



Quick Start Guide

Remote OPC DA (DCOM)

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1. Overview

This document intends to provide information for quickly setting up a secure DCOM connection between an OPC server and a client running on Microsoft Windows XP Service Pack 2 or later.

1.1 What is DCOM?

Distributed Component Object Model (DCOM) is an extension of Component Object Model (COM) that allows COM components to communicate among objects on different computers. DCOM uses Remote Procedure Call (RPC) to generate standard packets that can be shared across a network, which in turn allows COM to communicate beyond the boundaries of the local machine.

Because DCOM poses a security threat, care should be taken to not expose more than what is required for the application. Although multiple security layers exist, it is still possible that some part of the system will be compromised.

1.2 What is OPCEnum?

The OPC server stores OPC specific information in the registry. Since OPC clients need to be able to discover servers running on both the same machine and remote machines, there needs to be a standard method for accessing this registry information (which is not available for remote access). To do so, a component called OPCEnum is provided by the OPC Foundation. OPCEnum is an executable that is typically installed on a computer along with the OPC server. It runs as a System service and provides a means to browse the local machine for OPC servers and then expose the list to the OPC client.

2. Users and Groups

To ensure that an OPC connection is secure, create users and groups that are exclusively for this use. These can be manually added by any user who has the proper credentials to do so.

2.1 Domains and Workgroups

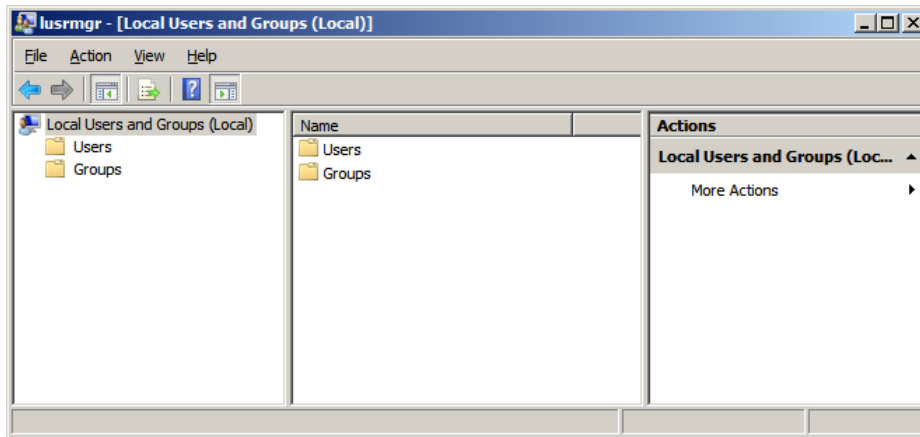
When working within a workgroup, each user will need to be created locally on each computer involved in the connection. Furthermore, each user account must have the same password in order for authentication to occur. A blank password is not valid in most cases. Because changes may need to be made to the local security policy on each computer, remote connectivity within a workgroup has the potential to be the least secure connection. For more information, refer to [Local Security Policies](#).

When working within a domain, local users and groups are not required to be added to each computer. A domain uses a central database that contains the user accounts and security information. If working within a domain is preferred, a network administrator may have to implement the changes.

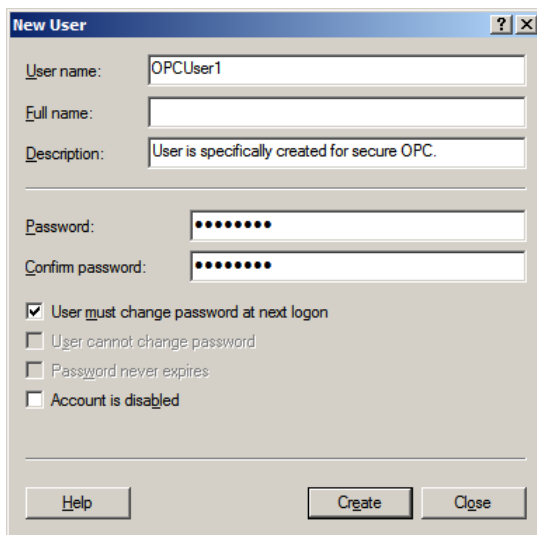
Mixing domains and workgroups will require both computers to authenticate with the lesser of the two options. This means that the domain computer will require the same configuration as it would if it were on a workgroup. Local user accounts must be added to the domain computer.

2.2 Adding a Local User

1. Launch the **Local User and Groups** snap-in, which is part of the **Microsoft Management Console**. It can be viewed directly by selecting **Start | Run** and then typing "lusrmgr.msc".



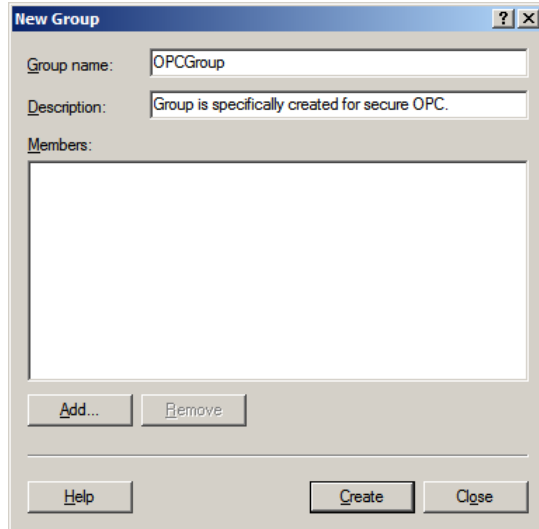
2. Next, click **Users**. Then, select **Action | New User**.



3. Type the appropriate information in the dialog box.
4. Change the following options as required:
 - **User must change password at next logon**
 - **User cannot change password**
 - **Password never expires**
 - **Account is disabled**
5. Click **Create**. Then, click **Close**.

2.3 Adding a Local Group

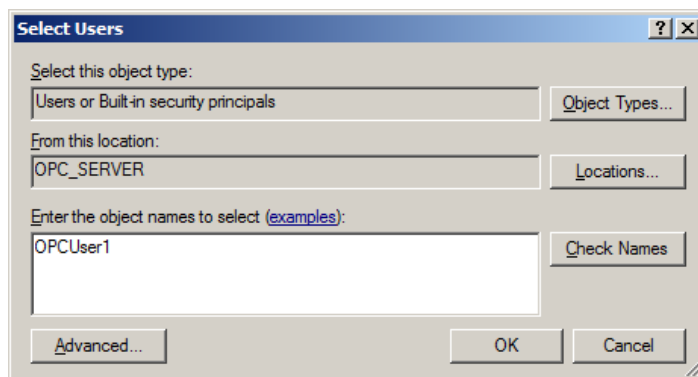
1. Launch the **Local User and Groups** snap-in, which is part of the **Microsoft Management Console**. It can be viewed directly by selecting **Start | Run** and then typing "lusrmgr.msc".
2. Click **Groups** and then select **Action | New Group**.



3. In **Group name**, type a name for the new group.
4. In **Description**, type a description of the new group.
5. Click **Create** and then click **Close**.

