

Configuring your Desktop Computer to Launch NoTouch Deployed Microsoft.Net® Windows Forms Applications

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NoTouch Deployment is a hot topic these days. Imagine being free from DLL Hell. You know what I mean - that sinking feeling when installing one application breaks another. Either it's happened to you, or it's happened to someone you know, and it happens all too much. This is where the Microsoft .Net Framework can come to the rescue. MicroApplications, Inc. has developed a simple test harness for you to experience the joys of running Rich User Interface Desktop applications deployed simply over the internet. The Smart Client architecture enabled by the .Net Framework combines the best of Rich UI This Client with the ease of deploying and managing Thin Client (Poor UI) Web Applications.

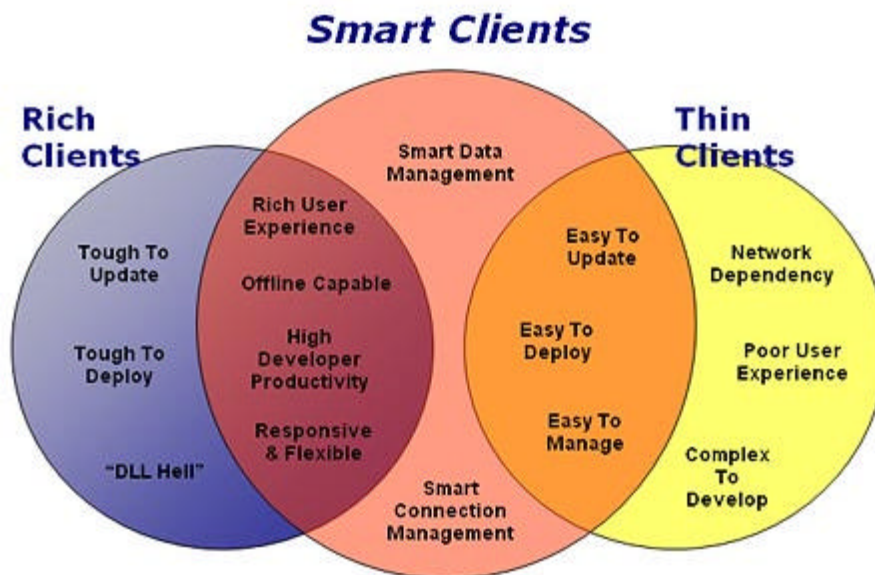


Figure 1. Smart Clients are a blend of the benefits of both Rich and Thin Clients

There are just a few things you will have to do on your end to make this work, and the purpose of this whitepaper is to walk you through the steps required.

The first thing you need to do is to add <http://www.microapplications.com/> to your trusted sites in Internet Explorer (Netscape users: I'm not sure we have a solution for you). You can do this by selecting Tools, Internet Options from within Internet Explorer, and then selecting the Security tab at the top of the resulting dialog box as shown on the following page.

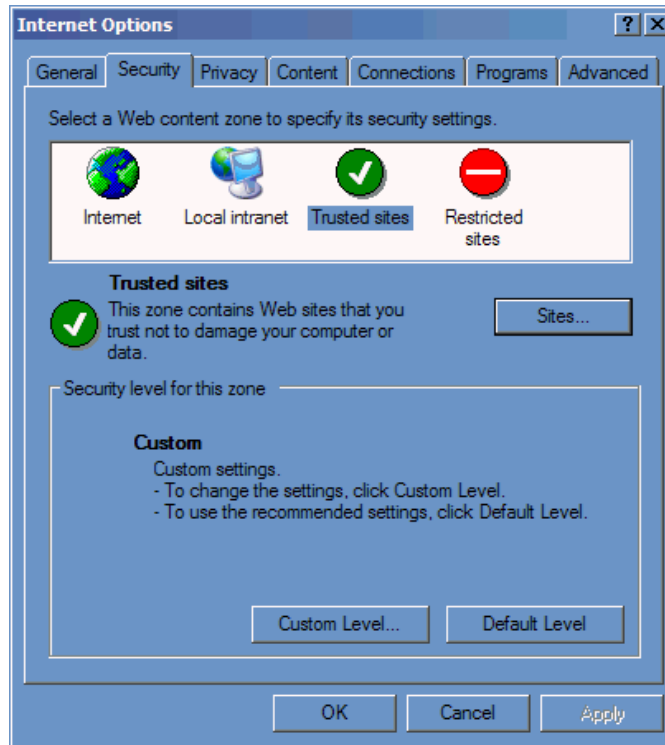


Figure 2. Internet Explorer Security Options Dialog

Highlight the Trusted Sites icon as shown above, and you will see what security level you currently have selected. As you can see, I have a Custom Level specified (more on that later). Click on the Sites button and add <http://www.microapplications.com/> as shown below.



