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How can I install Intelligent Message Filter on Exchange Server 2003 Service Pack 2?

By: Daniel Petri

Page updated: 05-02-2006

Microsoft Exchange Intelligent Message Filter is a product developed by Microsoft to help companies reduce the amount of unsolicited commercial e-mail (UCE), or spam, received by users.

IMF used to be a stand-alone tool downloadable from Microsoft. Although one can still download and install it separately ([here](#), if you insist), IMF is now an integral part of Exchange Service Pack 2 (SP2).

As usual, one should read the [Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 Service Pack 2 Release Notes](#) before installing SP2. This is more important in regards to the installation and configuration of the Intelligent Message Filter in SP2.

Daniel Petri's Exchange Server Recommendations

By the way, if you are looking to really master [Exchange Server](#) (or other Windows 2003 networking skills), I strongly recommend that you try the Windows 2003 Video Training at [Train Signal](#). I receive hundreds of emails a month asking for my "recommendation for IT training" and I discovered this company several months ago. I like to send people their way because the training is so good (and it cuts down on a lot of my email!). I have used and reviewed A LOT of training products over the years and none of them come close to matching the quality or amount of detail found in Train Signal's courses. Read more (and watch a demo!) on their [Exchange Server 2003 Training](#).

Daniel Petri

Installing IMF (without Exchange 2003 SP2)

If you still do not have [Exchange 2003 SP2](#) (and why don't you?) you can d/I the IMF standalone tool from the link above and manually install it. Service Pack 2 users do not need to manually perform these steps.

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Microsoft MVP Program

After downloading IMF you can now install it on your machine. Read the [Block Spam with Exchange 2003 Intelligent Message Filter](#) page for more info.

Once you've installed SP2, do not install IMF v1 again!

Installing IMF (with Exchange 2003 SP2)

After downloading Exchange Server 2003 SP2 you can now install it on your machine. However, make sure you read the following information before doing so:

Uninstall IMF v1 first!

Exchange 2003 SP2 setup program will check for the presence of IMF v1 on the server, and if found it will display an error that the older IMF v1 needs to be uninstalled first before SP2 (with IMF v2 bundled in) can be installed.

Important note: There seems to be a bug in the SP2 setup program that will sometimes, under specific circumstances, to ignore the fact that IMF v1 is in fact installed on the machine, and will proceed without warning. In this case, IMF v2 will not work. Make sure you remove IMF v1 prior to installing SP2.

If there was no IMF v1 prior to installing SP2

The [Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 Service Pack 2 Release Notes](#) has a note about the need to manually create a container in the Active Directory prior to installing SP2 (if there was no IMF v1 installed on the system prior to installing SP2).

In order for Intelligent Message Filter to function a container must be created within Active Directory directory service. This container will NOT be present unless you used to run the IMF v1 add-on tool. If not present, you must create it manually.

This global Microsoft Active Directory object "CN=UCE Content Filter" holds content filter configuration information used by the spam filter, and the information on this object applies across all servers in the system.

You must have elevated rights to create this container - either Exchange Full Administrator or Exchange Administrator role at the organization level. The first time that you try to upgrade to a released or SP1 version of Exchange Server 2003, your permissions will be checked and a warning displayed if you do not have the correct

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rights level. After the first upgrade is completed successfully, the system checks for the container and allows you to proceed with a more restricted permission set, such as Exchange Administrator role at the administrative group or higher.

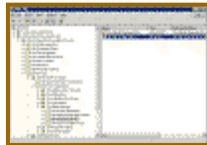
I have tested installing SP2 on many machines, and so far I can only say that it seems to me that there is no actual need for this container to be present. IMF will work either way, or so it seems. Please do send me a [feedback](#) if you think otherwise.

In order to create this folder follow these steps:

1. Go to Start > Run. Type *adsiedit.msc* and press Enter.

Note: In order to have the Adsiedit tool you will need to install the Windows Server 2003 Resource Kit tools, found here: [Download Windows 2003 Reskit Tools](#).

2. Browse down to the location shown in the screenshot. Right click in the right frame and select new->object to create the new container (give it the proper name of course).



