

## **An error occurred while trying to access server** **Explanation and Fixes**

### **Description of problem:**

When launching Controller v8, the user sees the following error message:

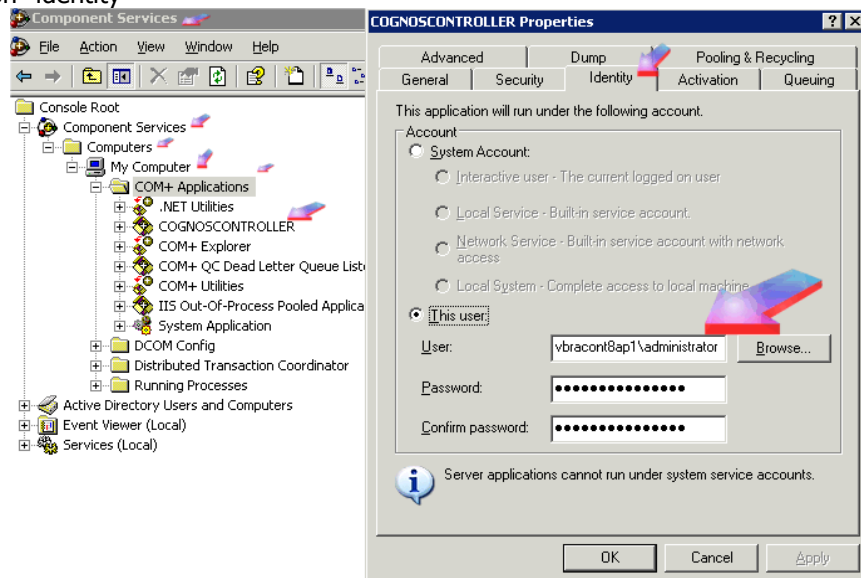


## Explanation & solution

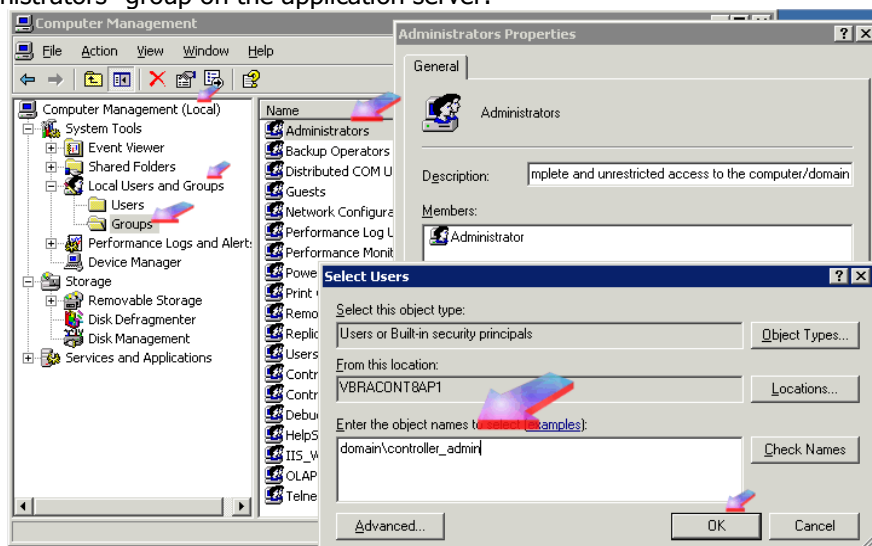
There are several potential causes. However, in **many** cases, it is due to **security** permissions. Run through all the following checks to ensure that everything is correctly configured:

### Check#1 – COGNOSCONTROLLER COM+ application username ("identity")

- Start – Settings – Control Panel – Administrative Tools – Component Services
- Expand the top row until you see the COGNOSCONTROLLER COM+ application
- Right-click on "COGNOSCONTROLLER" and choose "properties"
- Click on "identity"

