will cause the workstation profile (PROFILEW.DEF) to be updated when an update is run on the system. Please keep in mind that in most cases, you do not need alternate profiles. We discourage you from using them because they add complexity when changes are made to the system. Only if you are sure you must have some unique settings for a workstation which are only specified in PROFILE.DEF should you consider using them. Keep in mind that ports specified in PROFILE.DEF can be overridden by changing settings in the PORTS.DEF file specified in a workstation folder.

## **Summary of Steps to Establish Networking**

1. Create the subdirectories in Rentpro that are needed (WS2, WS3, etc.). Remember to copy the content of WS1 into these new folders.

2. Edit AUTOEXEC.BAT to have SET WSNR=2 (for Workstation 2) or SET WSNR=3 (for Workstation 3).
3. Create and/or edit Workstat.1, Workstat.2, Workstat.3, etc. to have the correct paths. Each workstation requires a unique folder on the first line (e.g., WS2, WS3). Make sure you map the server drive in Windows and indicate that you want Windows to reconnect that drive at logon. Experience suggests that it would be best to choose a drive letter that would work on all workstations and make them the same letter. For example, if you map the server drive to all workstations as drive F, then editing paths and creating shortcuts is easier.
4. Edit RP.BAT to pass the correct switch to RPX.EXE. Look for RPX /D and change the /D (D=DOS Stand alone system) to /M (M=Microsoft Networks used in Windows).
5. Create a shortcut on each workstation which will execute RP.BAT on the server.
6. Edit UPDFINIS.BAT to copy update files in WSUPD to each workstation folder.
7. Setup the printer driver files as discussed above. If network printers are being used, set up the captures appropriately.
8. If you are connecting long distance over a slow connection, you can speed up start up time by having a local copy of the program on the workstation. As long as the path statements point to the server properly, the program itself can load from the workstation. While this will result in faster load times, realize that future updates of the program only update the copy existing in the Rentpro folder. It would be your responsibility to update the workstation copy of the program files (RPX.EXE and RPX.OVR) to that local workstation drive.

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