



Level: Beginner
Works with: Notes/Domino
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Beginning with Notes Release 5 and the new Welcome Page feature, companies were able to customize how they wanted their users to see Notes when it was first launched from their desktops. Some companies may have wanted their intranet page to be the default page users saw when Notes opened; other companies may have wanted their Mission Statement written in big, bold letters, so it could be learned and applied to daily projects; and still others may have wanted to have current company news appear with every new day Notes was launched. The customized Welcome Page gave companies the ability to create a unique look and feel in Notes according to who the company was and how they wanted their users to make the most of the technology on their desktops.

With the release of Notes 6.0.1, customizing the Welcome Page has become an even easier task for administrators and makes it simple and fast to change the page as often as a company would like, getting rid of many manual steps that were necessary to do in R5. This article shows you exactly how to take advantage of these new features in Notes/Domino 6.0.1. By the end of this article, you will have a very simple customized Welcome Page for a fictional company called XYZ Company, and you will deploy it to a fictional consulting group called MyConsultants. This article is intended for Domino system administrators who have some basic experience with database creation and design.

Once you are comfortable with creating this custom Welcome Page, you can experiment with your own ideas. You can create as many Welcome Pages as you like. For example, you may want one page for your sales team and a different page for your development team. Through the use of policies, which are new to Notes/Domino 6, you can deploy different Welcome Pages to different individuals, groups, or organizational units. It is a good idea to create a prototype of what you would like the Welcome Page to look like, how you want the information organized on the page, and what the purpose of your Welcome Page should be before you start creating it in Notes.

What do you need to get started?

To create a customized Welcome Page, you must be an administrator with the 6.0.1 Domino server and all three 6.0.1 clients: Domino Administrator, Domino Designer, and Notes. Domino Designer is only needed to enable an agent that allows you to make advanced customizations to the Welcome Page. You should not make changes to any design elements that make up the Welcome Page if you want to deploy the Welcome Page to users because design elements are not included in the deployment process. You can only use the design elements that ship with the Bookmark template—the template with which you create your Welcome page.

Creating the MyConsultants group

Before we create a Welcome Page, we need to create a group that the Welcome Page can be deployed to. This is a fictional test group that will be created in your Domino Directory for the purpose of this article only. If you already have test users and test groups registered, and do not want to create more test users and groups, deploy your Welcome Page to your own test group.

Note: It is highly recommended that you use the same machine to complete all of the procedures throughout this article because custom Welcome Page information is written to the Notes.ini file on a machine. If the Welcome Page database is located on a different machine than the one you administer from, the Notes.ini file will not have the Welcome Page information written to it yet, and you will have to use a workaround to get the Administration machine to see your Welcome Page located on your other client. This workaround is discussed later in the article.

To create the MyConsultants test group, follow these steps:

1. Start your Domino server that you administer from and on which you will store your Welcome Page.
2. Start the Domino Administrator client.
3. Register the following test users in your Domino Directory (first name/last name): Consultant One, Consultant Two, and Consultant Three. There are no special requirements needed for these users, for example, an Internet password.
4. Add a multipurpose group to your Domino Directory called MyConsultants, then as members of the group, add the three test users you just created.

For more details about registering users and creating groups, refer to the [Domino 6 Administrator help](#).

Creating your Welcome Page database

Now that we have our test group to deploy the Welcome Page to, we can start creating the Welcome Page. The first thing you need to do is create a new database for your Welcome Page.

Note: For release 6.0.1, you should only use one database for your custom Welcome Pages. You can create an unlimited number of Welcome Pages. However, there is a limit of eight to ten Welcome Pages, depending on the length of the titles of the Welcome Pages, that will appear in the database drop-down list in the desktop settings document. We discuss this later in the article.