2.4 Adding Users to a Group

1. Launch the **Local User and Groups** snap-in.
2. Next, select **Groups**. Then, right-click on the group in which a member will be added and point to **All Tasks**. Click **Add to Group | Add**.



3. In **Object Types**, select the types of objects to find.
4. In **Locations**, click the domain or the computer that contains the users to add. Then, click **OK**.
5. Type the name of the user or group that will be added to the group and then click **OK**. To validate the user or group names being added, click **Check Names**.

3. Server Runtime

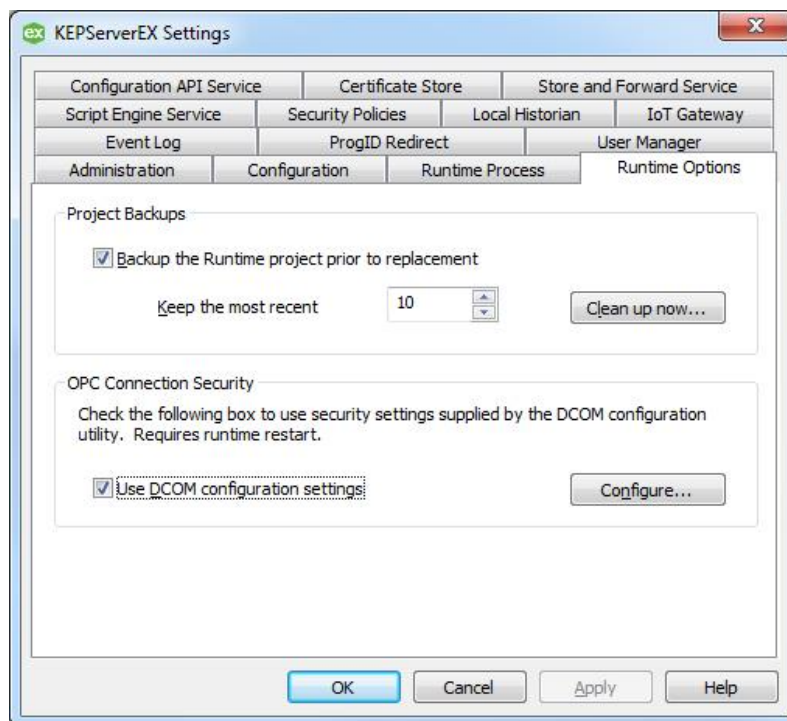
Before DCOM is configured on the server computer, both the level of security and the Runtime's process mode should be considered. To provide the highest level of security, users must enable the appropriate settings. The process mode should be chosen since the DCOM configuration is reset when the process mode is changed.

For more information on which process mode is appropriate for the specific application, refer to the server's help file.

3.1 OPC Connection Security

To provide the highest level of security, DCOM must be enabled in the Runtime. This option, which is enabled by default, ensures that DCOM settings are obeyed and user authentication is performed. Disabling the option is not recommended since the server will impersonate the security of the client when performing any actions on behalf of the client application.

1. Right-click on the server **Administration** icon in the system tray and then select **Settings**. If the Administration icon is not present, it can be accessed from the **Start** menu.
2. Select the **Runtime Options** tab.
3. Check **Use DCOM configuration utility settings** (if it is not already enabled).



4. Select **Apply** or **OK**.
 - **Note:** If prompted to restart the Runtime, choose **Yes**.

3.2 Process Mode

The server Runtime has the ability to run as a service or to run interactively under a user account. By default, the Runtime is installed as a service. In a few cases, however, it may be necessary to change the process mode to allow interactive functionality. For more information on how to switch the process mode, refer to the server's help file.

● **Caution:** Application DCOM settings are reset when the server's process mode is changed.

When remote OPC connections are required, selecting System Service Mode produces the most predictable results. The Runtime is started when the system starts and does not require user intervention. A specific user is not required to be logged on.

Using the Runtime in Interactive Mode may require additional DCOM configuration. The simplest way to authenticate the connection and prevent this additional configuration is to have a DCOM privileged user account logged on to the Windows operating system on both the server and client side. This user account must have the appropriate permissions set in the DCOM settings as described in [DCOM Configuration](#).

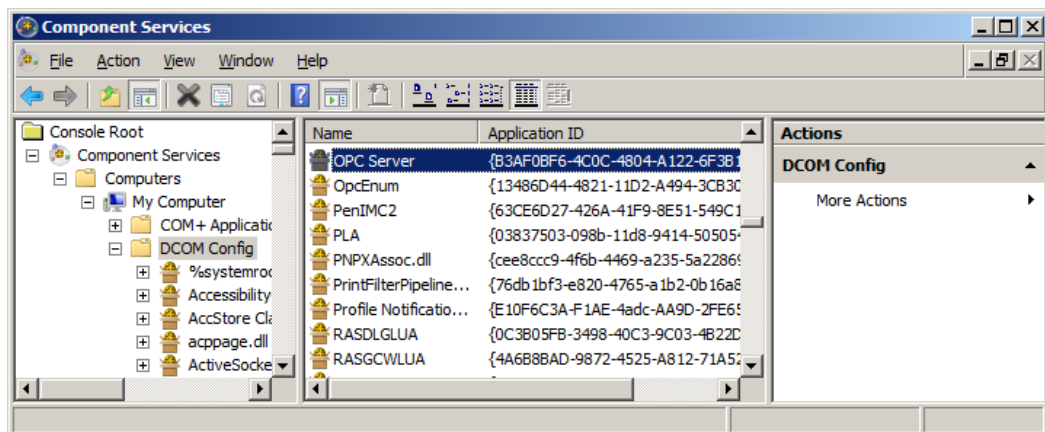
● **Note:** For some situations, extra DCOM configuration is required. For more information, refer to [Configuring the Application Identity \(Optional\)](#).

4. DCOM Configuration

The computer running the OPC server must make changes to the application and system levels to setup DCOM correctly.

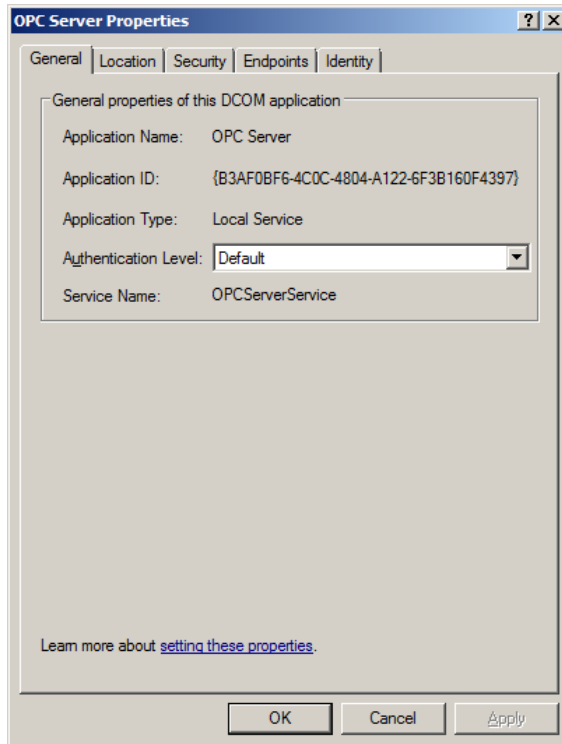
4.1 Configuring the Application

1. Launch the **Component Services** snap-in, which is part of the **Microsoft Management Console**. It can be viewed directly by selecting **Start | Run** and then typing "dcomcnfg".
2. Under **Console Root**, expand **Component Services, Computers, My Computer** and **DCOM Config**.

