

# Using STSADM to Copy Sites Collections in SharePoint Products and Technologies 2003

## Introduction

There will always be times that you are required to copy content from one Windows SharePoint Services site to another; either because you wish to move a pilot site's content to it's permanent home, or you are migrating content from one server to another, or you are simply looking for a backup strategy and do not wish to buy in additional third party item level recover solutions.

In this paper we will take a look at using STSADM to copy a complete site collection from one location to another. Remember, STSADM can only backup and restore entire site collections.

## Using the STSADM Command

STSADM is a command line administration tool that is installed automatically with Windows SharePoint Services. It's located in the bin folder of what is commonly called the 60 hive, and its full path is as follows:

```
C:\program files\common files\microsoft shared\web server extensions\60\bin\stsadm.exe
```

You define what you require the STSADM command to do by specifying an operator with the `-o` switch, followed by any additional parameters that are then required. Whilst STSADM has a number of operators for the tasks that it can perform, the ones that we are interested in are as follows:

```
-o enumsites  
-o backup  
-o restore
```

Whilst the backup and restore operators are self explanatory in what functions they perform, the enumsites operator is worth explaining. What it does, is to look at the URL path specified (which should be the URL path of the Portal) and return a list of top level and personal WSS sites. This is useful to determine what top level sites and therefore what site collections exist under the Portal, and therefore what site collections we are required to backup. The full command to enumerate top level sites for a portal on `http://portal.domain.local` would be:

```
Stsadm -o enumsites -url http://portal.domain.local
```

This command would return information similar to the following:

```
C:\Program Files\Common Files\Microsoft Shared\web server
extensions\60\BIN>stsadm -o enumsites -url http://portal.domain.local
```

```
<Sites Count="8">
  <Site Url="http://portal.domain.local"
Owner="DOMAIN\administrator" />
  <Site Url="http://portal.domain.local/personal/ccarpenter"
Owner="DOMAIN\ccarpenter" />
  <Site Url="http://portal.domain.local/personal/ssmith"
Owner="DOMAIN\ssmith" />
  <Site Url="http://portal.domain.local/personal/blonsdale"
Owner="DOMAIN\blonsdale"
  <Site Url="http://portal.domain.local/sites/customers"
Owner="DOMAIN\administrator" />
  <Site Url="http://portal.domain.local/sites/technical"
Owner="DOMAIN\ccarpenter" />
  <Site Url="http://portal.domain.local/sites/financials"
Owner="DOMAIN\blonsdale" />
  <Site Url="http://portal.domain.local/sites/training"
Owner="DOMAIN\ssmith" />
</Sites>
```

From this output we can determine that the users: ccarpenter, ssmith and blonsdale have MySites and that we have site collections defined by the top level sites: customers, technical, financials and training. We have also obtained all of the URLs required to backup these personal sites and site collections.

Let us now backup the technical site collection so that we can move it's content into a documentation site collection that we wish to create in it's place.

In order to backup the technical site collection, we use the command:

```
Stsadm -o backup -url http://portal.domain.local/sites/technical -filename technical_backup.
```

This file will contain the contents of the entire technical site collection and will be placed into the same folder as STSADM if we do not specify a path. If we want to place the backup file into a specific path, then the -filename switch becomes:

```
-filename "d:\backup files\technical_backup"
```

Note that should the path contain spaces, we will need to encase the path in quotation marks. Once the backup has finished, we should see the Command Completed Successfully message returned to the Command Prompt.

We now have a full fidelity backup of our site collection including any content, customisations and permissions. So, let's look at restoring this backup to its new location of:

```
http://portal.domain.local/sites/documentation
```

Before we can restore the site collection to its new location there are a couple of things that we must ensure are configured before hand.

