

Rename Domain

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How to Rename an Active Directory Domain Name

In this short article, we will show you how to properly change an Active Directory domain name from `test.com` to `resource.loc`. In fact, it is not the best idea to rename an Active Directory domain. In large and complex AD infrastructure, it is better to migrate users, computers, and servers to a new domain. However, for simple and small AD environments (test, pre-prod, or DMZ), you can easily rename your AD domain according to this guide

Before you start, make sure that:

- You have an up-to-date [backup of your domain controllers](#);
- Replication works correctly in your domain and there are no critical errors of domain controllers or DNS ([How to check Active Directory health](#));
- There is no Exchange in your domain. You cannot rename an AD domain if Exchange is deployed in it (except for Exchange Server 2003);
- To rename a domain, you need Windows Server 2003 or newer (in my example, the functional level of my AD domain and forest is Windows Server 2016).

First of all, create a DNS zone for your new domain on your current domain controllers. To do it, open the dnsmgmt.msc snap-in, create a new primary **Forward Lookup Zone** with the name `resource.loc` and replicate it on all DNS servers in your old `test.com` domain.

You can create a new [DNS zone using PowerShell](#):

```
Add-DnsServerPrimaryZone -Name resource.loc -ReplicationScope "Domain" -PassThru
```

1create-dns-primary-zone-for-new-ad-domain.png

Wait till the new DNS zone is replicated on all DCs.

Run the `rendom /list` command to generate a **Domainlist.xml** file with the current AD forest configuration.

2rendom-list-command-used-to-generate-domainlist-x.png

```
Get-Content .\Domainlist.xml
```

```
<Forest>
<Domain>
<!-- PartitionType:Application -->
```

```
<Guid>6944a1cc-d79a-4bdb-9d1b-411fd417bbbc</Guid>
<DNSname>DomainDnsZones.test.com</DNSname>
<NetBiosName></NetBiosName>
<DcName></DcName>
</Domain>
<Domain>
<!-- PartitionType:Application -->
<Guid>bb10d409-4897-4974-9781-77dd94f17d47</Guid>
<DNSname>ForestDnsZones.test.com</DNSname>
<NetBiosName></NetBiosName>
<DcName></DcName>
</Domain>
<Domain>
<!-- ForestRoot -->
<Guid>b91bcb80-7cbc-49b7-8704-11d41b77d891</Guid>
<DNSname>test.com</DNSname>
<NetBiosName>TEST</NetBiosName>
<DcName></DcName>
</Domain>
</Forest>
```

Open the Domainlist.xml and replace all old domain names with the new ones:

```
Notepad .\Domainlist.xml
```

3rename-the-domain-in-the-domainlist-xml-active-dir.png

Save the file and run this command:

```
rendom /showforest
```

The command will show the changes to be made in the configuration.

4rendom-showforest-show-ad-configuration-changes.png

The following command will upload Domainlist.xml with the new configuration of AD partitions to the domain controller with the Domain naming master FSMO role:

```
rendom /upload
```

6rendom-upload-upload-new-domain-name-to-ad.png

The FSMO role owners can be displayed as follows:

```
netdom query fsmo
```

7netdom-query-fsmo.png

After that, you won't be able to make changes to the AD forest configuration because it will be locked.

The `rendom /prepare` command will check the availability of all DCs in the forest and if they are ready to be renamed.

Make sure that the command has not returned any errors.

8rendom-prepare-prepare-for-domain-renaming.png

```
Waiting for DCs to reply.  
mun-dc02.test.com was prepared successfully  
mun-dc00.test.com was prepared successfully  
The operation completed successfully.
```

The command below will rename the domain (domain controllers will be unavailable for some time and restarted automatically to apply new settings):

```
rendom /execute
```

9rendom-execute-apply-the-new-domain-name.png

```
Waiting for DCs to reply.  
The script was executed successfully on mun-dc02.test.com  
The script was executed successfully on mun-dc00.test.com  
2 servers contacted, 0 servers returned Errors  
The operation completed successfully.
```

Make sure that the new domain name is displayed in the domain properties. Note that the full computer name did not change.

