Pre-staging a computer in Active Director - Server 2012

Pre-staging is when the domain or enterprise administrator creates a client computer account within the Active Directory domain controller before the client computer has been actually added to the domain. The benefit of pre-staging is that administrators can pre-stage the account in any of the desired containers (and not only the Computers folder). When a client computer account is pre-staged in any different container, and when the authorized person adds the client computer to the domain, the client computer account is automatically mapped with the pre-staged computer account in that particular container where it was previously created by the administrator.

For example, if the client C-01 is to be added to an OU named Europe, the administrators can pre-stage the account in the Europe OU before they actually add the client computer to the domain.

As soon as the client C-01 is added to the domain by the authorized person, a new C-01 computer account would not be created in the default Computers folder. Instead, it would be automatically mapped with the pre-staged C-01 computer account that has already been created by the administrator in the Europe OU.

Here is how you can pre-stage the client computer in Windows Server 2012 Active Directory domain controller:

1. Log on to the Windows Server 2012 Active Directory domain controller with either the Enterprise Admin or Domain Admin account credentials.

2. If not already started, initialize the Server Manager window from the bottom left corner of the screen.

3. On the opened Server Manager window, go to the Tools menu from the menu bar.

4. From the displayed list, click the Active Directory Users and Computers option.
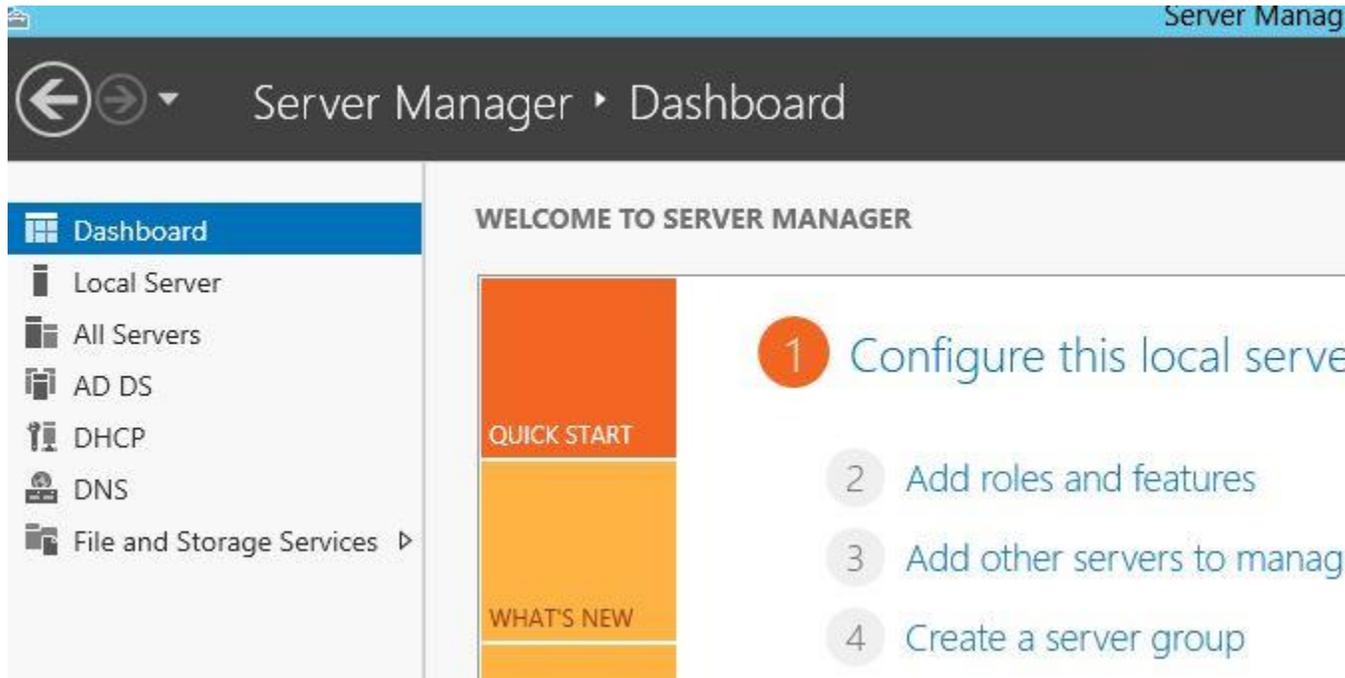
5. On the opened Active Directory Users and Computers snap-in, from the left pane, right-click any container or Organizational Unit (OU) where you want to pre-stage a client computer.