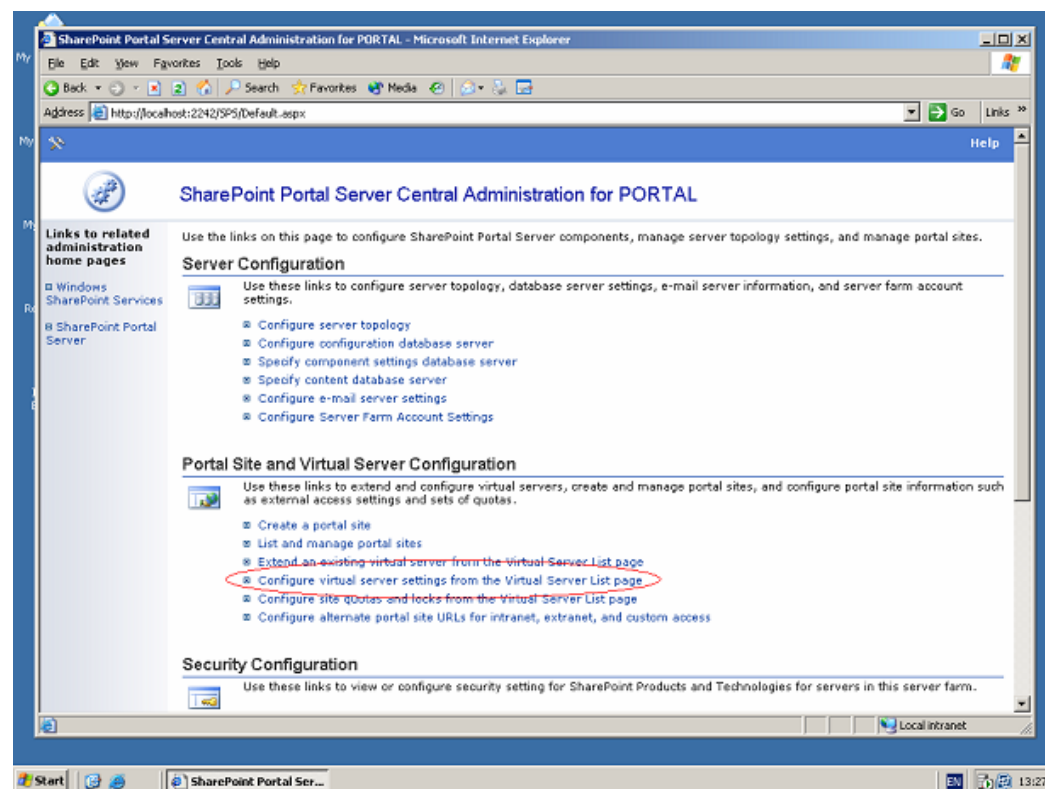
The first thing we need to check is that the destination URL that we are going to restore into is not in use. STSADM will not restore to a URL path that is used by an existing site or site collection. Should a site exist on the URL, then we will need to delete that site before performing the restore operation.

The second requirement depends on whether we are making a copy of our site collection by the backup and restore process or whether we are simply moving it. In other words, are we keeping the original site collection or not?