10new-domain-name-in-the-computer-properties.png

You must provide an account name in the format `newdomain\username` to login to the DC.

To get to the DC, specify the account from the domain. On Windows Core domain controllers you can specify a different username by pressing ESC several times.

11login-to-dc-under-new-domain-account.png

Run the following command to update GPO bindings:

```
gpfixup /olddns:test.com /newdns:resource.loc
```

12gpfixup-fix-gpo-bindings.png

```
Group Policy fix up utility Version 1.1 (Microsoft)
Start fixing group policy (GroupPolicyContainer) objects:
Start fixing site group policy links:
Start fixing non-site group policy links:
gpfixup tool executed with success.
```

Then update the NetBIOS domain name:

```
gpfixup /oldnb:TEST /newnb:RESOURCE
```

Then add new names on each domain controller manually and make them primary ones:

```
netdom computername %COMPUTERNAME%.test.com /add:%COMPUTERNAME%.resource.loc
netdom computername %COMPUTERNAME%.test.com /makeprimary:%COMPUTERNAME%.resource.loc
```

Restart the DCs:

```
Shutdown -f -r -t 0
```

Only domain controllers need to be manually renamed. The rest of the computers and servers can be rebooted twice and they will automatically switch to the new domain. This must be done after /execute and BEFORE executing the rendom /clean command.

Or you can use the commands above to rejoin computers to the new domain.

The command below will remove links to your old domain from AD:

```
rendom /clean
```

Unlock the domain configuration:

```
rendom /end
```

Open the [ADUC](#) (`dsa.msc`) console and make sure that it has connected to the new domain name and all OU structure, users and computers remain in place.

13domain-rename-completed-successfully.png

Note that you will have to do some extra steps to re-configure some services (CA, Failover Clusters) to a new domain.

After renaming your domain, check the AD replication state and errors on the DCs (see the link above).

[Original Article](#)

Step by Step How to Rename Domain Name in Windows Server 2016

You can use the domain rename process to change the names of your domains, and you can also use it to change the structure of the domain trees in your forest. This process involves updating the Domain Name System (DNS) and trust infrastructures as well as Group Policy and service principal names (SPNs).

The ability to rename domains provides you with the flexibility to make important name changes and forest structural changes as the needs of your organization change. Using domain rename, you cannot only change the name of a domain, but you can change the structure of the domain hierarchy and change the parent of a domain or move a domain residing in one domain tree to another domain tree. The domain rename process can accommodate scenarios involving acquisitions, mergers, or name changes in your organization, but it is not designed to accommodate forest mergers or the movement of domains between forests.

Note:

Domain rename is intended to be a supported method for renaming domains when domain renames are necessary; it is not intended to make domain rename a routine operation. The domain rename process is complex, and it requires a great deal of care in planning and execution. In addition, the time that is required for a complete domain rename operation is directly proportional to the size of an Active Directory forest in terms of its number of domains, domain controllers, and member computers. Therefore, although domain rename is possible, it should not be undertaken lightly. The domain rename operation is not supported in `Microsoft Exchange Server 2007` or `Exchange Server 2010`. DNS domain rename is supported in `Exchange Server 2003`. However, renaming of the NetBIOS domain name is not supported in any version of Exchange Server. Other non-Microsoft applications might also not support domain rename.

For this time easy Guide, I will show you all how to rename domain name in Windows Server 2016, the process is straightforward. but as usual. backup any necessary information and Server before you proceed & I always advice, please do this exercises in LAB Environment (Hyper-V). Don't simply take any risk by doing this is production environment unless you have to. ☐☐

The existing domain is `Windows.ae` and I will rename it to `Sifad.local`

So, let get started.

1 - Open your `System Properties` and check your `existing domain name`, if you see from my Windows Server 2016 `system properties`, my existing domain name is `Windows.ae`. This will be change to `Sifad.local` in the short while.

1.webp

2 - Next, open your `Server Dashboard`, go to Tools & click `DNS` to open `DNS Manager`.

2.webp

3 - on the `DNS Manager`, you must create the `New DNS Zone (Sifad.local)`, this is to make sure that after whole process successfully, your `member server and Windows clients can join to new Domain name`.