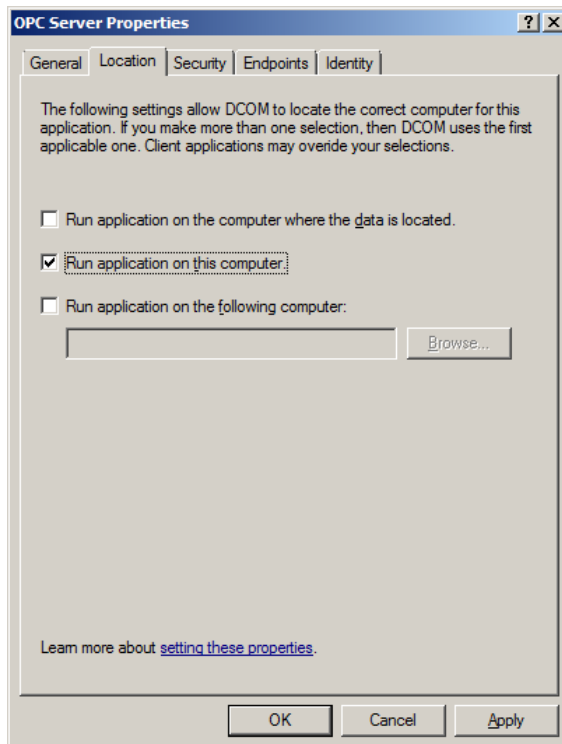


3. Browse the DCOM enabled objects until the OPC server application is located. In this example, "OPC Server" is displayed where the actual application name will appear.
4. Right-click on the server application and select **Properties**.

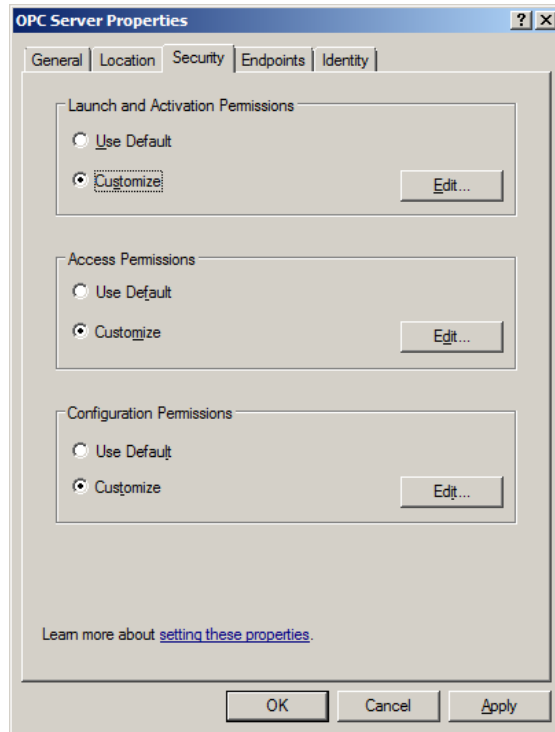
5. Open the **General** tab. Then, verify that the **Authentication Level** is set to **Default**.



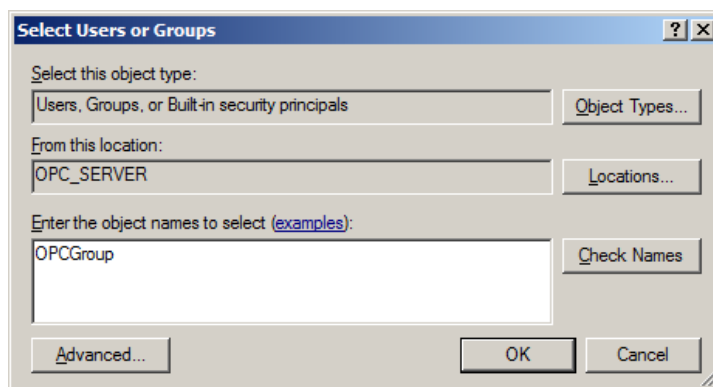
6. Open the **Location** tab.
7. Verify that only the **Run application on this computer** option is enabled.



- Open the **Security** tab.

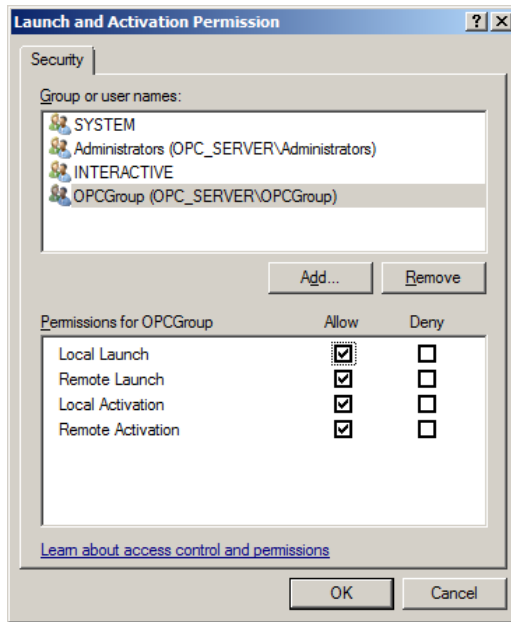


- In **Launch and Activation Permissions**, select **Customize**. Here, users and groups can be granted permission to start the OPC server if it is not already running.
- Click **Edit**.
- In **Launch and Activation Permissions**, select **Add**.



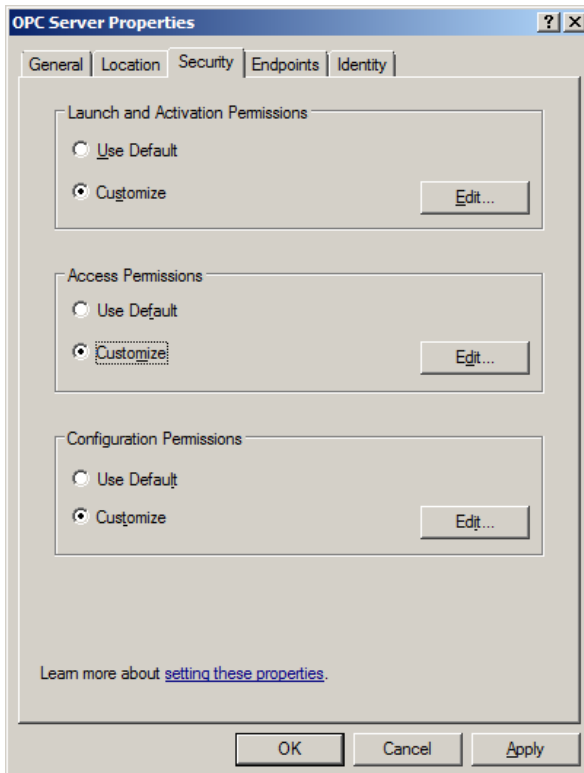
- In **Object Types**, select the desired object type.
- In **Locations**, click the domain or the computer that contains the users or groups that will be added. Then, click **OK**.
- Type the name of the user or group in the window. To validate the user or group names being added, click **Check Names**.
- After the account has been validated, click **OK**.
- Continue to add users and groups until all the desired accounts have been added. The new account or group should be visible in the **Group or user names** list.