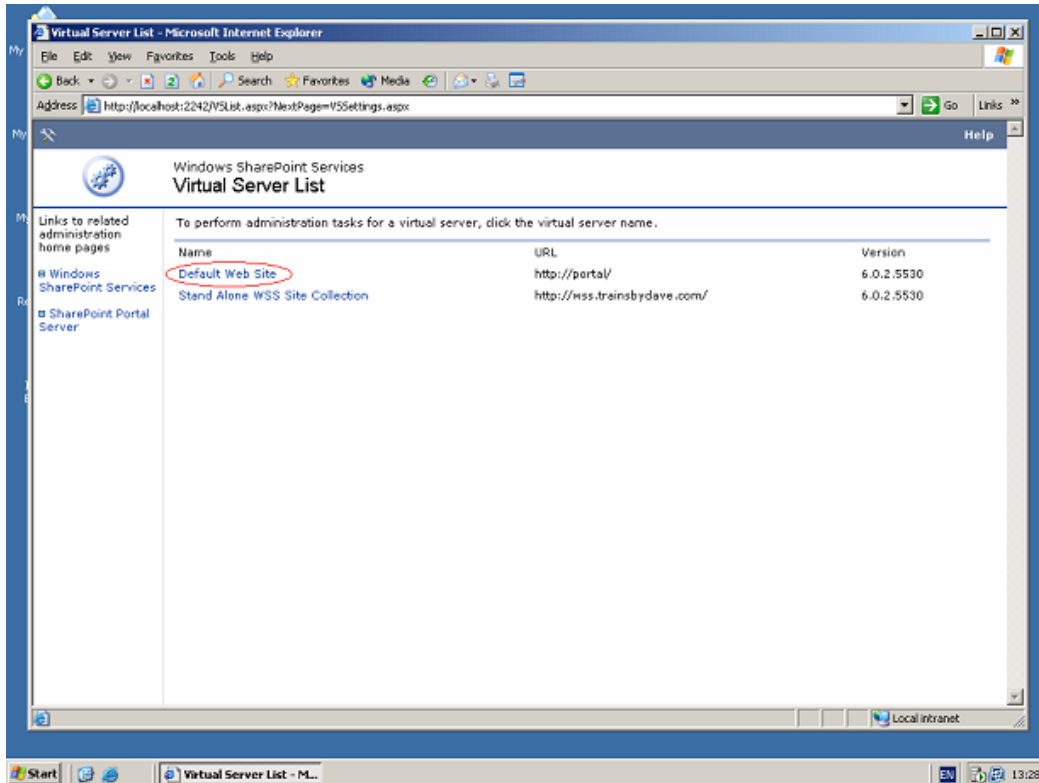
If we're not keeping the original site collection, and are in effect moving the site collection to a new URL location, then we first need to delete the original site collection. If we attempt to restore the backup to a new URL path whilst the old site collection still exists, the restore operation will fail. We must delete the `http://portal.domain.local/sites/technical` site collection before we can restore to `http://portal.domain.local/sites/documentation`.

If we are making a copy of the site collection (for instance we simply want to recover a single item such as a list, document library or even a single document) from a site within the site collection, then we are going to be required to add a new content database to the virtual server. This is because although we are restoring to a new URL location, the GUID of the site collection is still the same and the content already exists within the content database.

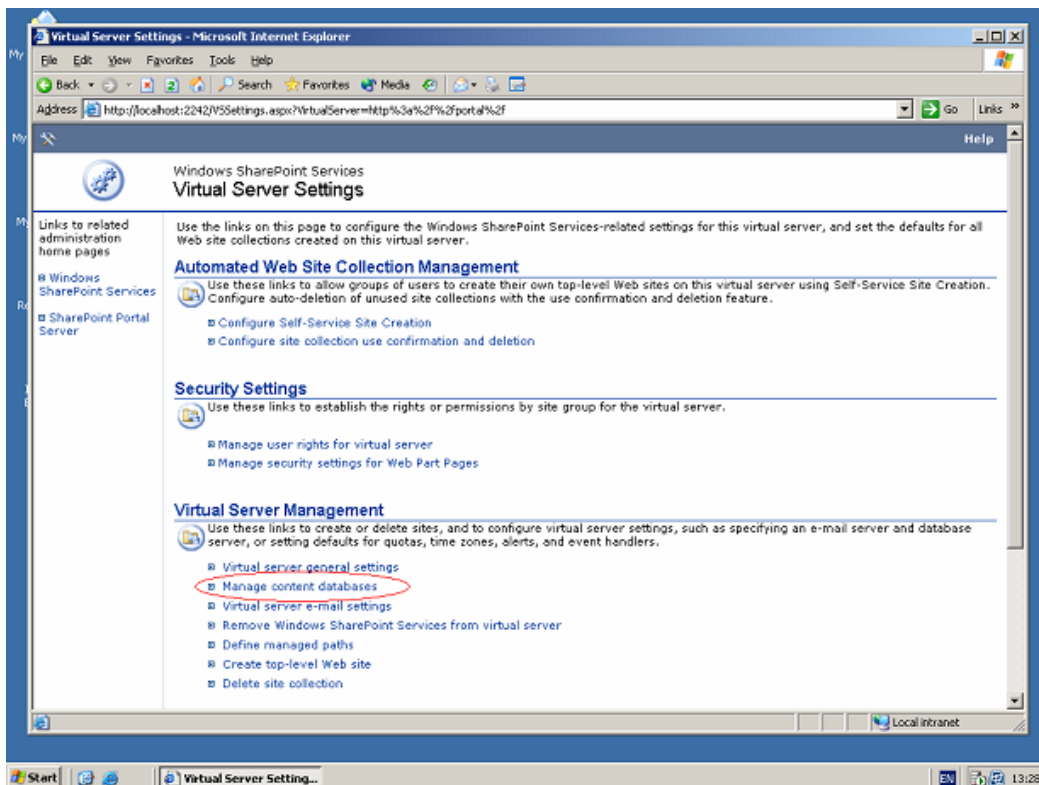
We therefore need to go into SharePoint Central Administration and click the *Configure virtual server settings from the Virtual Server List page* link under the Portal Site and Virtual Server Configuration section.



