

WebDAV

Enabling simple file transfers and management via WebDAV

In terms of file transfers, WebDAV is simply an alternative to FTP. Many FTP clients also support WebDAV, allowing users to choose between the two protocols when establishing a connection. While FTP provides similar functionality, WebDAV offers several unique advantages. First, since it's based on the HTTP (Web) protocol, firewalls that might interfere with FTP transfers will usually permit WebDAV sessions without special configuration. Also, a single standard for establishing encrypted sessions (SSL) is widely supported, simplifying secure transfers.

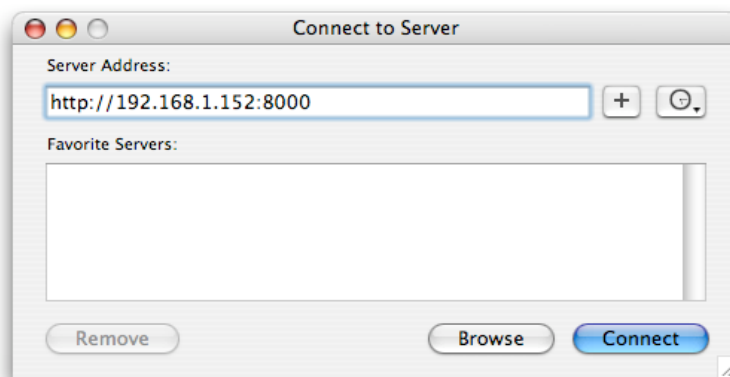
Enabling WebDAV In Rumpus

When the Rumpus Web server is enabled, WebDAV is also enabled by default. WebDAV support can be turned on or off in Rumpus using the "Enable WebDAV Access" option on the "Web Server" tab of the Web Settings window. The Rumpus Web Server, and the Web File Manager, also need to be enable in order for WebDAV to be functional.

All user account and security settings defined in Rumpus are applied to WebDAV access, just as they are for FTP and Web File Manager services. When a user account is defined in Rumpus, that account can be used for FTP, WFM, or WebDAV access, granting users the same file access permissions and capabilities regardless of the protocol used to connect to the server.

Connecting Via WebDAV From The Finder

With WebDAV enabled, it's easy to mount a Rumpus server as a volume on your desktop from anywhere on the Internet. Just choose "Connect To Server..." from the Finder's "Go" menu. When asked for the server address, enter "http://" followed by the server address and port number. (The port number isn't required if it is set to the Web default of 80.)



The address entered is exactly the same as that used to connect via Web browser, but be sure to include “http://”, as the Finder will attempt to make the connection via AFP by default.

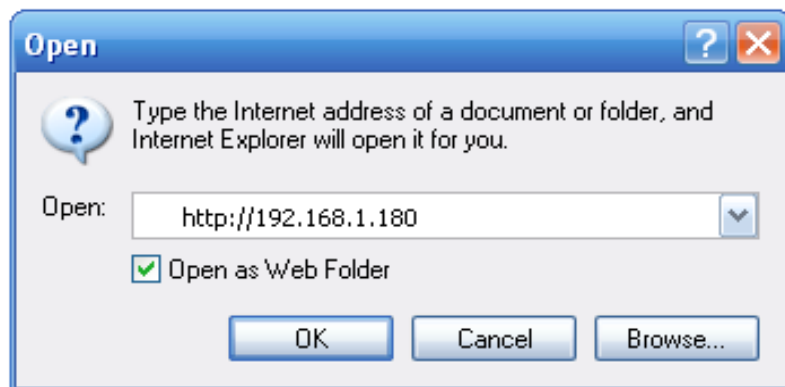
After entering the connection URL and clicking Connect, you will be prompted to enter a name and password. Any Rumpus user account can be used to access that user’s Home Folder. Uploading, downloading and managing files is then done as if the Rumpus server were a hard drive or any other standard volume mounted on your Mac desktop.

For Mac OS X systems, OS X 10.3.9 or later is required to access the Rumpus WebDAV service.

Connecting Via WebDAV From A Windows PC

There are several methods to mount a WebDAV server from Microsoft Windows XP or Vista. The easiest and most reliable is through Internet Explorer.

In Explorer, choose “Open ...” from the “File” menu, then enter the Web address of your Rumpus server in the Open dialog box. Check the “Open as Web Folder” option, then click “OK”.



When prompted, enter a Rumpus user account name and password. The Explorer window will display the list of files in the user home folder, allowing you to upload or download files by dragging them and providing options to delete, rename, etc.

Performance Considerations

Mac users often mount servers as desktop volumes and remain connected for long periods of time, actively transferring files only for brief periods during the session. A WebDAV session, however, will only connect and consume server resources while the volume is actually being accessed. In other words, if a user isn't actively transferring or managing files, there is no drain on the server at all, even though the volume is mounted on the user's desktop.

Because inactive sessions don't generate any server load whatsoever, there is no performance penalty to be paid when allowing clients to remain connected to your WebDAV server for extended periods of time.

However, the Finder's WebDAV client is somewhat inefficient compared to other options available. When transferring files by mounting the Rumpus server using "Connect To Server...", you will notice an excessive number of transactions reported in the Rumpus statistics. While the extra overhead involved shouldn't dramatically slow down file transfers using the Finder, you may want to consider using a 3rd party WebDAV client for routine transfer of very large numbers of files.

Secure WebDAV Sessions

WebDAV is actually an extension to the Web protocol, HTTP. WebDAV sessions can be encrypted using SSL, in the same way that standard HTTPS is encrypted. To enable SSL encrypted WebDAV, install and configure SSL tunneling, as described in the "Secure Transfers" article in this package. To connect securely, simply enter the URL as "https://", instead of "http://" when connecting.