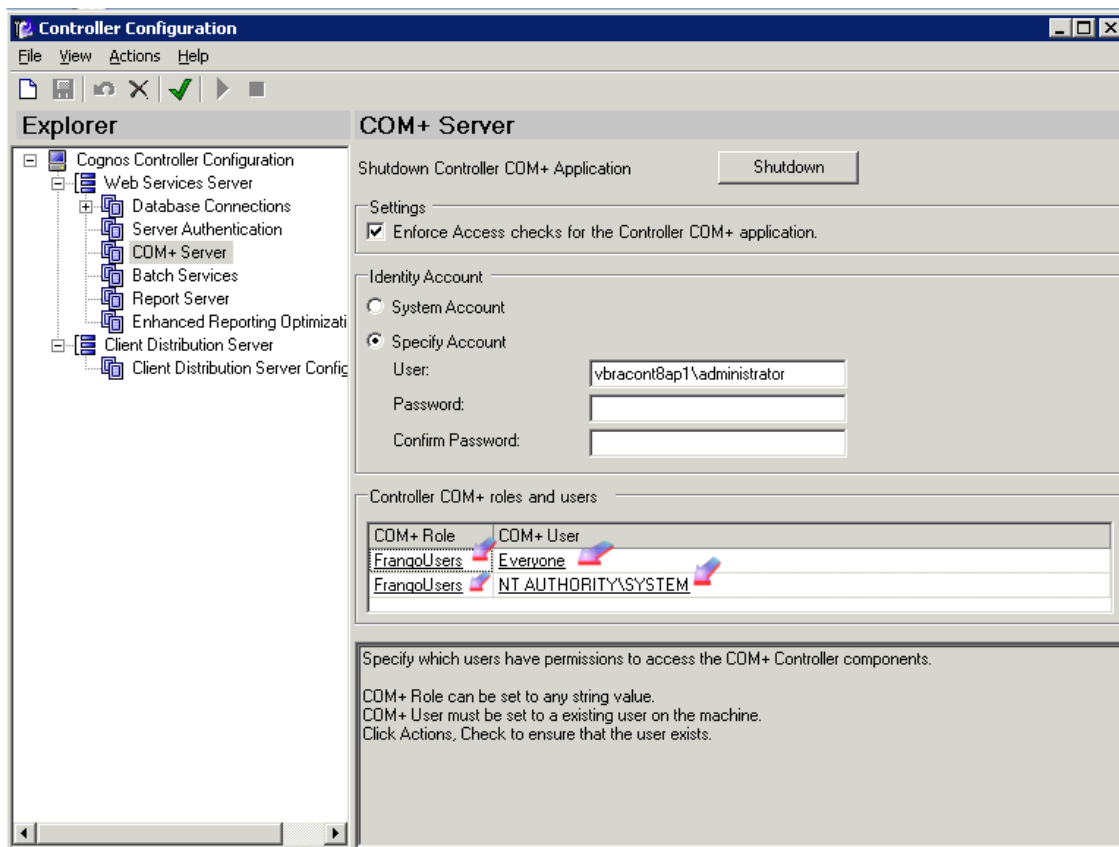


- Ensure that this user (e.g. DOMAIN\Controller\_admin) is a member of the local "Administrators" group on the application server:



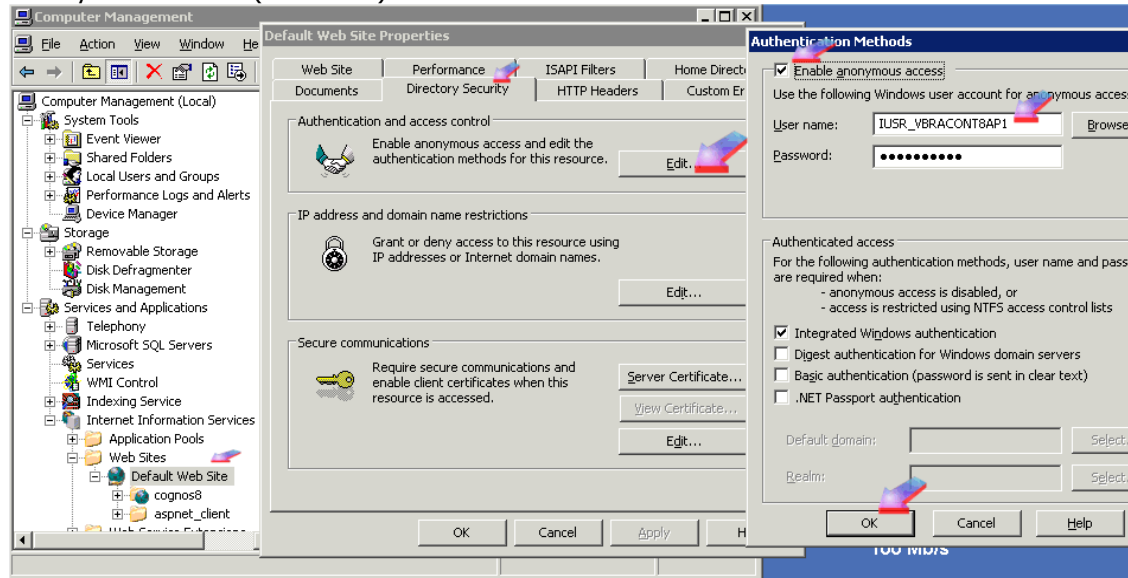
## Check#2 - COGNOSCONTROLLER COM+ authorised user group(s)

- From the Start Menu (on the application server), launch Cognos Controller configuration
- Open the "COM+ Server" section
- Check the Controller COM+ roles and users section
  - For the most secure system you *can* lock the Controller COM+ roles/users down to specific user(s) and group(s)
  - However, for most customers, it is best to simply have the following entries:
    - FrangoUsers Everyone
    - FrangoUsers NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM



### Check#3 – Application server website – authentication method

All client ⇔ server communication is via web-traffic (i.e. HTTP requests to the IIS/web-server on the application server). By default, the “default website” (running on the app server) will use “anonymous access” (see below):



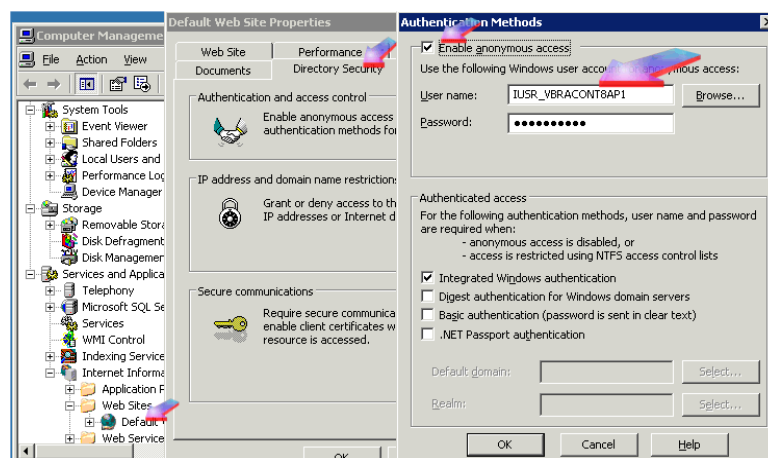
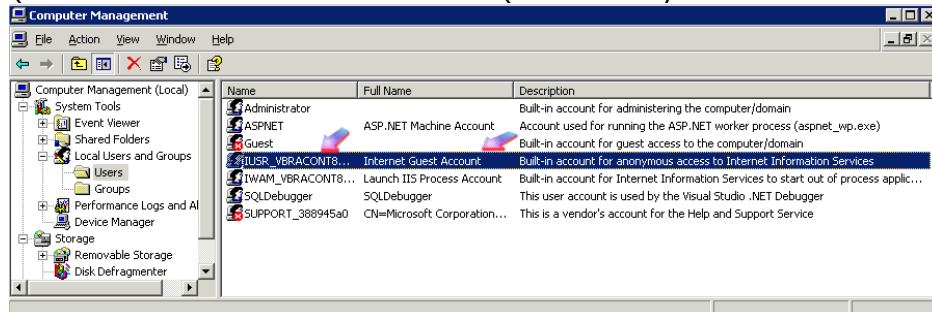
This means that the application will run under the above user's credentials (i.e. IUSR\_<servername>).