Follow these steps to create the Welcome Page database:

1. From the Domino Administrator, choose File - Database - New.
2. Keep Local as your server in the Server field.
3. Enter Custom Welcome as the title for your database in the Title field.
4. Keep the default title in the Filename field. (Note that you can change the filename of your database to differ from the title of the database; you can use any file name, except bookmark.nsf. For the purpose of this article, we keep it the same as the title.)
5. Keep Local as your template server in the Server field.
6. Select the Show advanced templates options.
7. Select the template Bookmarks (6) from the template list (bookmark.ntf), then click OK.
8. Once the database opens, choose File - Database - Access Control and change the -Default- access privilege to Reader. Note that if you do not change the default access to this database, the custom Welcome Page will not be copied to the Notes client when deployed via policies.

Close the database and continue with the next set of procedures.

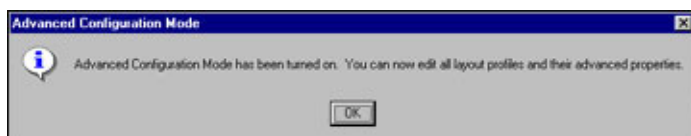
Setting up your Welcome Page database to allow advanced design modifications

The next step we need to take is to set up the Welcome Page wizard to allow you to make advanced design modifications to the Welcome Page. For this procedure, you need Domino Designer.

Enabling the Toggle Advanced Configuration Editor

The Toggle Advanced Configuration Editor is an agent that enables advanced design modifications. Follow these steps to enable the Toggle Advanced Configuration Editor:

1. Open Domino Designer and choose File - Database - Open.
2. Keep Local as your server in the Server field.
3. Select Custom Welcome from the Database list, then click Open.
4. From the Design pane of the Custom Welcome database, click Shared Code - Agents.
5. Select the (Toggle Advanced Configuration Editor) agent, then from the menu choose Agent - Run. The following message box opens when the agent is enabled:



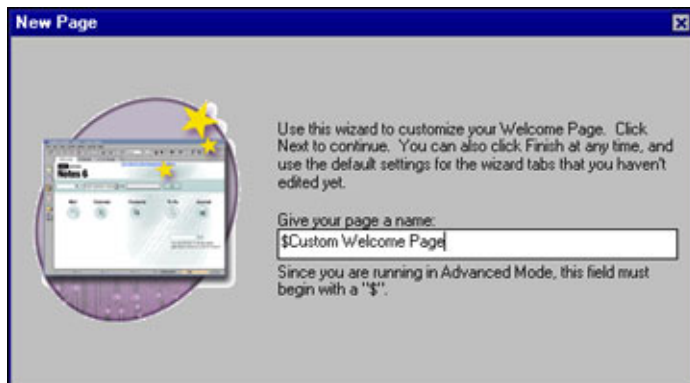
6. Click OK, and then click Done in the Agent Log.

7. Close the Custom Welcome database and close Designer.

Creating a title for your Welcome Page

Follow these steps to create a title for your Welcome Page:

1. Open the Notes Client and choose File - Database - Open.
2. Keep Local as your server in the Server field.
3. Select Custom Welcome from the Database list, then click Open.
4. Click "Click here for Welcome Page options" at the top of the Basics Welcome Page to open the Welcome Page options.
5. Click the Create a new Welcome Page button at the top of the Welcome Page. This opens the Welcome Page wizard.
6. In the "Give your page a name" field on the first page of the Welcome Page wizard, a dollar sign symbol (\$) at the beginning of the default title appears on the first page of the wizard. Leave the dollar sign symbol (\$), delete the text "My Page," and enter Custom Welcome Page.