17. Next, select the new user or group.



18. To only allow local applications to connect, only enable the local permissions for the account. In this example, local and remote permissions are enabled.

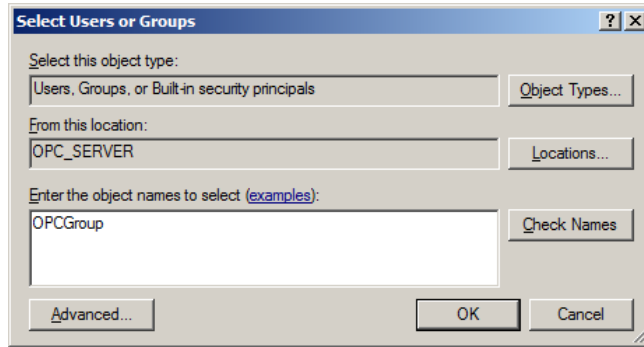
19. Repeat the process for all accounts that have been added. Click **OK**.



20. Select **Customize** in the **Access Permissions** group. Here, users and groups can be granted permissions to make calls to the OPC server. These calls include browsing for items, adding groups and items, or any other standard OPC call.

21. Click **Edit**.

22. In **Access Permissions**, select **Add**.



23. In **Object Types**, select the desired object type.

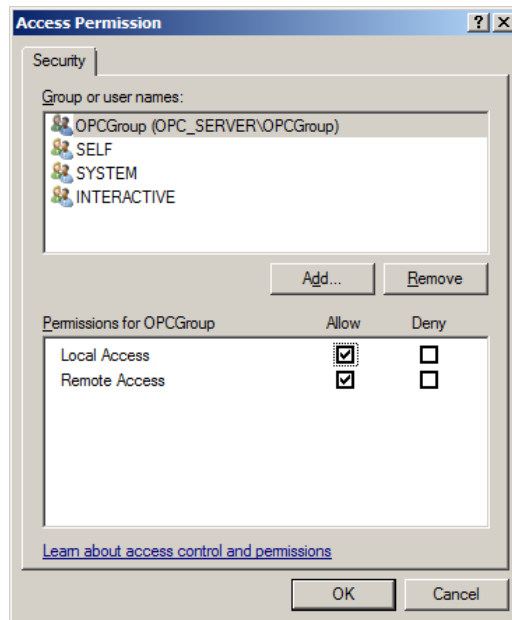
24. In **Locations**, click the domain or the computer that contains the users or groups that will be added. Then, click **OK**.

25. Type the name of the user or group in the window. To validate the user or group names being added, click **Check Names**.

26. After the account has been validated, click **OK**.

27. Continue to add users and groups until all the desired accounts have been added. The new account or group should be visible in the **Group or user names** list.

28. Select the new user or group.



29. To only allow local applications to connect, only enable the local permissions for the account. In this example, local and remote permissions are enabled.

30. Repeat the process for all accounts that have been added. Then, click **OK**.

31. Click **OK** to close the **Application Properties** window.

4.2 Configuring the Application Identity (Optional)

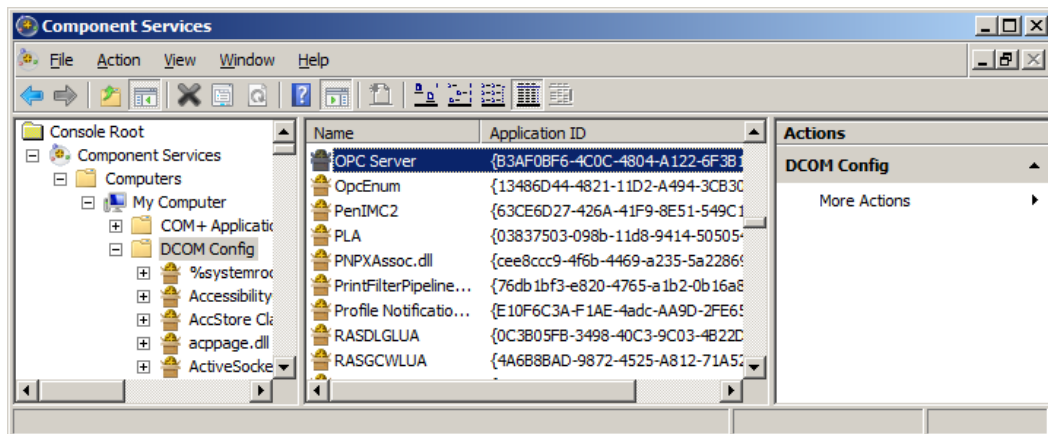
The **Identity** needs to be set when the process mode is set to Interactive and one of the following conditions is present:

- The computer used as the server is required to run with multiple user accounts.
- Users that have not been granted DCOM permissions will be using the computer.

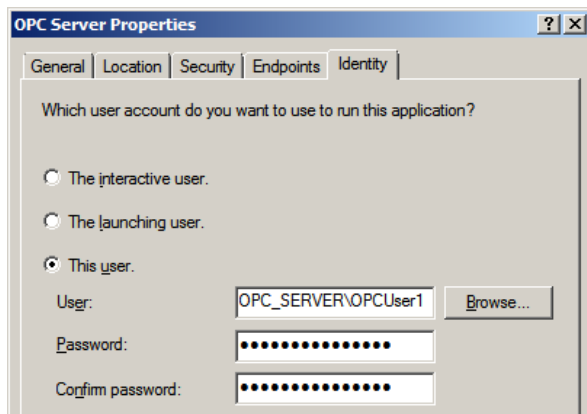
Setting the Identity to **This user** allows a specific user account to be selected to run the application. Clients are then directed to the account allowing a connection to be made to the server. The specified user is not required to be logged on to the Windows operating system in order for this to happen.

◆ **Note:** In this case, the specified user must be part of the Administrators group. If not, the server will not start.

1. Launch the **Component Services** snap-in, which is part of the **Microsoft Management Console**. It can be viewed directly by selecting **Start | Run** and then typing "dcomcnfg".
2. Under **Console Root**, expand **Component Services, Computers, My Computer** and **DCOM Config**.