This is one of the reasons why it's simpler to ensure that the group “everyone” is a member of the FrangoUsers role (see Check#2 above), because IUSR\_<servername> will be a member of “everyone”.

In other words, if the IUSR\_<servername> user was NOT a member of any of the “FrangoUsers” roles, then you would receive the error message.

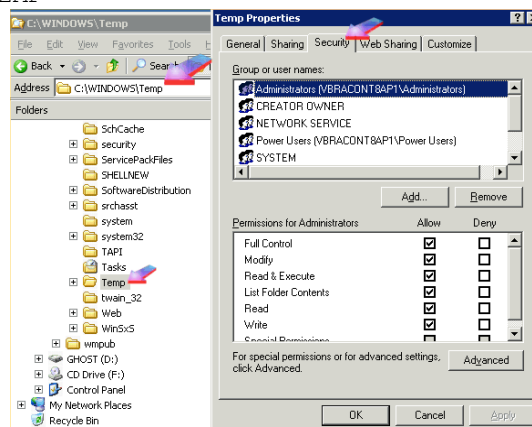
#### Check#4 – TEMP directory permissions

As per “check#3”, by default the application will be run under the **IUSR\_<servername>** user account (i.e. the server’s “Internet Guest Account” (i.e. the ‘anonymous web user account’).



This will need read/write access to certain folders. For example, it *may*<sup>1</sup> require read/write to the following folder on the application server:

C:\WINDOWS\Temp

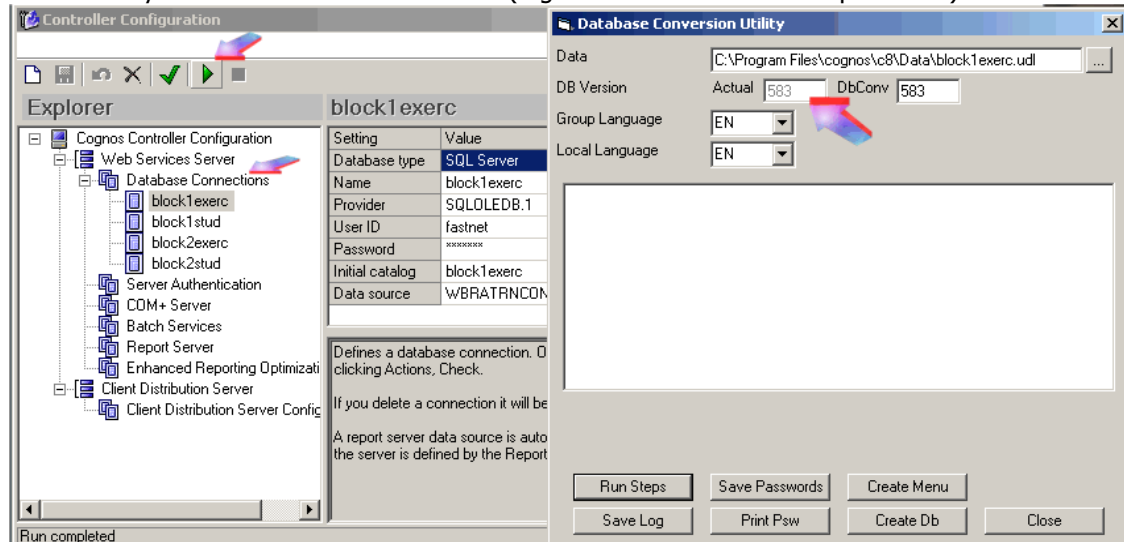


**You could add the user explicitly to have permissions, or alternatively (simpler) add the group “everyone” to have permissions, to solve this problem.**

<sup>1</sup> Possibly only when running Controller 8 as a server on Windows XP Pro (e.g. for demo / testing purposes)

