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## Microsoft's DNS Has More Flaws

By [Frank J. Ohlhorst](#), CRN  
New York

5:31 PM EST Fri., Feb. 09, 2001

The CRN Test Center discovered more flaws in Microsoft's DNS infrastructure while investigating the changes the company has made to date to prevent the recurrence of its recent outages.

Working with Johnny Chin of Onesimus Enterprises, an ISP based in New York, Test Center engineers examined Microsoft's start of authority (SOA) records using the nslookup utility. The Test Center found refresh and retry times set to 15 and 10 minutes, respectively. Those times are too short and can cause other DNS servers to experience time outs, Chin says.

Another setting, TTL, or time to live, is set to two hours. That value can cause cached copies of DNS records to be purged prematurely, leading to "not found" errors, Chin says.

Commenting on the recent DNS outages, a Microsoft spokesman told the Test Center that the company recently partnered with Akamai to host secondary DNS servers for Microsoft's Web properties.

When presented with the Test Center's recent findings, the spokesman reiterated points made by Microsoft CIO Rick Devenuti in an open letter, which stated, in part: "We have distributed access to DNS for Microsoft so that there is no single network performing name resolution, and we plan to further enhance the solution shortly."

However, Microsoft would not comment on whether it would change its SOA configuration or what specific enhancements it planned to make.

A WHOIS search confirmed Microsoft's new distributed DNS structure, while an nslookup showed no fewer than 12 name servers on four different networks. A trace using Neoworx's Neotrace Pro determined that the new DNS servers are now spread out among three time zones in the United States, with at least one DNS server located in Europe.

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