

VPN Step-by-Step

If your enterprise has a Microsoft tunnel server in place to support broadband users, chances are that users who have Windows Mobile 2003 PDAs can immediately reap the VPN connectivity benefits I describe in "Using Windows Mobile 2003 to Access Exchange." To start using a VPN connection, you need only implement a few simple configuration settings on the PDA.

Windows Mobile splits network connection settings into My ISP and My Work Network categories. You configure VPN settings in the My Work Network section. The steps that follow assume that you already have connectivity to an ISP or to a wireless network configured on the PDA. To create the VPN settings, tap Start, Settings. Tap the Connections tab and select the Connections object. On the Tasks tab, select Add a new VPN server connection to display the Make New Connection window.

Enter a descriptive name for the tunnel in the Name field. Enter the Fully Qualified Domain Name (FQDN) or IP address of the tunnel server in the Host name/IP field. By default, Windows Mobile selects the more secure IP Security (IPSec) protocol. If you use a PPTP VPN server, select PPTP, then tap Next.

On the subsequent screen, enter your username, domain, and password to authenticate the tunnel connection. If you don't use DHCP to assign an IP address and name servers, tap Advanced and specify values as appropriate, then tap OK to return to the VPN screen and tap Finish.

To test the VPN, click the opposing arrows at the top of the PDA screen to display the Connectivity control box. Tap the Connect VPN link. If the connection fails, you'll receive a problem report. When the connection succeeds, the arrows become solid and you can tap them again to redisplay the Connectivity control box and see how long the VPN has been active.

To configure Microsoft Pocket Outlook to use the VPN, open the Inbox and tap the Accounts menu. If you've defined a connection, tap it, or tap New to create a connection definition. On the first email setup screen, enter your email address, then tap Next. Enter your account credentials, then tap Next. Specify the type of protocol you'll use (e.g., IMAP), then tap Next. Define the server information and tap Options. The first Options screen lets you define what connection to use. To tell Pocket Outlook that it needs a VPN connection to access the hosts you specified, tap the drop-down list and select Work, then tap Next. The remaining Options screens let you configure SSL and SMTP authentication settings, as well as how much of a message to download. Because you're using a tunnel, you probably don't need to

use SSL. You might still want to consider it, however, because your password and data will move in clear text between the tunnel server and the front end if you don't use SSL. Depending on your SMTP server's configuration, you might also need to authenticate to send mail. Now, when you activate the Inbox connection, Windows Mobile will automatically establish the VPN tunnel, then open the IMAP (or POP) and SMTP connections.