### Check#5 – Ensure that there is a valid database for the user to connect to

- Launch Controller Configuration, and look at the “database connections”
- You may have several databases listed (e.g. there are 4 in the example below):



- Each user can either have “database selection mode” *enabled* or *disabled*
  - This can be changed *once the user is inside Controller*, by him/her clicking on “Maintain” – “Database” then clicking on “Database Selection Mode”
    - In the example below, it is *enabled* (i.e. ticked)



- This means that the user will receive a choice of databases when they launch Controller

**NOTE:** this setting is actually stored under the user’s profile in a file:

C:\Documents and Settings\<username>\Application Data\Cognos\ccr.config

You can therefore open up the above file (using NOTEPAD.EXE) and modify the “SelectDB” option (e.g. change “True” to “False” or vice versa) manually.

**If you have “database selection mode” disabled then you MUST have a database connection called “default”**

In other words, all customers should ensure that their “live” (i.e. the one that all users should be using by default) database connection name called “default”.

**NOTE:** The ‘connection’ name does not have to be the same name as the SQL server’s ‘database’ name!

To summarise:

- if your 'live' database connection name is *not* called "default", users may get the above error
- Also, if the "default" database is *invalid*, then you will get the same problem.

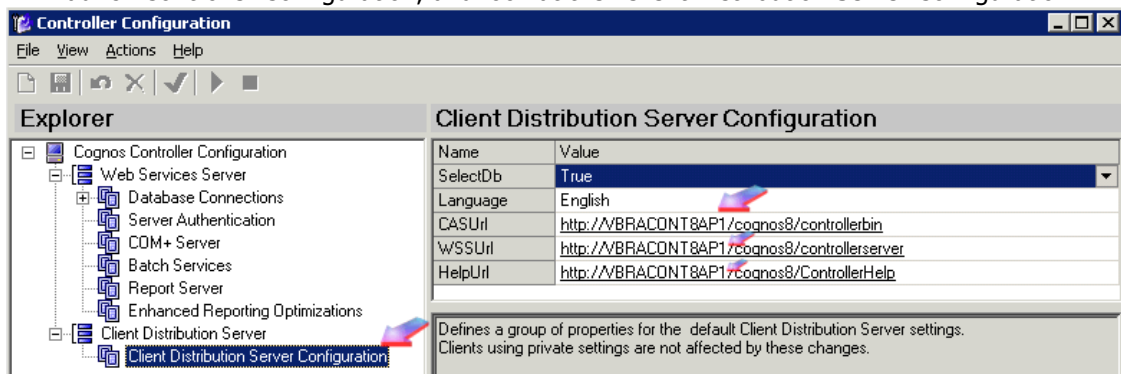
**For example**, if the 'default' database connection pointed to a database that was *completely blank* (i.e. newly-created inside SQL Enterprise Manager, with no Controller tables in it) then you would get that error.

The solution is to check that the "default" database connection is accessible:  
i.e.

- Highlight the database connection called "default"
- Click on the green "tick" to ensure it's valid
- Click on the green "play" button
  - See picture earlier in the "check#5" section
- Ensure that the "actual" DBVersion is the same as the "DBConv" version
  - e.g. in the picture earlier, 583 = 583, so this is good.

### Check#6 – Ensure that the server address is reachable from the client PC

- Launch Controller Configuration, and look at the "Client Distribution Server Configuration"