Figure 3. Internet Explorer Trusted Sites Dialog

Click on the Add Button, and then the OK button to complete this step. Notice that the https: checkbox is unchecked, since you will not be accessing our secure site.

Back on the Security tab page, if your dialog box has a slider on the left, you can either slide it to Medium or High, or click on the Custom Level button and set the first two radio button groups as shown below.

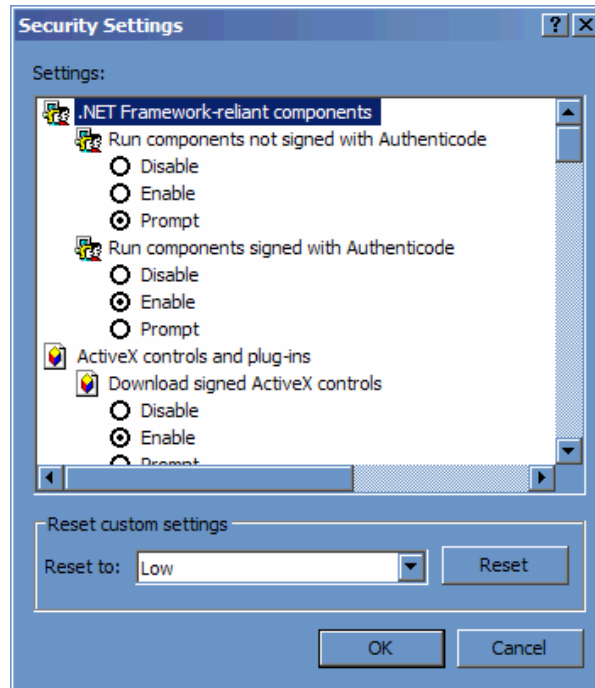


Figure 4. Internet Explorer Trusted Sites Custom Security Level Dialog

If you do not see the .Net Framework-related components group, then you do **NOT** have the .Net Framework installed, and you can quit reading this whitepaper! I like to set components not signed with Authenticode to prompt me, and signed ones to run automatically. It's a matter of personal preference (or paranoia).

With that done, you should be able to point your browser directly to our application by following the links on our corporate page or in our blog article and post. While the application tries to run, you will most likely see the prompt dialog on the following page.

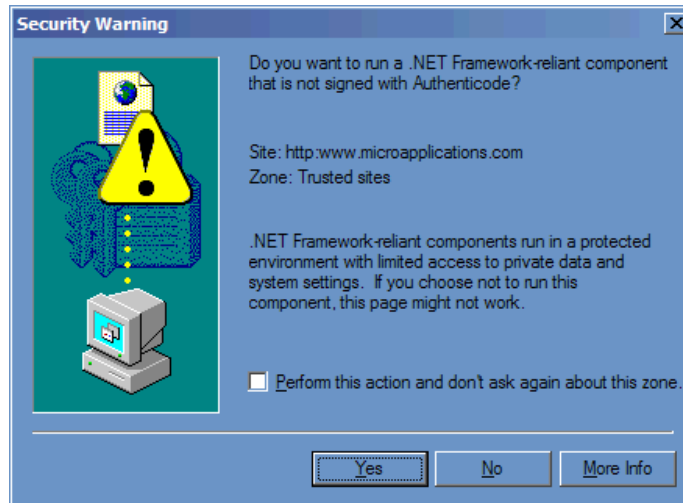


Figure 5. Internet Explorer Security Warning Dialog

Click the Yes button and the application will load. I generally do not turn off these types of prompts by checking the checkbox offering to do this for me again later without asking. In a few moments, depending on your internet connection speed, you should see the startup screen of our ZipCodeWinFormClient application as shown below.