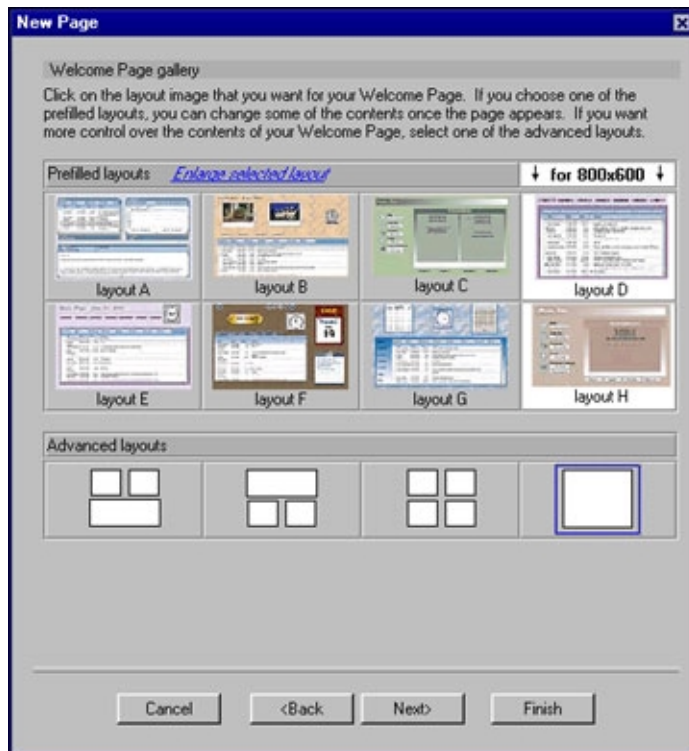


7. Click Next.

Designing the base of your customized Welcome Page

Now that we are all set up to make design changes to the Welcome Page and you have given your page a title, let's start designing your new corporate Welcome Page! The Welcome Page wizard offers many options to design your Welcome Page. For the purpose of this article, we choose the design elements for you to use to create this test Welcome Page:

1. From the second page of the Welcome Page wizard, which allows you to choose your Welcome Page display, select the I want Personal Page option and click Next.
2. From the Welcome Page gallery page, under the Advanced layouts section, select the last layout on the right, which is one white square, shown in the following screen outlined in blue.



3. Click Next.
4. From the Backgrounds page, select the Clouds background, which is the last option on the right in the top row.
5. Click Next. You should now be on the advanced design page of the wizard, which only appears when you have the Toggle Advanced Configuration Editor running in Designer.
6. In the Sort key field under the List sort section, enter eight zeros, 00000000. This puts your custom Welcome Page at the top of the Welcome Page list that users use when choosing a Welcome Page to display. (To place the Welcome Page in-between certain pages, or at the bottom of the list, click the green link "Click here to see a popup list of all the current pages and their sort keys" and enter the appropriate placement number for your Welcome Page.)

New Page

List sort

Sort key: 00000000

The sort key determines the order in which the profiles are displayed in the drop down list.

[Click here to see a popup list of all the current pages and their sort keys.](#)

Ignore layout settings

☐ Ignore all layout settings and instead load this frameset:

Checking this will cause the all layout settings to be ignored and instead the specified frameset will be displayed. When this is checked you should uncheck the box below to avoid confusing users.

User editable

☐ Allow end users to edit this page

Checking this will allow the normal end user to edit the layout settings. They will not be able to see or edit any of the settings on this tab.

Cancel <Back Next> Finish

7. Make sure "Ignore all layout settings and instead load this frameset" and "Allow end users to edit this page" are unchecked, then click Next.

Note: If you are not deploying your Welcome Page to users, you can change some of your design elements like framesets, but remember that any change you make to design elements are not deployed to users. If you create a customized frameset in Domino Designer, instead of using the canned Welcome Page options, check "Ignore all layout settings and instead load this frameset" and enter the name of the frameset in the field below the option.

8. Click Next, then click Finish at the end of the wizard.

Congratulations! You should see your new Welcome Page with clouds! Notice that Custom Welcome Page is listed first in the drop-down list of Welcome Pages, which is a result of entering the eight zeros in the Sort key field in the previous procedure.