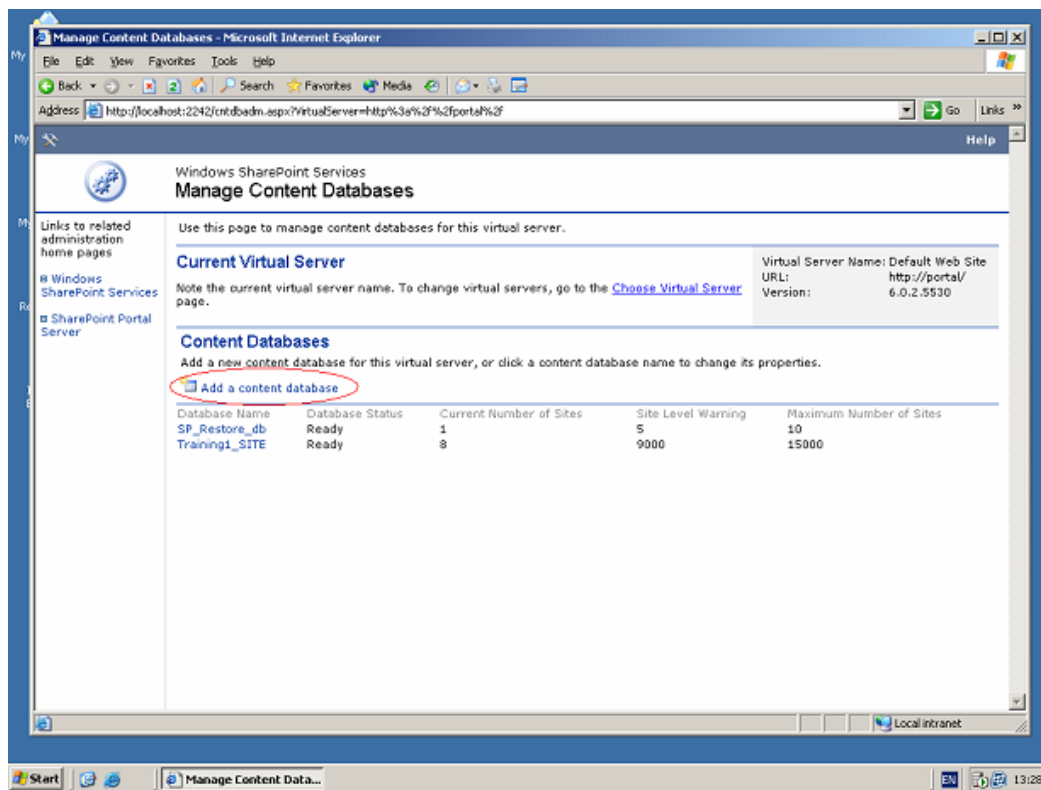
From here we select the virtual server to manage.



