11 Running a local Web server

What is a Web server?

A *Web server* is a program that runs on a computer and waits for requests (usually from other computers over a network) for Web pages and related files located on the server computer. When you use a *Web client*, such as a Web browser, to click on a link or fill out a form, the client sends a request for the specific document or program to the server. The Web server then returns the page or result.

Web servers and clients communicate using HTTP (*HyperText Transfer Protocol*).

Introducing ZBServer Pro

ZBServer Pro is an Internet server program that runs on your local PC. While you can use ZBServer Pro to host your own Web, Gopher, Talk, or FTP site through a dedicated Internet connection (for example, an ISDN or T1 connection), you can also use it on a stand-alone PC to test server-side operations on your Web pages, such as CGI scripts, image maps, and FTP downloads.

ZBServer Pro Limited Edition is a subset of the full ZBServer Pro Edition from ZBSoft Corp. See their Web site, *http://www.zbserver.com/*, for a special upgrade offer for SoftQuad HoTMetaL PRO 4.0 users.

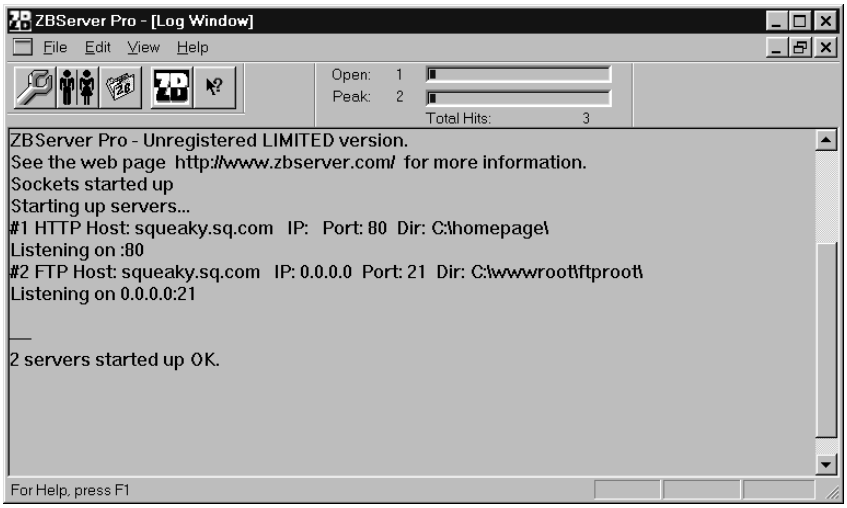
Running ZBServer Pro

To run ZBServer Pro:

- Start ZBServer Pro from the Start menu.
- In the *status area* of the taskbar, click on the ZBServer Pro icon.
- Choose Show ZBServer from the pop-up menu; this brings up the ZBServer Pro window.

The ZBServer Pro interface

The ZBServer Pro window has menus, a status bar at the bottom, and a toolbar and hit counter bar at the top. You can remove the toolbars, status bar, and hit count bar by deselecting them in the View menu.



The main window area displays information about the server status. From the View menu, you can select which events (for example, HTTP request headers) you want to display in the main window.

Configuring ZBServer Pro

While you can use ZBServer Pro to host your own Internet site on machines with dedicated Internet connections, the following will explain how to configure ZBServer Pro on a stand-alone PC as a server for testing your Web pages. For information about configuring ZBServer Pro as an Internet-connected server, consult the ZBServer Pro online help.

ZBServer Pro settings

The following instructions will configure ZBServer Pro to run on a stand-alone PC. These instructions do not cover all of the configurable options. See the ZBServer Pro online help for more information about settings not explained here.

To configure ZBServer Pro:

- Choose Settings... from the Edit menu, or click on the (settings) toolbar button; this brings up a tabbed dialog box.

General settings

These settings define the host machine.

- Fill in your name and company (if applicable).
- Fill in your email address.

For a stand-alone PC, you do not need to specify a DNS Host Name or Host IP.

You can use the local machine name of your PC for the DNS Host Name. If you have a dial-up network connection for Windows 95, you may have set up your PC with a host name. To find out what the machine name is:

- Go to the Windows 95 Control Panel.
- Double-click on the Network icon.
- Click on the Identification tab.