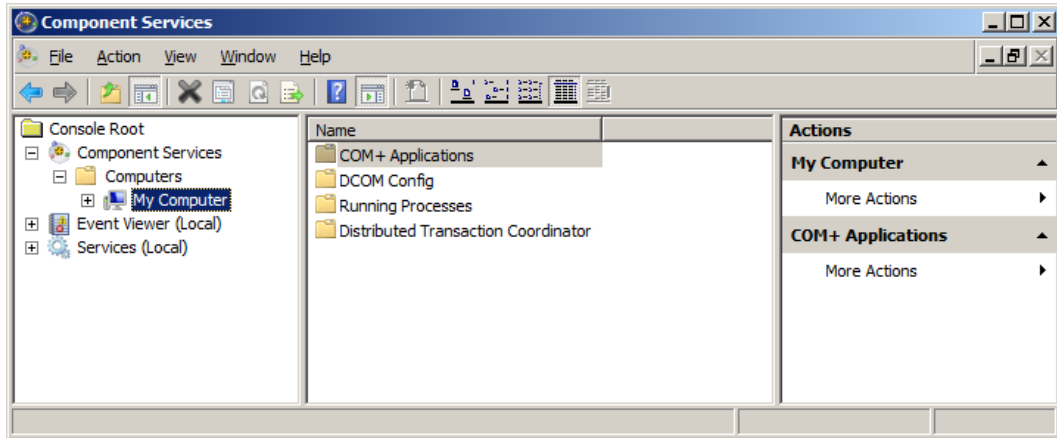


3. Browse the DCOM enabled objects until the OPC server application is located. In this example, "OPC Server" is displayed where the actual application name will appear.
4. Right-click on the server application and then select **Properties**.
5. Next, select the **Identity** tab.
6. Enter the user name or click **Browse** to launch the **Select User** dialog to assist in selecting a valid user name.
7. Enter and confirm the password of the user that has been chosen to run the server application.
8. Select **OK** to close the **Server Properties**.

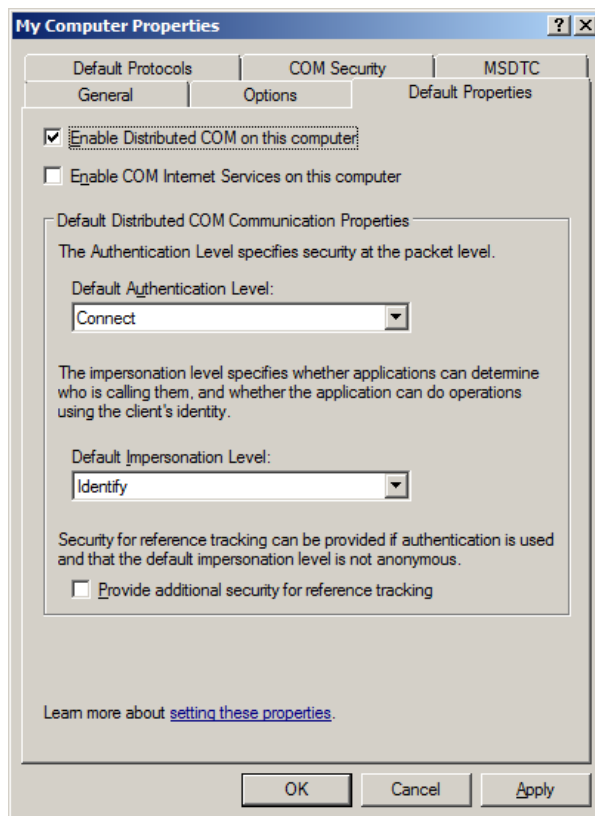


4.3 Configuring the System

1. Launch the **Component Services** snap-in, which is part of the **Microsoft Management Console**. It can be viewed directly by selecting **Start | Run** and then typing "dcomcnfg".
2. Under **Console Root**, expand **Component Services** and **Computers**.

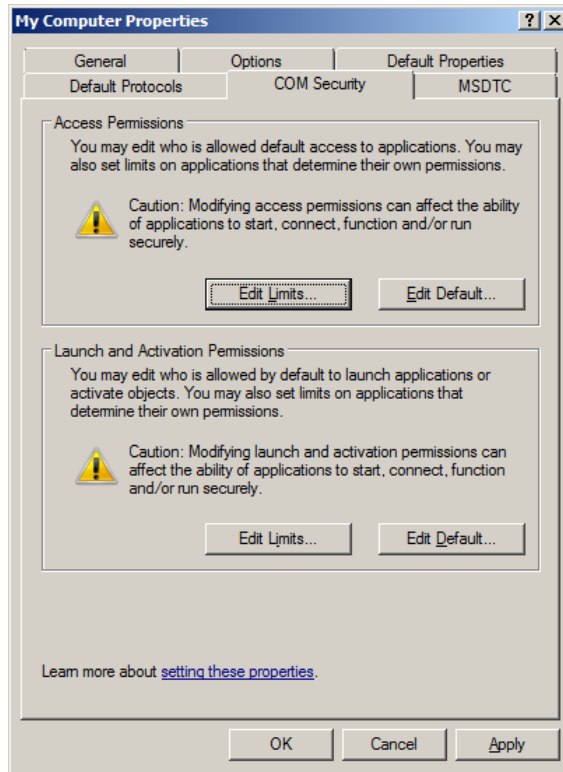


3. Right-click on **My Computer** and then select **Properties**.
4. Next, select the **Default Properties** tab.



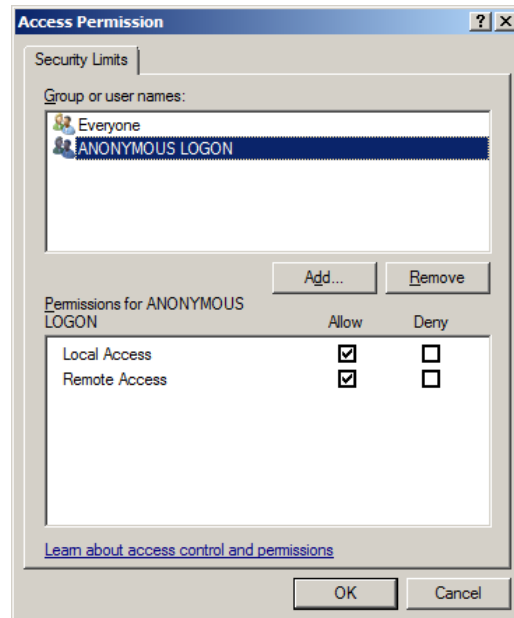
5. Verify that the **Enable Distributed COM on this computer** option is enabled.
6. Select **Connect** for the **Default Authentication Level**.
7. Select **Identify** for the **Default Impersonation Level**.

8. Next, select the **COM Security** tab.



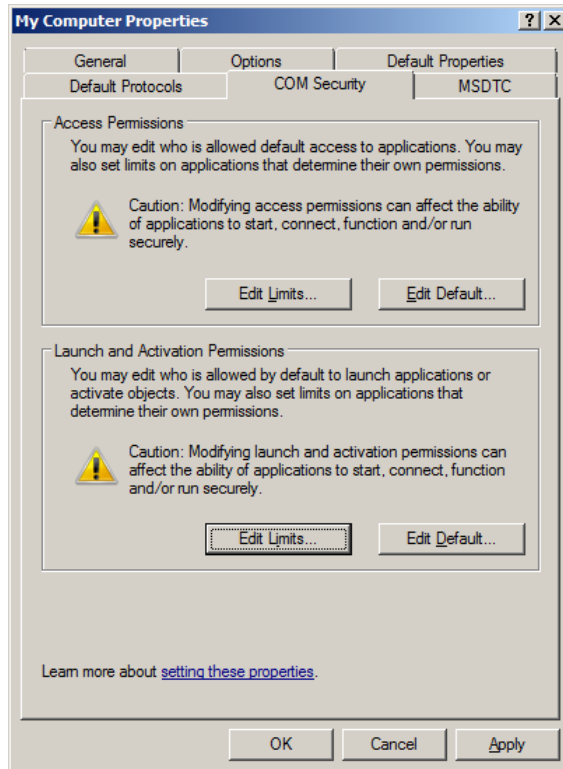
9. Select **Edit Limits** in the **Access Permissions** group.

