

# ARX Config, day two (and three, technically)



Don MacVittie, 2010-20-01

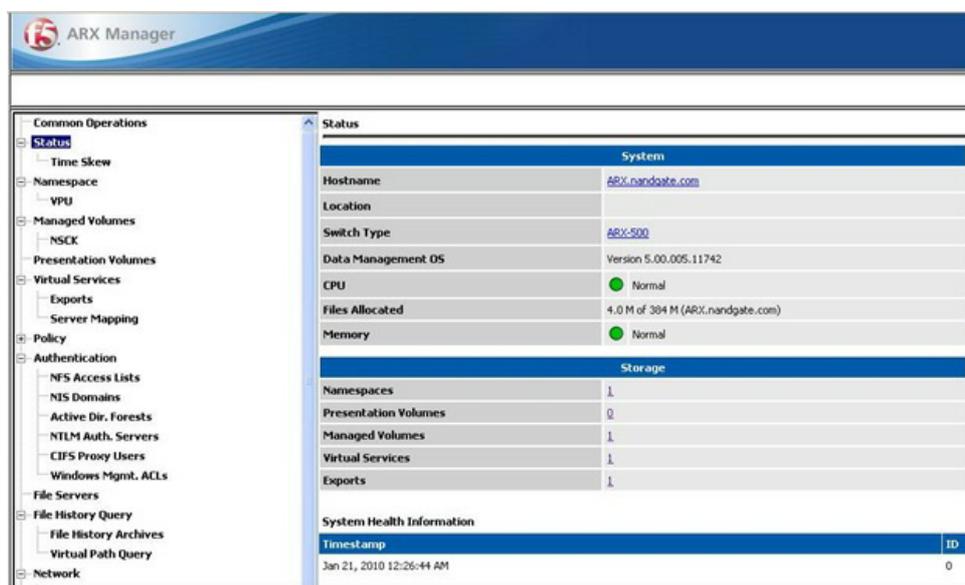
Okay, so I hit a wall and didn't post yesterday. That is not at all a statement about the ARX, indeed, it was acting as advertised. The problem is our network. It creaks a little bit around the corners.

We've got two NAS boxes, a bunch of Linux boxes (all patched, but some OS versions showing their age), a non-public Windows 2000 Server, and a slew of both Linux and WinXP clients. No Windows 7 yet, and we ditched Windows Vista pretty quickly.

Pretty simple setup, right? Yeah, if you're in IT, you know that the longer a network exists the more weird stuff happens on it. Ours is a hybrid, we use it for testing and for hosting our "production" servers. Several websites, mail, two DNS servers, a box whose job is to present our SAN as a NAS (yeah, we did that)... Apps we installed to test – either for us or for various employers – and a media server.

The first snag I hit was the DNS servers. I set up the base IPs on the switch okay – the management port on one subnet and the data/inband management port on another – and the ARX config to do this is as straight-forward as any I've seen. Then I put the new names into DNS (more on names in a minute)... Problem is that our DNS servers have to be restarted in a specific order. I always forget that, so I modded the files and restarted them, and... Nothing. Wasted more time than I should have before I recalled that this happened to me before several years ago because I had restarted the secondary first (IIRC). So I restarted DNS in the opposite order and BAM! Problem solved.

So now I have reliable connectivity other than a serial port, and I pop open the configuration tool in the web browser. I've already done the basic config, so now I'm creating the actual virtual directory structure and mapping my drives to it. Or so goes the theory.



ARX again performed exactly as advertised, and the screens are really clear. The logs don't contain as much information about errors as I'd like, but if I had the network overall config'd correctly, that wouldn't have been a problem.

The only issue when two people with masters degrees in computer science and high-tech jobs share a network is that it changes a lot. We *used* to have a Windows Domain Controller – ADS on Win2K. We even used to have a pre-ADS PDC... But when I looked, the NAS boxes were in a workgroup, not a domain. Hmmm. After poking around the network, Lori tweeted that the domain controller has been gone for a while. Doh! Okay, I look at the ARX config, and while it might be possible to run the CIFS portions without a domain controller, it certainly doesn't look like it. I could have popped off and asked the great people on our ARX Marketing team, or our IT staff who has also offered a hand, but I wanted to work through this to give you all the "starting cold" walk-through, and I knew a secret. I am Storage Guy in the house, and since most of our servers run Linux, all of our NASes support NFS. I don't create storage without it.

