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Disable 'Shared Workspace' for all users when opening Office 2003 and 2007 files from a SharePoint Document Library.

The scenerio in this situation was a SharePoint Document Library was used to share content with external customers. Each customer was added to the site with read-only access. If we had a Word/PowerPoint file in the library the user could open it directly in Word/PowerPoint, which is fine, but they were able to see other users on the same site (thus other customers!!) as when opening the document the Shared Workspace was showing this information.

There is a way around this problem.

There is not an option from a SharePoint site to disable the Shared Workspace feature. It is the service which provides the information to the word document. This is a part of the Office 2003/Office 2007 feature set and has two options:

1) Disable through group policy for all machines internally to not show the users in the Shared Workspaces Pane which is thus determined at the client level.

2) Disable the service which provides the information to the office document. The service responsible to do so is dws.asmx and can be found under the
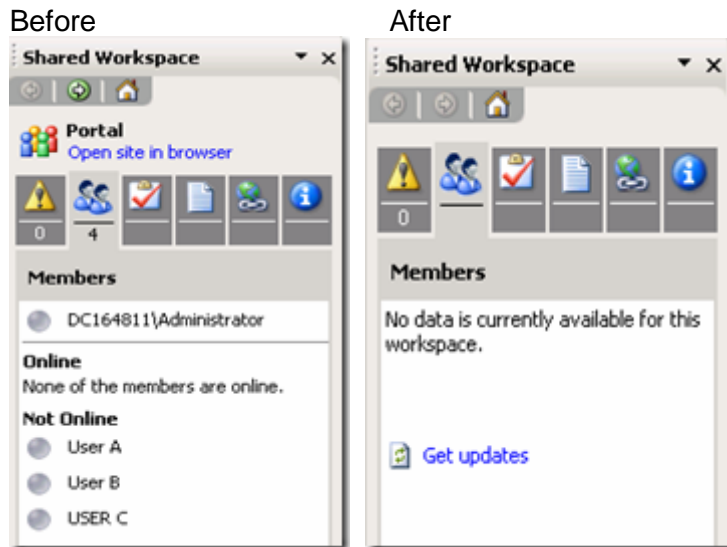
/60/ISAPI folder for WSS 2.0/SPS2003 and

/12/ISAPI folder for WSS3.0/MOSS 2007.

What was done was the file DWS.aspx was renamed:
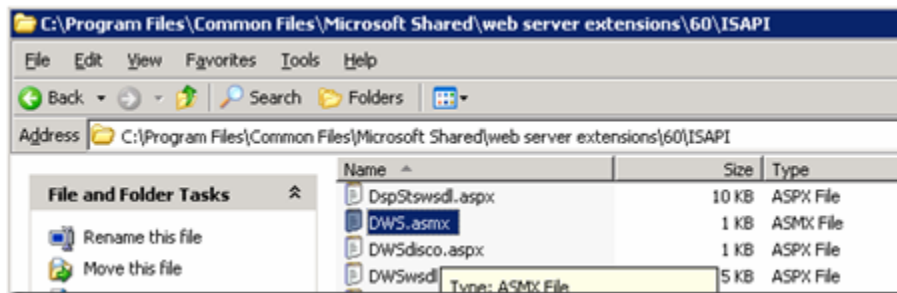
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Thus, when one open a Office document the user list is not shown:

Before   After

Another method:

To completely disable through the group policy open
GPEDIT.MSC
Access the location (example for Office 2003):

User Configuration | Administrative Templates | Microsoft
Office 2003 | Tools | Options | General | Service Options | Shared Workspace.
Set the policy "Show the shared Workspace Pane at startup when" to DISABLED
Set the policy Automatic Discovery to Enable and set to Off