10. Select the **ANONYMOUS LOGON** group account in the **Group or user names** list.



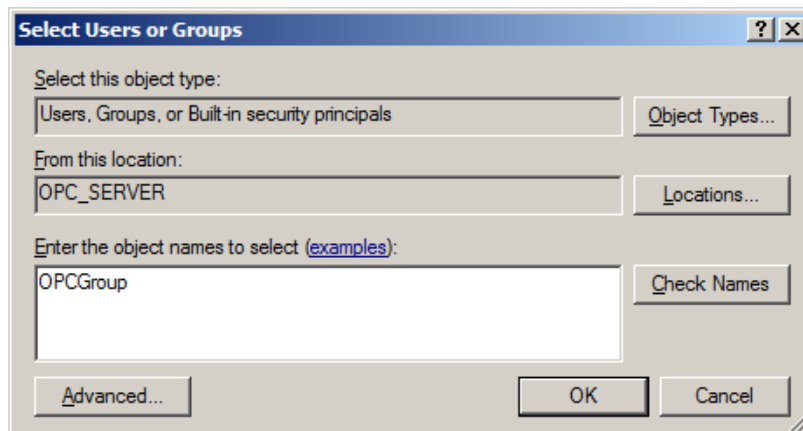
11. Enable the local and remote permissions for this group. OPCEnum overrides DCOM settings and opens accessibility to everyone. In Windows XP Service Pack 2 and above, this step is required because applications are not permitted to perform this action without user interaction.

12. Click **OK** to return to the **COM Security** tab.



13. In the **Launch and Activation Permissions** group, select **Edit Limits**.

14. In **Launch and Activation Permissions**, select **Add**.



15. In **Object Types**, select the desired object type.

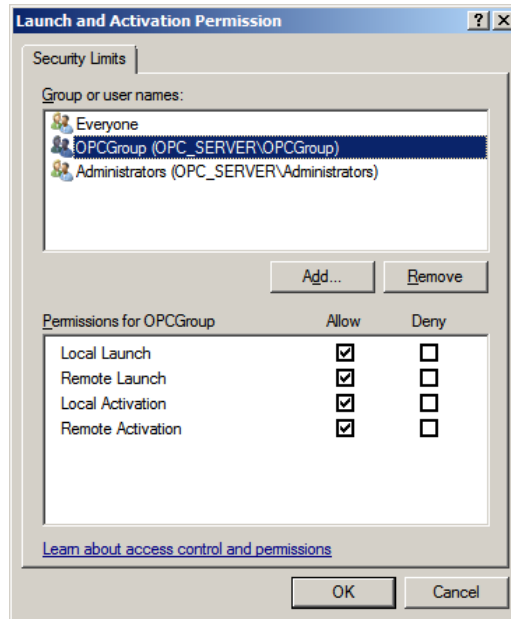
16. In **Locations**, click the domain or the computer that contains the users or groups that will be added. Then, click **OK**.

17. Type the name of the user or group in the window. To validate the user or group names being added, click **Check Names**.

18. After the account has been validated, click **OK**.

19. Continue to add users and groups until all the desired accounts have been added. The new account or group should be visible in the **Group or user names** list.

20. Next, select the new user or group.



21. To only allow local applications to connect, only enable the local permissions for the account. In this example, local and remote permissions are enabled.

22. Repeat the process for all accounts that have been added. Then, click **OK**.

23. Click **OK** to close the **My Computer** properties window.

4.4 Applying Changes

After the DCOM settings have been modified, the changes made may not be applied immediately. While some operating systems require a reboot for DCOM changes to take effect, others will only require restarting the Runtime. To do so, right-click on the **Administration** icon in the **System Tray** and then select **Stop Runtime**. Once the Runtime has stopped, the **Start Runtime** menu item will be enabled and ready for selection.

5. Firewalls

In some cases, it is easier to turn off any firewalls that may be running on both the client and server machine before DCOM is setup. Once a connection has been successfully created, it is recommended that the firewall security is restored and the correct exceptions are added.

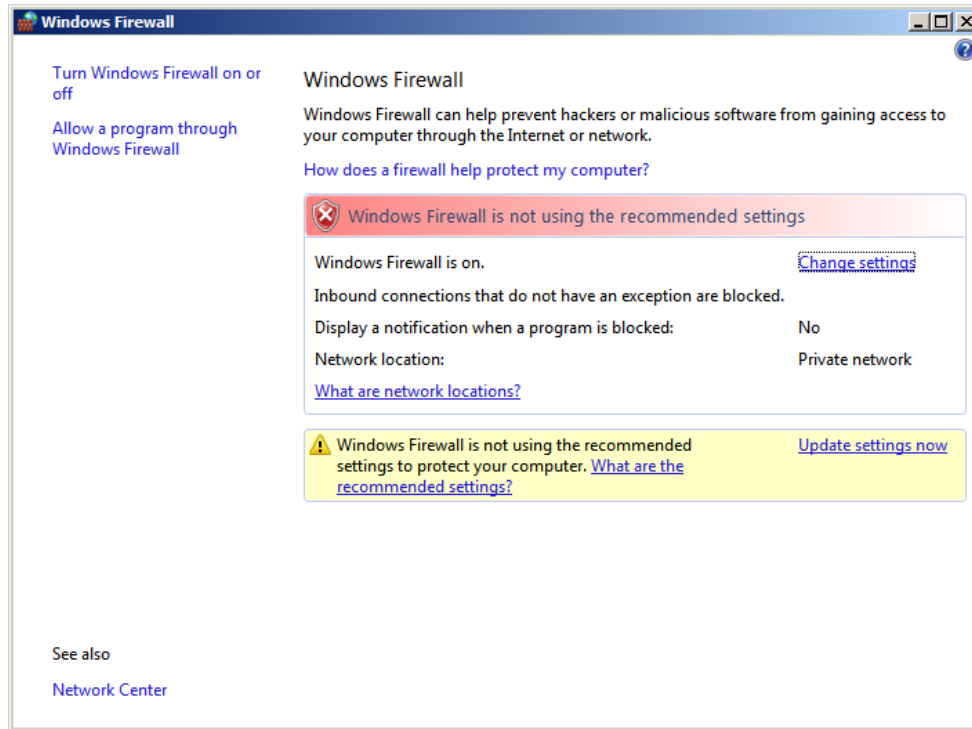
5.1 What is the Windows Firewall?

The Windows Firewall is the firewall service included with desktop and server releases of Microsoft Windows. Prior to Windows XP Service Pack 2, it was named "Internet Connection Firewall." Its purpose is to drop incoming traffic that is not expected (unsolicited traffic) or traffic that does not correspond to the exceptions (excepted traffic) that are set within the firewall.