So I checked, and yes, both NAS boxes were configured to run NFS, and ARX has some great NFS support, so I chose this path (as opposed to making our one Windows server into an ADS domain controller).

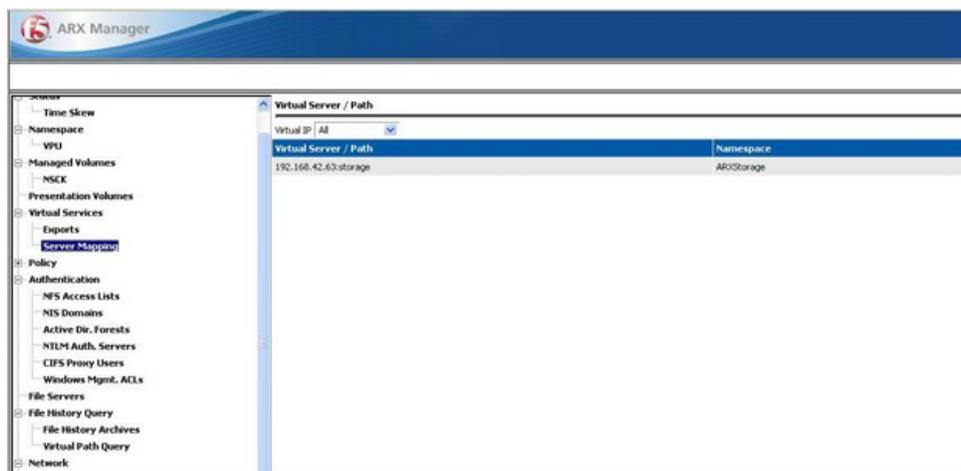
I was off! Well, kind of. This is the point where I admit that while I set everything up with NFS, I don't always mount NFS. In fact, it appears that my finely configured NFS interfaces on one NAS box had *never* been used.

Our primary servers are all Linux. I checked them. They were nearly all mounting the NAS boxes with CIFS. Nearly. All of the ones accessing the primary NAS box were mounting it CIFS.

Sad state of affairs. Now I had NFS configured, and had read up on how to add nfs shares to the ARX (easy as pie, just a few questions like "which file server?" and "What mount point", etc.)... But my shares were rather stale. So stale in fact that neither machine allowed the ARX access – not with an admin account, not with a user account. The ARX uses the admin task to handle things like moving files between tiers and other non-user activity, while the users just want their files.

Major sidetrack #2. The ARX was talking to both boxes, but wasn't able to mount them. Either of them, any of the shares. So I go look at the configurations. On the secondary NAS box it was a simple case of mount point permissions. On the primary? I don't know yet. That's where I sit. I have a managed volume on the secondary (a 2TB Infrant NAS if you care), and it appears to be loading, but the primary is still not letting me mount via NFS – not from a random Linux box, not from the ARX.

So what's the point of all of this? Well, you've got my "we've got a cruffy network" update, and Lori and I talked on the phone tonight about how we're going to rearchitect it after she returns – another fun time for reconfiguring the ARX ;-). And I've got at least one filer hooked up. Seems strange to me to call a brick a filer, but it's equivalent, I still need to get the other going and see what happens when it synchs directories - they're copied directory structures with some files on both and many others on one but not the other.



And if I can avoid it, I'm not going to take the fine offers of help from fellow F5ers. You are going to have to wade through most of this on your own if you install an ARX, and I want to give you a bit of an overview of one man's issues as much as I want to do the "look how cool and easy *this* was!" thing.

Off to get some rest, it's the 2 year old and I, off on our own tomorrow, I'm going to need that rest!

Tomorrow, we'll see if I can actually get the basic config together. This sounds bad, but remember that I have other duties, I've got about six hands-on hours into this including downloading and reading docs – less than a day of your time, or a day of your time if you hang out at the water cooler a lot. Weeks of your time if you read too much BoFH. ;-)

Until next time,

Don.

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F5 Networks, Inc. | 401 Elliot Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119 | 888-882-4447 | [f5.com](http://f5.com)

F5 Networks, Inc.  
Corporate Headquarters  
[info@f5.com](mailto:info@f5.com)

F5 Networks  
Asia-Pacific  
[apacinfo@f5.com](mailto:apacinfo@f5.com)

F5 Networks Ltd.  
Europe/Middle-East/Africa  
[emeainfo@f5.com](mailto:emeainfo@f5.com)

F5 Networks  
Japan K.K.  
[f5j-info@f5.com](mailto:f5j-info@f5.com)

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