Creating the final design touches

You are almost done with your Welcome Page design:

1. Click the Edit this page link at the top of the Welcome Page.
2. Enter XYZ Company in the rich-text field.
3. Select the text and choose Text - Text Properties.
4. In the Font tab, select 24 for Size, Bold for Style, and select any blue color from the Color dialog box.
5. Click Save.
6. With the database still open, choose File - Database - New Copy.
7. Select your server from the Server list in the Copy Database dialog box, keep the defaults for the rest of the fields, making sure that the ACL is copied, then click OK. (The database with your custom Welcome Page must be stored on the Administration server or on users' mail servers, so it can be deployed to users. You can make updates to the design of the Welcome Page on your local database copy, and then replace the database copy you have on the server with the updated database.)
8. Close the database after copying it to the server.

Setting up your policy and desktop settings and deploying the Welcome Page

Now that you have created your new corporate Welcome Page, it is time to roll it out to your consultant group. In R5, you had to manually update your users' bookmarks to deploy a custom Welcome Page. In Release 6.0.1, you can roll out bookmark changes through the use of a desktop settings document and a policy. The next step for you to do is create a test policy and a test desktop settings document to deploy your Welcome Page.

A policy contains multiple settings that define defaults for users who are assigned to that policy. There are two types of policies you can create: an Organizational policy, which applies to all users registered in a specific organizational unit, or an Explicit policy, which applies to individual users or groups. For purposes of this article, you will create a test Explicit policy because you are deploying your Welcome page to the group MyConsultants. The settings that define the defaults in a policy are actually located in separate documents called settings documents, which are referenced through a policy. Having separate settings documents allows you to make changes to settings without having to edit a policy. One type of settings document is a Desktop Settings document. A Desktop Settings document allows you to control the content on a user's workspace. The settings you have in a Desktop Settings document are enforced on a user's workspace each time a user authenticates with his or her home server. The test Desktop Settings document you are creating next contains your custom Welcome Page information.

For more information on policies, see the *LDD Today* article, "[Policy-based system administration with Domino 6](#)."

Note: Every Desktop Settings document that you have has to reference the same Welcome Page database.

Follow these steps to create a Desktop Settings document and Explicit policy:

1. From Domino Administrator, choose File - Database - Open.
2. Select your server from the Server list.
3. Select Custom Welcome from the Database list, then click Open.
4. Leaving the database open, go back to the People & Groups tab, and click Settings.
5. From the menu, choose Create - Policy Settings - Desktop Settings.
6. Click the Basics tab, enter Welcome Page Test in the Name field and LDD Today article in the Description field, so you know that this is a test document.
7. Under the Homepage/Welcome Page Options section of the Basics tab, select the window tab of your Welcome Page database and drag it to the Corporate Welcome Pages database field. This creates a database link in the field.

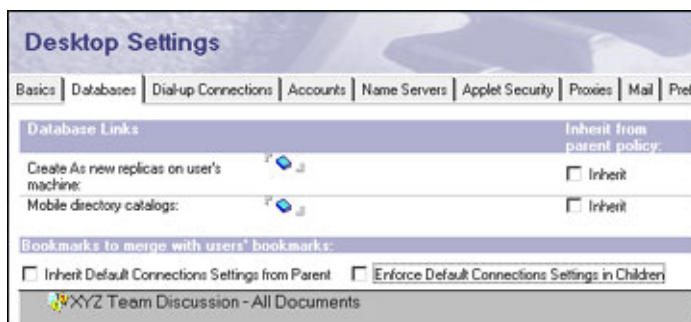


8. Select Custom Welcome Page from the Default Welcome Page list to have your Welcome Page show up as the default page when users open Notes.

Note: If you do not see your custom Welcome Page in the drop down list, it may be because you created the database on a different machine from the one you administer from. See the sidebar, "[Configuring the Desktop Settings document to show your Welcome Page](#)."