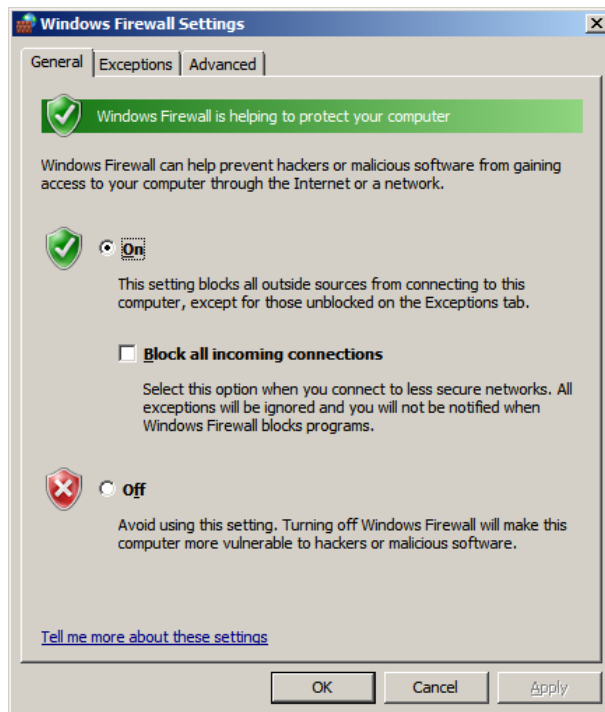
- **Note:** Aside from the server computer, the firewall must also be set on client computer so that callbacks can be received.

5.2 Server Side Exceptions

1. Launch the **Windows Firewall** by selecting **Start | Run** and then typing "firewall.cpl".

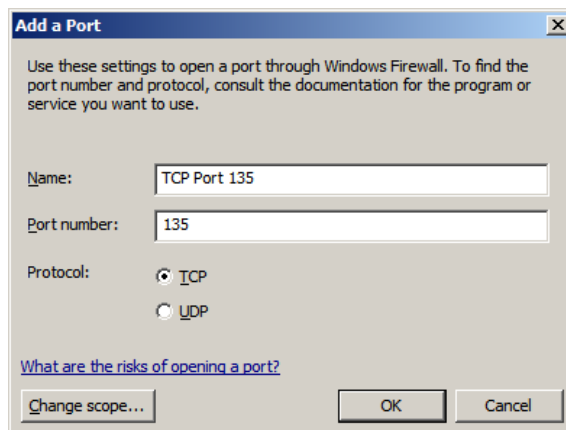


2. Windows Vista or Windows Server 2008 will not directly display the settings dialog. To view the dialog, select **Change Settings**.
3. Next, select the **General** tab.

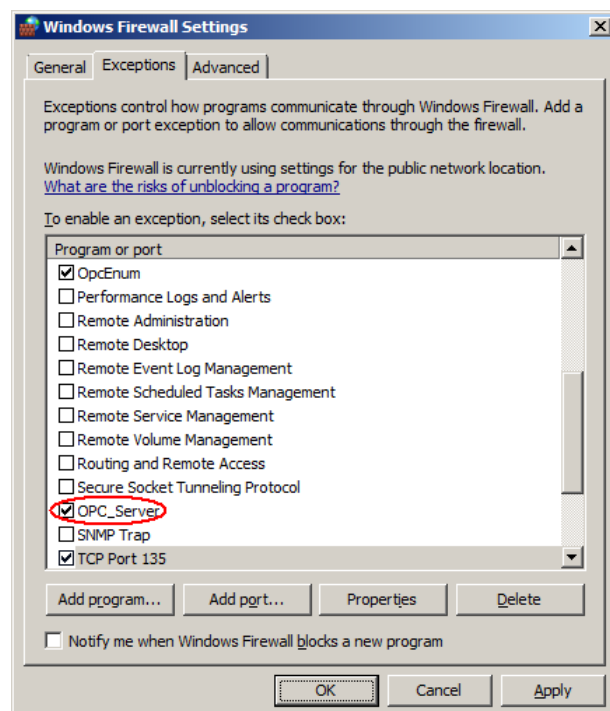


4. Verify that the firewall is enabled by choosing **On**.

5. Select the **Exceptions** tab.
6. Click **Add program**.
7. Click **Browse** and then locate **OPCEnum.exe**. This is located in *C:\Windows\System32*.
8. Click **OK**.
9. Click **Add program**.
10. Next, select **Browse** and then locate the OPC server application's executable file. This is usually located in *C:\Program Files\<company name>\<product name>* or in *C:\Program Files\product name*.
 - **Note:** In this example, a generic server name of "OPC_Server.exe" is used to apply to any OPC server's configuration.
11. Click **OK**.
12. Click **Add port**.

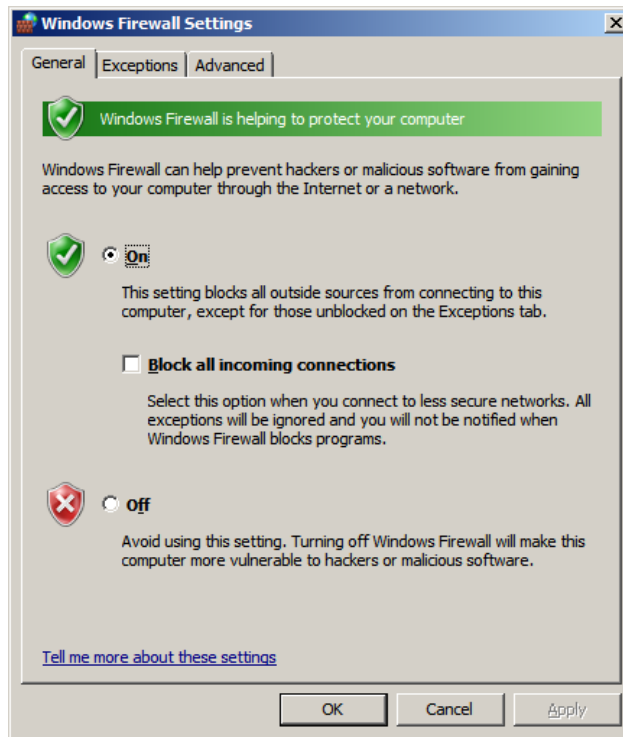


13. In **Name**, enter **TCP Port 135**. This port is commonly used for allowing clients to discover and utilize a DCOM service.
14. In **Port number**, enter **135**.
15. Verify that the correct **Protocol** is selected. The default is **TCP**.
16. Click **OK**.
17. Click **OK** to close the settings dialog.

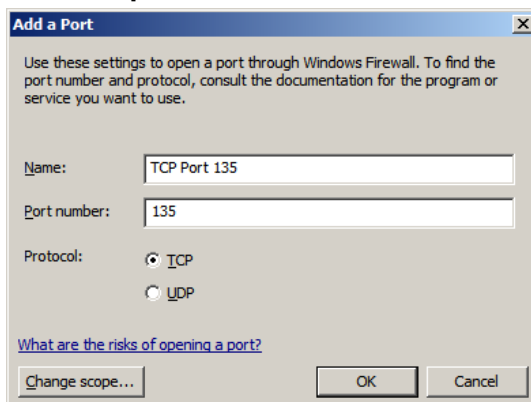


5.3 Client Side Exceptions

1. Windows Vista or Windows Server 2008 will not directly display the settings dialog. To view the dialog, select **Change Settings**.
2. Select the **General** tab.