Create the proper registry entry

IMF also requires the presence of the following registry key:

This key is required for certain advanced functions. This key only exists if you previously had IMF v1 installed. If it is not present, create it manually and restart the SMTP service to enable the extended functionality.

Configuring IMF

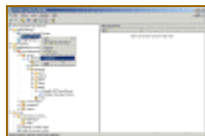
Configuring Intelligent Message Filter involves two settings:

Gateway Blocking Configuration - In Gateway Blocking Configuration, you establish a threshold based on a spam confidence level (SCL) rating above which the gateway server takes action on the message. You also define the type of action you want the gateway to take.

Store Junk E-mail Configuration - In Store Junk E-mail Configuration, you define the thresholds based on an SCL rating that Microsoft Exchange 2003 mailbox stores use to determine whether to deliver messages to a user's Inbox or Junk E-mail folder.

In order to configure IMF follow these steps:

1. Open the Exchange System Manager snap-in (ESM).
2. Expand your Organization object, expand Global Settings. Right-click Message Delivery and choose Properties.



3. Notice there is a new tab named "Intelligent Message Filtering". Click on it.
4. In the Gateway Blocking Configuration section enter the number you chose, based upon your own preferences. I use 7, but you may want to experiment with lower or higher numbers. Selecting a lower number for the SCL rating filters more messages, but also increases the likelihood of false positives, which are legitimate messages that appear to be UCE. Selecting a higher number for the SCL rating filters fewer messages, but also reduces the likelihood of false positives.
5. Now choose the action to perform when blocking messages. You can select Archive



6. In the Store Junk E-mail Configuration select your desired threshold. I use 5. but again, you may want to experiment with lower or higher numbers.
7. Click Ok.

After you configure Intelligent Message Filter, you must enable this filter on all inbound gateway SMTP virtual servers.

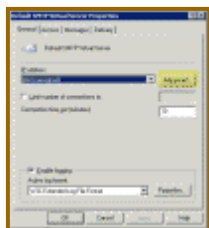
For **SP1** follow the steps outlined in the [Block Spam with Exchange 2003 Intelligent Message Filter](#) page.

For **SP2** follow on:

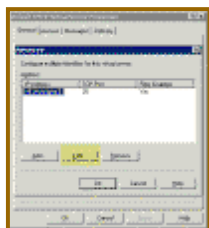
1. Expand the Administrative Group folder, then expand the Servers folder, then expand each server that will be configured with IMF.
2. Expand the server object and click to expand the Protocols folder. Expand the SMTP folder. Right-click the Default SMTP Virtual Server and choose Properties.



3. In the General tab click Advanced.



4. In the Advanced window, select the IP address setting line and then click Edit.



5. In the Identification window click to select the Apply Intelligent Message Filter checkbox. Click Ok.



6. Click Ok all the way out. Restart the SMTP Service.

After the configuration of IMF

Make sure you monitor your Junk Mail folder. Test your e-mail software (it does not necessarily have to be Outlook) and make sure you don't have too many false positives. If you do, or if you see that legitimate e-mail is deleted or treated as junk you can always go back to the IMF configuration screen and lower your SCL rating.

Note: IMF v2 will ignore messages that have attachments with the size of 3MB or larger. This is by design.

If you're running Exchange 2003 SP2 you can (and should) read the [Updating Intelligent Message Filter in Exchange Server 2003 SP2](#) page.

Related articles

You might also want to read the following related articles:

- [Block Spam with Exchange 2003](#)
- [Block Spam with Outlook 2003](#)
- [Combating Spam in the Corporate Environment](#)
- [Download Exchange 2003 Intelligent Message Filter](#)
- [GFI MailEssentials for Exchange/SMTP - more info](#)
- [How to Post to Newsgroups Without Getting spammed?](#)
- [Red Earth Policy Patrol - more info](#)
- [Sender Policy Framework](#)
- [Spam Marshall - More Info](#)
- [Updating Intelligent Message Filter in Exchange Server 2003 SP2](#)

Links

[Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 Service Pack 2 Release Notes](#) 

[Exchange Intelligent Message Filter](#) 

[Microsoft Exchange Intelligent Message Filter Deployment Guide \(2.2mb\)](#) 

[Microsoft Exchange Intelligent Message Filter Readme](#) 

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