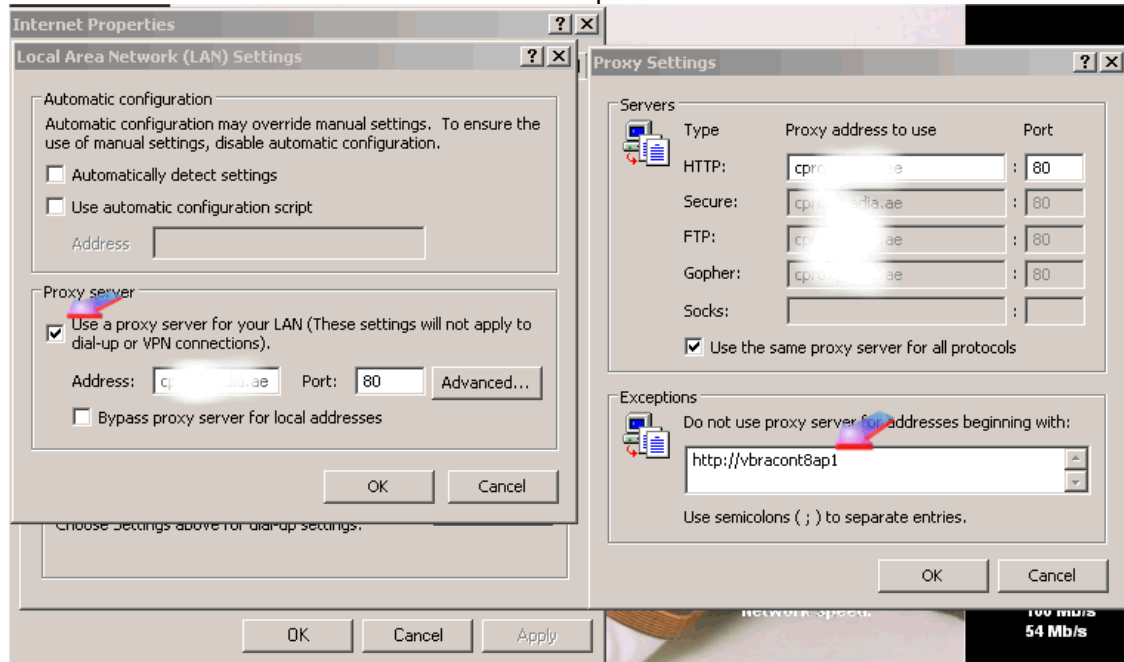
- Ensure that the web-addresses are reachable by all the end-users
  - For example, in the screenshot above, you would probably need to change the NetBIOS name "vbraconta8ap1" to an FQDN name such as: "vbracont8ap1.domain.org.uk"
  - Make sure that the client PC can resolve (e.g. "ping") this address successfully
- By making the above change, this will modify the file "ccr.exe.config"
  - By default, this is located on the server here: "C:\Program Files\cognos\c8\webcontent\ccr\ccr.exe.config"
  - You *may* have copied over the CCR folder onto the end-user's PC, for speed reasons. If so, then you'll have to modify the "ccr.exe.config" file here too.
  - This is easily done, for example use "NOTEPAD.EXE" to achieve this

### Check#7 – Ensure client PC is not using a Proxy Server

This is connected with check#6. Check the client PC's Internet Explorer proxy settings, by:

- right-clicking on the Internet Explorer icon, and choosing "properties"
- click "connections" then "LAN Settings"

If using a proxy server, then click on "advanced" and add the Controller application server's address to the list of locations that are in the "exceptions" box:





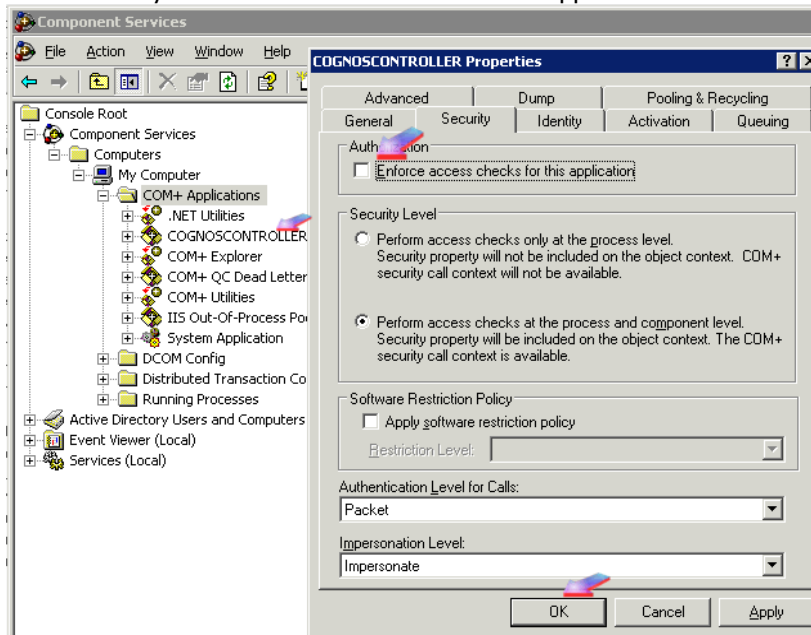
### ***Troubleshoot/Workarounds***

For a typical Controller system, security checking *should* be enforced. However, to try to troubleshoot the issue, it may be helpful to do the following.

NOTE: After the cause of the issue has been located, you should put these settings back to the *correct* settings, so that the system is 100% in an optimal state.

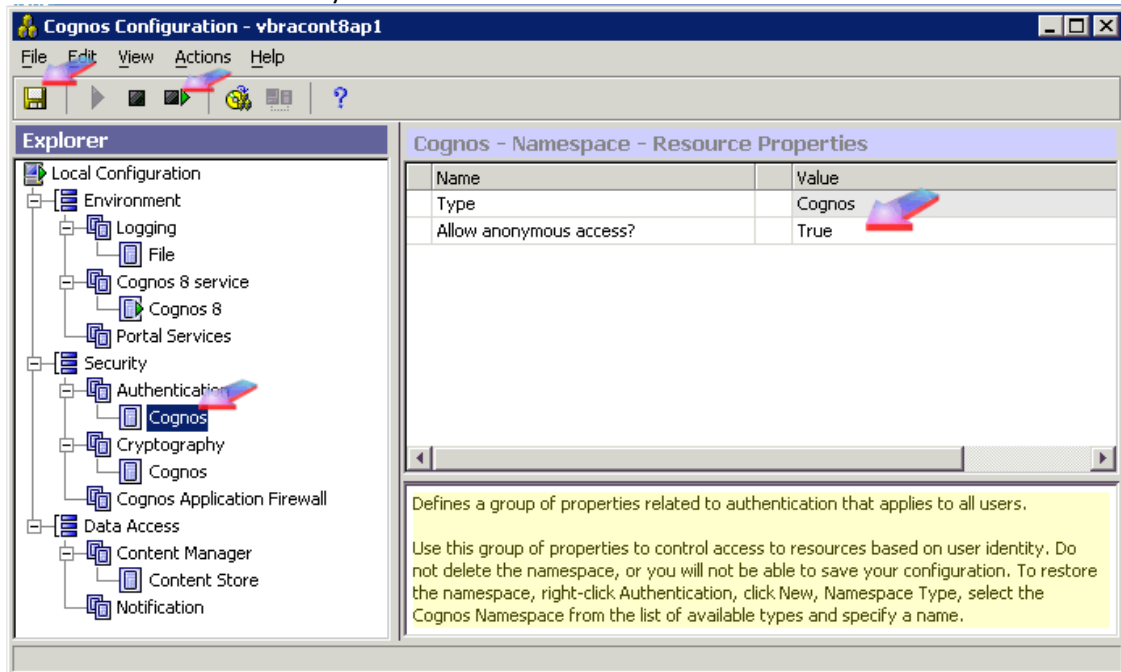
#### **Temporary #1**

- Inside Component Services, right-click on "COGNOSCONTROLLER" and choose "properties"
- Click on "Security" tab
- *Untick* the box that says "enforce access checks for this application":



## Temporary #2

- From the start menu, launch Cognos Configuration
- Click on Security – Authentication – Cognos
- Ensure that “Allow Anonymous Access” is set to “true”



- Click “save” and then restart the service (using the icon at the top)

## Temporary #3

- Change the “authentication method” (see “Cause #3 earlier in document) so that:
  - “Enable Anonymous Access” is ticked
  - Change the username to a local administrative user (e.g. DOMAIN\Controller\_admin)
- Launch a command prompt, and type the following (to apply these settings):  
IISRESET