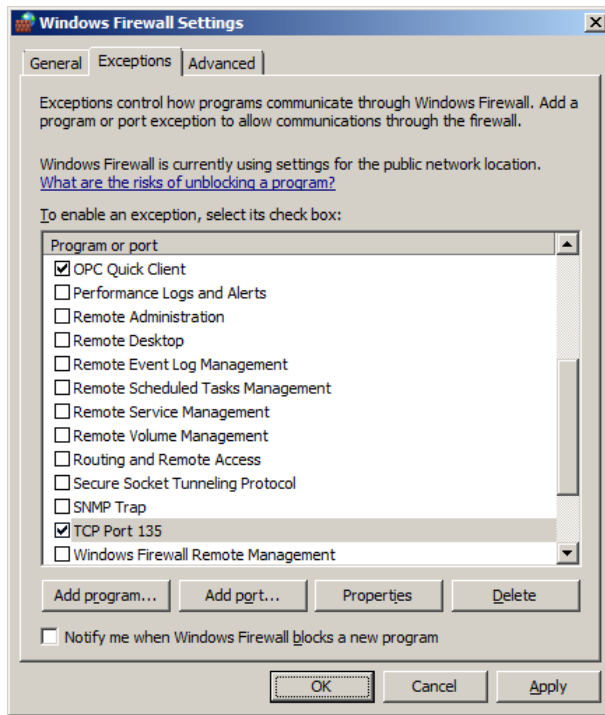


3. Verify that the firewall is enabled by choosing **On**.
4. Select the **Exceptions** tab.
5. Click **Add program**.
6. Click **Browse** and locate the server application's executable file. In this example, the OPC Quick Client is used and is usually located in *C:\Program Files\<company name>\<product name>*.
7. Click **OK**.
8. Click **Add port**.



9. In **Name**, enter **TCP Port 135**.
10. In **Port number**, enter **135**.

11. Verify that the correct **Protocol** is selected. The default is **TCP**.
12. Click **OK**.

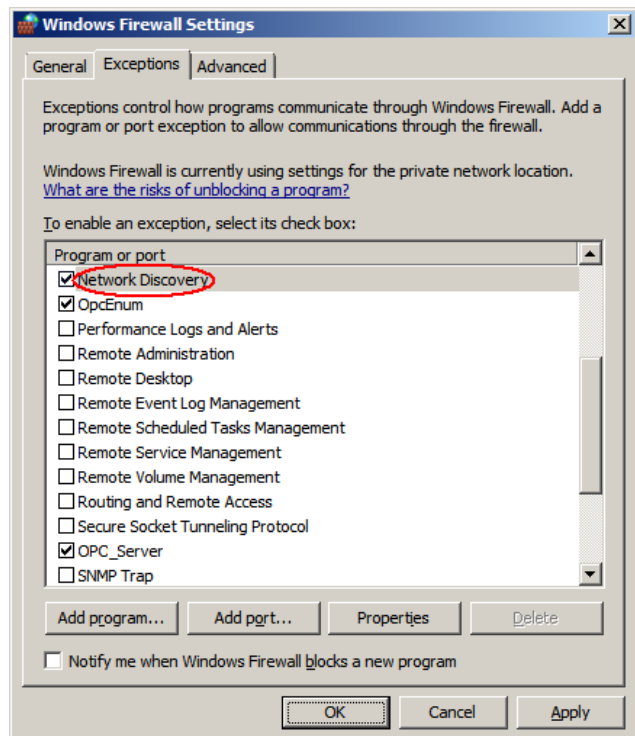


13. Click **OK** to close the settings dialog.

6. Network Discovery

The **Network Discovery** setting was first introduced in Windows Vista and allows or prevents the computer to detect or be detected by other computers on the network. If the setting is off (or if it is not set as an exception in the firewall) OPC clients might not be able to browse for the server.

1. Click **Start | Control Panel | Network and Sharing Center**.
2. Under the **Sharing and Discovery** section, click the **Down Arrow** in the **Network Discovery** row.
3. Click the **Turn on network discovery** radio button, and then click **Apply**.



4. If the state of **Network Discovery** displays **Custom**, it is because the firewall is not allowing for network discovery or because a required service (**dnscache**, **fdrespub**, **ssdpsrv**, and **upnphost**) is not running. While not all services are necessary, the firewall must be set correctly.
5. Launch the **Windows Firewall** and view the settings dialog.
6. Search for **Network Discovery** in the list and then verify that the exception is enabled.
7. Click **OK** to close the **Settings** dialog.

7. Local Security Policies

When the computers that are involved in the remote connection are part of a workgroup, it may be necessary to edit the **Local Security Policy**. This can pose as a security risk and should only be done if it is absolutely necessary. In most cases, the server computer may require changes to the authentication model whereas the client computer needs to have access to browse for servers.

7.1 Sharing and Security Model for Local Accounts

This setting determines how local users will be authenticated. When the setting is set to **Classic**, remote logons will use the same level of access that is set for the local account given that it has the same username and password. If set to **Guest only**, network logons will use the same level of access that is set for the **Guest** account.

The **Sharing and Security Model** may need to be set to **Classic** on the server computer only. An error code (HR=80070005) will be returned to the client when attempting to add items if this is required.

1. Launch the **Local Security Policy** snap-in, which is part of the **Microsoft Management Console**. It can be viewed directly by selecting **Start | Run** and then typing "secpol.msc".
2. Under **Security Settings**, expand **Local Policies**.
3. Next, select **Security Options**.
4. In the list, right-click on **Network access: Sharing and security model for local accounts** and then select **Properties**.
5. Choose **Classic - local users authenticate as themselves** and then click **OK**.

7.2 Let Everyone Permissions Apply to Anonymous Users

This setting determines the additional permissions that are granted for anonymous logons. When the option is disabled, the permissions granted to the Everyone security identifier do not apply to anonymous users. If the option is enabled, anonymous users are given the same permissions as the Everyone group.

The **Everyone Permissions** setting needs to be enabled on the client computer only. If clients cannot browse for the remote server even after DCOM has been set up, this setting is required.

1. Launch the **Local Security Policy** snap-in, which is part of the **Microsoft Management Console**. It can be viewed directly by selecting **Start | Run** and then typing "secpol.msc".
2. Under **Security Settings**, expand **Local Policies**.
3. Select **Security Options**.
4. In the list, right-click on **Network access: Let Everyone permissions apply to anonymous users** and then select **Properties**.
5. Choose **Enable** and then select **OK**.

8. Summary

Because OPC uses DCOM to allow remote communications, it is imperative that it is correctly configured. Users can create a secure connection by following the instructions in this document. For more information, refer to the OPC Foundation's support documentation at <http://www.opcfoundation.org/>.