The machine name will be displayed.

Servers settings

This tab configures the Web (HTTP) and FTP servers. The upper portion of the dialog box specifies the default folders that each server will access on your PC. You can use the default folders for each server or specify your own folders; for example, you may just want to use the folder where your local Web page files are located.

> **Note** ZBServer Pro will place a dummy root file called index.htm in the Web server folder. If you use the folder where your Web pages are already located, it will not overwrite an existing index.htm file. However, the Web server looks for index.htm or index.html as the default root page in that order; if the root page of your existing Web site is index.html, you must delete the dummy index.htm file that ZBServer placed in the directory or the server will serve that file by default.

You do not need to change the port settings.

The lower portion of the tab contains a list of active servers. If you have changed the default folder for the Web server, you should change the settings for HTTPD server to match. To do this:

- Click on the icon next to the httpd server listing; this highlights the server.
- Click on the Edit button; this brings up a dialog box where you can specify the new directory name.
- Click on OK .
- Click on Apply to complete the Servers tab.

You will be prompted to restart ZBServer Pro to effect the changes. You can wait until you have finished configuring the server.

CGI settings

Use the CGI settings to specify the path of a Perl Interpreter and the folder containing your Perl library files. Windows versions of Perl are available for download from the Internet.

- In the Perl Compiler text box, type the path to your Perl Interpreter; for example, *c:\perl\perl.exe*.
- In the Perl library text box, type the folder that contains your Perl library files; for example, *c:\perl*.

- Check CGI Debug Mode if you want to debug your CGI scripts; if this is checked, ZBServer Pro will keep old copies of the CGI and Perl input, content and output files. It will also send the CGI Debug message to CGI programs. This is useful when you are programming your own scripts or trying to get new CGI scripts to run.
- You can specify the GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) information to CGI programs that request it. This should be a value in seconds to be added to GMT to reach local time.

Shared folders settings

The Shared Folders tab sets access restrictions to any folder on any drive (local or remote) mounted on your computer. You can also use this dialog to set more detailed levels of permissions for your users and groups.

The Paths list shows all folders that ZBServer Pro is configured to share. Click on a path to edit its settings. Each line shows the URL Path, DOS Path, Owner field, Access field and the Allows fields. The Allows fields are abbreviated as C (for Allow CGI), M (for Allow Messages) and D (for Allow DIR). These settings are important if you are using ZBServer Pro as server on a network. For more information, see the ZBServer Pro online help for this tab.

Miscellaneous settings

The Misc tab sets the following options that are applicable to stand-alone PCs:

- Temp Directory – The location of the temporary file folder. Cache and other system information will be temporarily stored in this folder when necessary.
- Cache DNS Hits – Speeds up DNS lookups by caching the last few looked up hostnames.
- Start as 95 Service – Adds an entry to the Windows 95 registry so that ZBServer Pro will startup automatically before the normal login screens.
- Minimize after start – ZBServer Pro will minimize after starting up.
- Hide after start – ZBServer Pro will hide after starting up. If ZBServer Pro is hidden, you can access it from the *Status Area* of the taskbar.

- Ask before quitting – ZBServer Pro will prompt you before exiting the program.
- Beep on POSTs – ZBServer Pro will beep whenever it gets a POST command; for example, when a message is posted to the message board or when a CGI program is run.
- Send Buffer Size – How much data ZBServer Pro sends at one time.
- Read Timeouts – How long (in seconds) before ZBServer Pro closes a connection.

To complete the configuration of ZBServer Pro, you will have to close it down and restart it.

Serving a page

Once you have configured ZBServer Pro, you can access your local Web pages just as if you were surfing the Web. Your Web pages should be located in the folder that you specified as the default in the Servers tab of the Settings dialog box. In order to surf to your home page, you simply use 'localhost' as the domain name; ZBServer Pro will automatically serve any file named *index.htm* or *index.html*.

For example, if the default folder for the server is *homepage*, and the folder contains a file called *index.html*, you would type the following in your Web browser:

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http://localhost
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ZBServer Pro would then serve the *index.html* page. This is typically the filename that Internet service providers specify for the root page of your Web site.