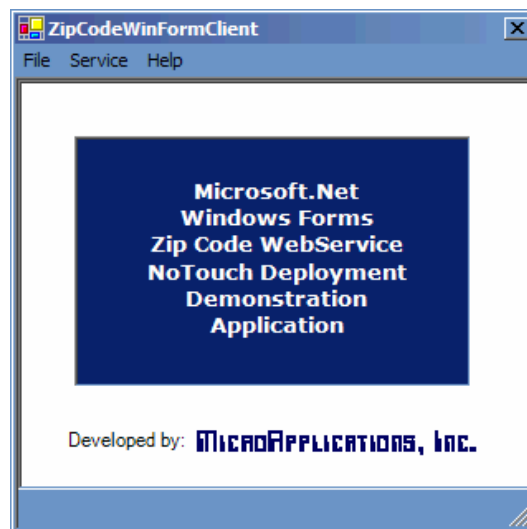


Figure 6. MicroApplications, Inc. ZipCodeWinFormClient Splash Screen

You can then use the application by selecting any of the three Services available, filling in the details requested, and executing the action button on each of the three service forms displayed. There is an About Dialog, Status Bar prompts and a File, Exit command just like any standard Windows desktop application. And, it was downloaded to to run on your desktop over the internet. Do not underestimate the importance of this technology. We intend to add the capability of exporting the grid results for the *ZipCodes in a City*, and *Locations near a ZipCode* services to an XML file on your desktop in an upcoming version upgrade.

There is an alternative way to set the security level for Trusted sites via the .Net Framework Configuration Wizards applet, located in the Administrative Tools folder of your Control Panel.

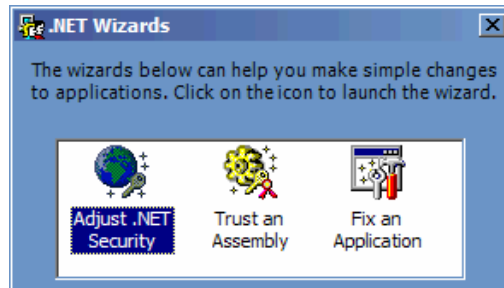


Figure 7. Microsoft .Net Configuration Wizard

Select the Adjust .Net Security icon, and you will see a dialog box asking you how you want to adjust security as shown below.