If you don't want your users to see any other Welcome Page, select "Do not allow users to change their home page." We leave this option unchecked for this article.

9. Click the Databases tab. Currently for Release 6.0.1 and 6.0.2, you must make sure you have server database links in each field in the Databases tab, otherwise the Welcome Page won't work. Create database links in each field by opening databases for those fields and dragging their window tabs to each field or by choosing Edit - Copy As Link - Database Link from each open database and then choosing Edit - Paste to paste the links in each field.



10. Save and close the Desktop Settings document.
11. Click Policies, then choose Create - Policy.
12. Enter Welcome Page Test in the Policy name field, and leave Explicit in the Policy type field.
13. Under the Setting Type section, select Welcome Page Test from the Desktop keyword list.
14. Save and close the policy.
15. Click Groups, select the MyConsultants group, expand Groups on the right side of the screen, then click Assign Policy.
16. Select the Welcome Page Test policy from the Policy drop-down list in the Assign Policy Options dialog box, then click OK.

Note For alternate procedures on assigning policies to users, refer to the [Domino 6 Administrator help](#).

You are now ready to see your new Welcome Page deployed to your test users. Because server caching has to take place, note that you should wait five or ten minutes to ensure that your policy changes have been applied. You can also restart your server and restart Notes.

Seeing your custom Welcome Page from a user's desktop

The first time a user authenticates with his or her server after you have set up the new Welcome Page, the user should see the new Welcome Page. Open the Notes client on a different machine and log in as one of your three consultants. It is best to run a new setup through the configuration wizard for your test user, so you can simulate a true authentication for your test user. After you log in, you should see your custom Welcome Page. If your user still does not see the new Welcome Page, restart Notes.

It is important to note that policies affect a user's bookmark.nsf file. If a custom Welcome Page is deployed to a user who shares a machine with another user, and they simply switch IDs to use Notes, each user may not see the Welcome Page he or she is supposed to see because the same bookmark.nsf is used for all non-Notes multi-users who share one machine. For example, if User A is included in a policy that has a custom Welcome Page, then User B logs on to User A's machine to check his or her mail using his or her own user ID, but is not set up as a Notes multi-user on User A's machine, User B will see all of the settings that are associated with the one bookmark.nsf that is on User A's machine, including the custom Welcome Page only meant for User A to utilize. Ideally, the custom Welcome Page feature is for users who are on machines set up for Notes multi-users, where each user has his or her own bookmark.nsf file, or for users who have their own machine.

It is also important to note that roaming users will bring their policy documents with them wherever they roam to, so roaming users will see the Welcome Page they are supposed to see according to their desktop setting document.

Conclusion

If everything went smoothly, your custom Welcome Page should have been created and deployed to a test group of users. Now that you know the basics, you can get a lot more creative with the design and creation of a custom Welcome Page than what we did in this article. You can add your company logo, create unique pages for different departments, and so on. The Welcome Page wizard and pre-made pages give you many options to create attractive, functional Welcome Pages. If you do not want to deploy your Welcome Page to users and want to create a page just for yourself, you can bring in your own graphics, framesets, and alter the design elements of the Welcome Page database. Have fun!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Configuring your Desktop Settings document to show your Welcome Page

If you created your Corporate Welcome Page database on a machine different from the machine that you use to administer the page, follow these steps to enable the Welcome Pages to appear in the drop-down list of the Desktop Settings document.

1. Save and close the Desktop Settings document to save the database link you just added.
2. From the machine on which you administer, choose File - Database - Open, locate the database that contains your custom Welcome Page, and open the database.
3. From the Current Welcome Page selection drop-down list at the top of the Welcome Page, select and open each Welcome Page in the list. This action writes each page to your Notes.ini file on the machine you are opening them from, which allows that machine to recognize the Welcome Pages.
4. After you have opened each Welcome Page, open your Desktop Settings document in edit mode and view the Default Welcome Page list. You should now see your Welcome Pages.