To `create new DNS Zone`, Right Click `Forward Lookup Zone`, and click `New Zone`

3.webp

4 - On the `Welcome to the New Zone Wizard`, just click Next button.

4.webp

5 - On the Zone Type, Click `Primary Zone` and click Next.

5.webp

6 - On the `Active Directory Zone Replication Scope`, click button `To all DNS servers running on domain controllers in this domain: Windows.ae` and click Next.

6.webp

7 - In the `Zone Name`, key in your `New Domain Name`, my new Domain Name is `Sifad.local`.

7.webp

8 - On the `Dynamic Update`, Click `Allow only secure dynamic updates (recommended for Active Directory)`, and click Next.

8.webp

9 - On the `completing the New Zone Wizard`, click `Finish` to complete the process.

9.webp

10 - On DNS Manager, you can see my new `Domain Name is listed (sifad.local)`.

10.webp

11 - Next, open `Command Prompt`, run as administrator.

11.webp

12 - In CMD, type `rendom /list` and press enter - this command use to generate a state file named `Domainlist.xml`. This file contains the current forest configuration.

12.webp

13 - Next, open computer and browse to `C:\Users\Administrator` folder to get your `Domainlist.xml`.

13.webp

14 - Once you see the `Domainlist.xml`, right click the file name & choose `Edit`. I going to change the DNSname and NetBiosName in this `Domainlist.xml file`.

14.webp

15 - Once the `Domainlist.xml` open, you can see there are few existing Domain name, `change this existing domain name to new domain name`. **(Refer to picture)**

15.webp

16 - once you change to new Domain name, make sure you save the `Domainlist.xml` file.

16.webp

17 - After you save the `Domainlist.xml` file, On the CMD, type `rendom /showforest`. This is to show the potential changes; this step does not make any changes.

17.webp

18 - Next, type `rendom /upload`. This is to upload the rename instructions (`Domainlist.xml`) to the configuration directory partition on the domain controller holding the domain naming operations master role.

18.webp

19 - Next, type `rendom /prepare`. This use to verify the readiness of each DC in the forest to carry out the rename instructions. This should contact all DC's successfully and return no errors before proceed to next process.

19.webp

20 - Next, type `rendom /execute`. This is to `verifies readiness` of all DC's and then preforms the rename action on each one.

“Remember also there will be a service interruption during this process. Once the process successful, your DC Server will be restarted.”

20.webp

21 - Once your DC Server restarted, log in using the new Domain name as Administrator.

21.webp

22 - Next, after you successfully log in, open System Properties and check your old Domain Name is now gone. Replace by new Domain name.

22.webp

23 - Next, open CMD again, and type gpfixup /olddns:windows.ae /newdns:sifad.local This is to refresh all intra Domain references and links to group policy objects.

23.webp

24 - Next, type gpfixup /oldnb:DC-CLOUD /newnb:sifad.

24.webp

25 - Next, type rendom /clean. This is to remove references of the old domain name from AD.

25.webp

26 - Next, type rendom /end. This is to unfreeze the forest configuration and allow further changes. This was frozen during the rendom /upload step.

26.webp

27 - Next, Open DNS Manager, click your new created domain (Sifad.local), here you can see your own IP listed but we still have long way to go to make sure this DNS Zone is working.

27.webp

28 - Next, turn on your client PC, for this exercise I'm using Windows 10 as a client. Open System Properties and join to new Domain (sifad.local). Windows Security box will show up and now key in administrator and domain password and click OK (Welcome to the sifad.local domain). (Refer pictures)

28.webp

29.webp

30.webp

31.webp

29 - After your Windows 10 restart, log in as a domain administrator.

32.webp

30 – Once you log in, double check Windows 10 System Properties. Now your Windows 10 successfully join in to new Domain (Sifad.local).

33.webp

31 – Now, go to the Server 2016 and open DNS Manager, you can see now your Windows 10 Client is listed in DNS.

34.webp

32 – You can also check in Active Directory Users & Computers that your Windows 10 Client now also listed.

35.webp

This ends the rename process and we have a dc now with a new domain name.

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