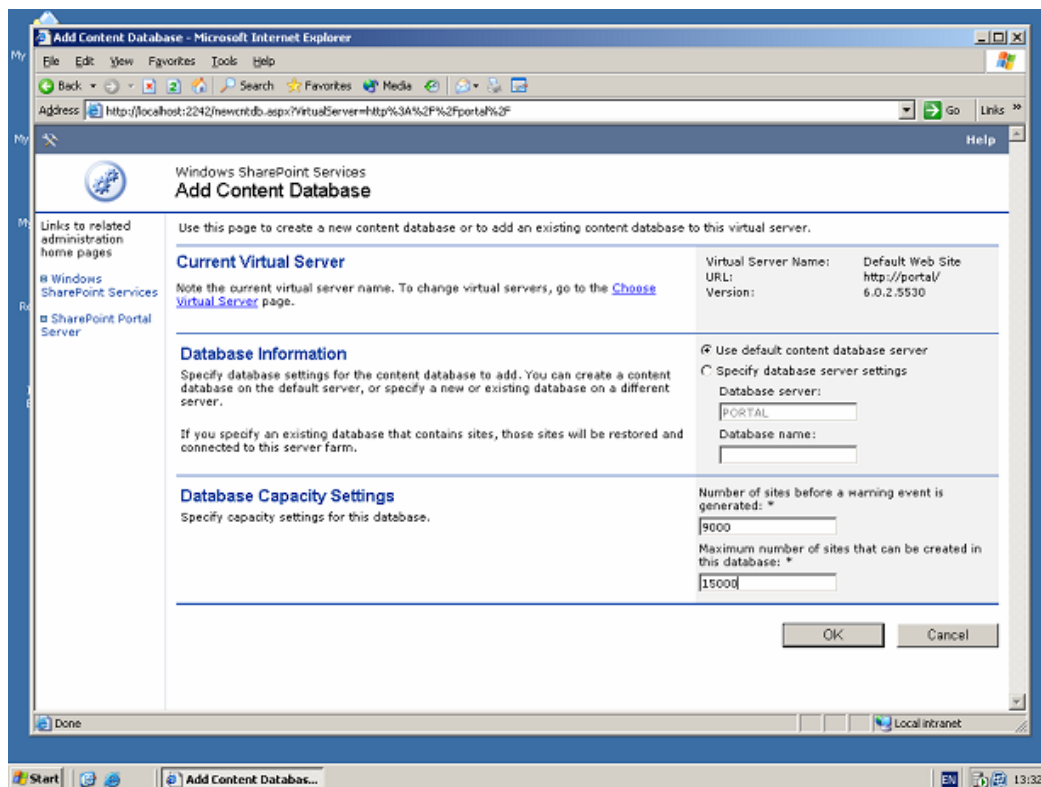
On the Virtual Server Settings page, click the *Manage content databases* link under the Virtual Server Management section.



On the Manage Content Databases page click the *Add a content database* link.



Specify the database server and database name (you can leave this set to default) and set the site warning and maximum limits.



Once we have either deleted the original site collection, or created a new content database, we are in position to restore the site collection to it's new location using the following command:

```
Stsadm -o restore -url http://portal.domain.local/sites/documentation -filename technical_backup
```

Again, once the restore operation is finished, we should see the command completed successfully message returned to the command prompt.

We have now successfully moved our technical site collection to a new location. All that is left now is to clean up any links to sites in the old site collection if we are no longer using it as these links will not have been removed when we deleted the site collection.

If you are trying to restore a list, document library or document itself, then navigate into the newly restored site collection using the new URL and save anything that you need to recover to disk, remembering that when you save a document library or list as a template, to include it's content. You can then use the site collection list template gallery to save the template to disk and import back into the original site collection to restore.