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Setting up your hosts file

(V 1.0)

The hosts file

When you access another host by name on the Internet or any intranet/internet, your computer needs to know the remote host's IP address. You can get remote host addresses from DNS (Domain Name System) or from your computer's hosts file. This file lists the names and addresses of other hosts known by your computer.
When you need to know about thousands of hosts on the Internet, maintaining the hosts file is really too cumbersome a mechanism. Imagine having to spend all that time updating it as computers come and go or relocate on the Internet! In that case, you need DNS to locate remote hosts.

The location and name of the hosts file depend on the operating system and version of TCP/IP you use. Table 1 lists the hosts file locations for a few implementations of TCP/IP.

Table 1: Popular Locations for Hosts Files

Location	Operating System	Vendor
/etc/hosts	Linux and UNIX	Various
c:\winnt\system32\drivers\etc\hosts	Windows NT, 2000	Microsoft
c:\windows\hosts	Windows 95, 98	Microsoft
c:\windows\system32\drivers\etc\hosts	Windows XP	Microsoft
Netinfo database	Apple	Mac OS X
/etc/hosts	zOS	IBM

We can use the hosts file to temporarily point a domain to a different server for testing (for example) a new web site.

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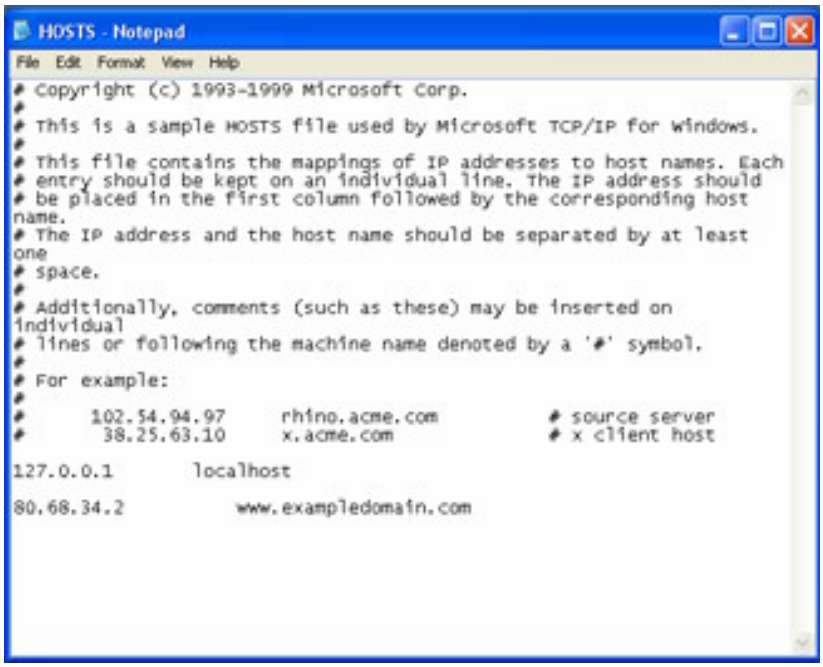
Changing the hosts file:

First locate your hosts file, the location is system dependant see **Fig 1** for possible locations.

Edit the file with Notepad or Wordpad it should look something like this :-



Move to the end of the file and add a new line with the IP address and domain name you require.

The additional line should look something like :-

```
80.68.34.2          www.mynewdomain.com
```

Save the file and your done.