Determining the IP Address of a network service

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Question

I use a piece of software that automatically connects to an online service, but it doesn't ask me for an address or tell me which one it is connecting to. How can I determine the address of that server so I can PING/TRACE to it?

Solution

One way to determine any address that your computer is currently connected to is the Windows command-line utility "NetStat". This tool is a bit advanced, but offers some great information.

Netstat is a command line utility, so you'll need to open a command prompt to use it. Your Windows start menu should have an menu option to open a command prompt.

Once you have the command prompt open, type "netstat" (at the command prompt) and hit enter.

This list will likely have a lot of things in it, so you might try closing as many non-essential programs before running it (ie: email, web browsers, etc).

In Netstat, you'll have a list of addresses - the "Foreign Address" column is a list of all the servers and ports your machine is looking at. Go through this list of Foreign Addresses and hopefully one of them will obviously be your application's server - either because of the DNS name, or because that's the only connected process.

It can sometimes be difficult to determine exactly which of the listed IP Addresses is the right one. To make things easier, close as many applications as you can (including the one that you want to determine what its server address is). Before you start that application, run NetStat. Run your application, then run NetStat again. The new address listed is probably the server you care about.

Once you have the IP Address or the name of the server, you can enter that in PingPlotter or MultiPing to monitor the performance of the network between your computer and that server.

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