

Logging off users on Windows Server 2016 with Remote Desktop Services

You may want to see which users are logged on to your Windows 2016 Server at any given time and may want to logoff a user. Users can be “active” on a server or in a “disconnected” session status which means they disconnected from the server but didn’t log off. Since disconnected sessions continue to utilize server resources, we recommend you enable a group policy to log off disconnected sessions automatically after a specific time period such as 5 minutes or X hours – easiest method is to enable a group policy to set session time limits for all users as follows:

1. Cmd prompt, **gpedit.msc**
2. Computer Configuration, Admin Templates, Windows Components, Remote Desktop Services, Remote Desktop Session Host, Session Time Limits
 1. Enable appropriate group policies and modify as needed
 2. We recommend setting this one because it will prevent disconnected sessions from consuming server resources — “Set time limit for disconnect sessions”
3. After modifying group policies, you can force an update without rebooting by typing “**gpupdate /force**” at cmd prompt

By default, we now release Windows 2016 Servers with the disconnected session limit set at 5 minutes. We strongly recommend keeping this group policy at 5 minutes or change it to another time amount that you want. We don’t enable a default policy to log off “idle” sessions after X period of time but it is recommended that you enable this at X hours or X days.

To see detail on each users session (how long it has been active, if disconnected or idle, etc.), you can open a command prompt and type in “**quser**” which will show each user with session stats.

We haven’t seen this happen very frequently, but if a user logs on to the server and the screen remains black, it is likely because the user has an existing disconnected session that has not be fully logged off. To resolve this, log into the server as an Administrator and log off the User’s disconnected session. When the User logs in again, they should see their full desktop session without any issues.

Steps to view and log off users:

1. Login as Administrator or account with administrator rights
2. Open Task Manager by right clicking the bottom tool bar
3. Click on “More” or “Detail” to view all tabs of Task Manager

4. Go to the “Users” tab which will show the users that are logged on the server
5. Right click on a username and select “Log Off”
6. Task_manager_log_off_users

We recommend that users be educated to log off from the server when their tasks are completed (start, click on username, select log-off or sign-off) instead of just disconnecting the session by clicking the X in the upper right corner which doesn't log the user off and only disconnects the session.

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