

Task3000 Technical Specifications and Requirements

Introduction

We would like to recommend you, how to build reliable and cheap computer system, which will perform your job. From our experience we know, that buying the cheapest hardware and software do not lead to the goal that the job is done. Therefore we believe everybody is looking for solution, which perform the job with minimum resources used. Resources can be divided into:

1. Necessary hardware resources
2. Necessary software resources
3. Implementation resources

System stability – hardware issues

Is it possible to achieve the necessary stability, which we need to run automation on the Microsoft operating system? After several years of experience we can definitely say yes to the question. However, first condition is good hardware platform. Unfortunately, on the market are also very cheap computers, and Microsoft operating system is able to run on it somehow. But if you experience operating system crashes few times a day, your hardware platform is probably not good enough. Also, good test is the installation of the Windows NT or Windows XP/2000/2003 operating system. Very frequently you are not able to finish installation on such machines. We recommend very cheap solution for the servers, which consist of the usual computer with one or more processors and as much as memory as possible and two disks. Two disks are needed to achieve, that in case of disk crash of one disk everything (data, operating system etc.) is recoverable. Software mirror is possible on Microsoft Windows servers (not on Windows NT Workstation, Windows 2000 Professional or Windows XP). To improve the stability, use computer memory with error correction, and SCSI disks. SCSI disk are more expensive, but parity error is possible (on IDE disk usually there is no read/write test), some number of bad sectors can be relocated and usually they can be used longer, we experienced that usual IDE disks last only about 2 years on the non-stop operation, while SCSI disks are usually designed such that you can experience disk crash only after few years. Disk connected to FireWire adapters can also be recommended, as they support parity as well. With Microsoft servers we can also use RAID5 solution called Stripe Set With Parity or other hardware RAID solutions. All that improves the stability of the system significantly. We are now running several Windows 2000 servers with Task3000 Server and UPS (back up power supply) for more than a year without rebooting and we still do not see the need to reboot the server in the future (however, we are rebooting machines for maintenance reason). For computer rooms with servers and even workstations only we highly recommend the air conditioning, because overheating can be great source of the problems.

System stability – software issues

Operating system like Windows 98 or Windows Me are not designed to run as servers, but can be used very effectively as workstations. To run Task3000 server (Task3000 Server or Task3000 Personal Server) operating system Windows NT 4.0 or higher is needed. Windows NT 4.0 Workstation, Windows 2000 Professional or Windows XP can be used as Task3000 server, if the number of simultaneously connected users is about 10 (according to Microsoft sources). Very cheap solutions is using the existing Windows 98 platforms for Task3000 Menu and Submitter or Task3000 Workstations and add one or more Task3000 Server for batch processing. This is recommended minimum, however we recommend at least Windows NT 4.0 for serious business use.

Implementation issues

Task3000 system was carefully designed on such way, that it require very little knowledge to implement. However, running your favorite application program automatically means, that you have to obtain and control necessary parameters for your application. It is possible to pass parameters thru environment variables, scripting etc. Task3000 system very popular feature is very easy system to run a part of the task (only selected steps). Automatically searching of the files by FileRC mechanism is new feature to control the execution of the tasks/steps. We have prepared few examples, which can serve as starting point for very complex projects.

We recommend you to test application with Task3000 Personal Server first. Only tested application is recommended to run under Task3000 Server to avoid unnecessary problems with messages from several tasks etc. Many of the programs, that you wish to run are designed on such way, that when something unexpected happen they try to ask somebody, what to do. This is of course proper reaction, if somebody is controlling the execution. On the dedicated server this is undesired reaction, but very rare applications have the feature to run silently. But frequently the solution is very easy and good even documented, but you are not aware of this. Please use our Trouble Ticket System and maybe hint from us will solve your problem easily.

Your Task3000 Development Team

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