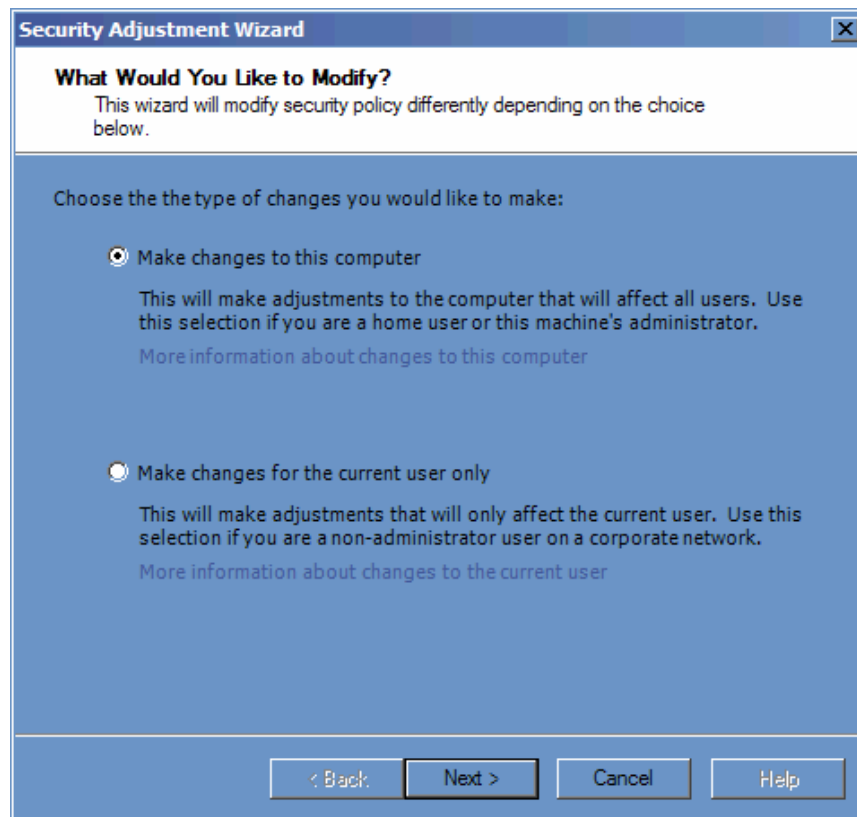


Figure 8. Microsoft .Net Configuration Security Adjustment Wizard

It is a matter of personal preference as to whether you want to make changes for the computer or just yourself. If you share your computer with others, you might want to play nice, and select the second radio button. Click the Next button, and you will see the Site Security dialog with a Security Level slider as shown on the following page.

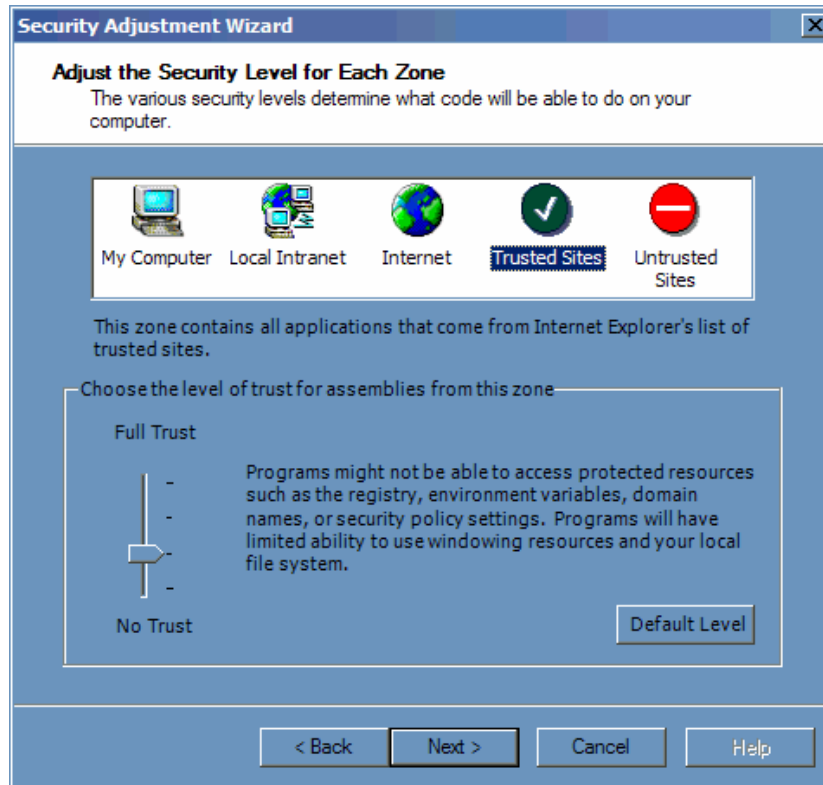


Figure 7. Microsoft .Net Configuration Wizard Zone Security Dialog

For the purposes of testing our ZipCodeWinFormClient application, you can raise the security level to Full Trust, run the application, and then reset the security level either here or in Internet Explorer.

The last thing you should know is that when you run NoTouch WinForms Applications over the internet, they are cached in a special area of your computer called the download cache. If you ever run into problems with these types of applications, you can browse to the Microsoft.Net/Framework/<version> subdirectory under your Windows Installation Directory (WINDOWS or WINNT) and run the gacutil program. To see all programs in the download cache, execute this command line:

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gacutil.exe /dl
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To clear the download cache, use /cdl

You may also want to clear your cached files in Internet Explorer by selecting Tools, Internet Options, and then clicking on the Delete Files button.

I have enjoyed learning how to present this technology to you, and I hope that this whitepaper is useful to you in preparing your computer to try it out! As always, we welcome comments, suggestions, or questions at any time via phone (407-647-6997) or email (bbaker@microapplications.com). Happy .Netting!
