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One of the great features about Active Directory (AD) is how easy it is to set up.

However, as a business grows, without a well thought out architectural plan, Active Directory can quickly become a real headache. One piece of AD that requires a solid plan is **Sites**.

The main purpose of a Site is to reduce replication traffic over the WAN and to insure that users have access to the closest AD resources. Let's look at a few requirements and best practices for how to design Sites to optimize network traffic.

A **Site** is a physical grouping of machines based on a TCP/IP subnet (like a LAN). A Site can contain multiple subnets and multiple domains. By default, the Default-First-Site-Name Site is created when the domain is set up and all servers added to that domain will be part of the default site.

If we left the defaults, there would be a lot more replication traffic over the WAN link. Take a look at the diagram (Fig. 1). At default settings, members of the Tacoma and Portland Sites could be attempting to authenticate to the Seattle domain controllers, which would slow them down greatly.

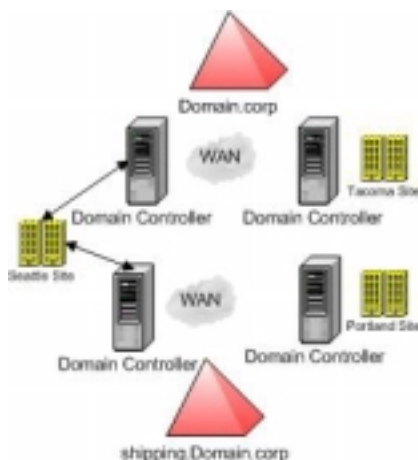


Fig 1. A Domain is a logical grouping while a site is a Physical grouping.

To configure Sites, open up the Active Directory Sites and Services snap-in from Administrative Tools. The default Site can be easily and safely renamed.

As the diagram shows (See Fig 1) the two logical domains (**domain.corp** and **shipping.domain.corp**) are divided into three physical Sites (Seattle, Tacoma and Portland). The physical Seattle Site has a domain controller in both domains. The Tacoma Site has a domain controller in the **domain.corp** domain and the Portland Site has a domain controller in the **shipping.domain.corp** domain.

Let's look at the solution. In the diagram, you can see that we have created one new site and moved the domain controllers into the correct sites. We've renamed the Default-First-Site-Name for the domain **domain.corp** to **Seattle Site**, and we've renamed the Default-First-Site-Name for the domain **shipping.domain.corp** to **Portland Site**.

Then we set up the subnets for each Site that map to each local LAN. We then created a site called Tacoma and moved the Domain Controller in the Tacoma office out of the Seattle Site and into the Tacoma Site.

We then moved the domain controller for the **shipping.domain.corp** located in the Seattle office into the Seattle Site. We can then use the Inter-Site Transports to **control replication** between domain controllers and between Sites.

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Use "Sites" in Active Directory to efficiently manage replication traffic and ensure that users use local resources.