6. From the displayed context menu, go to New, and from the submenu that appears, click Computer.
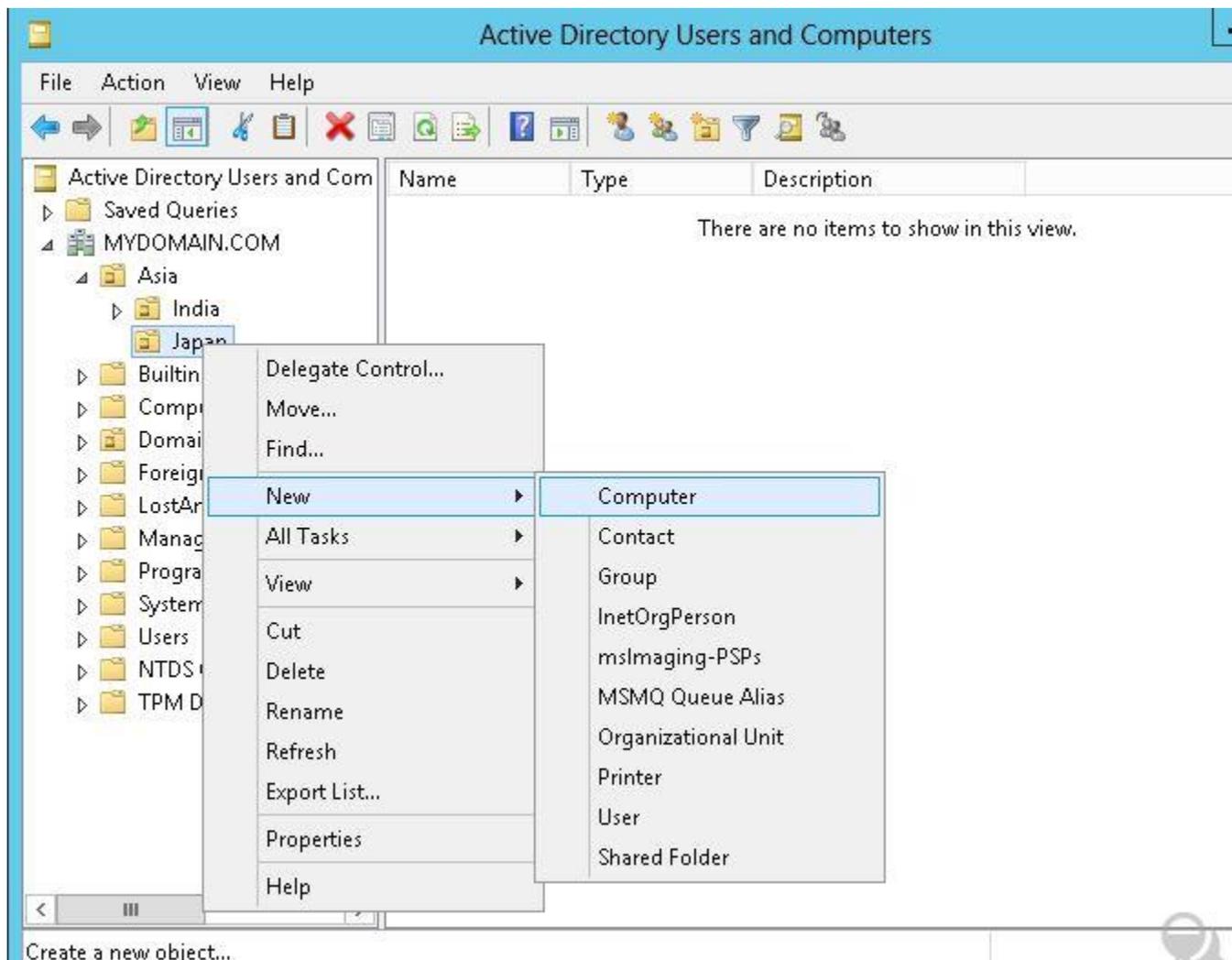
7. On the opened New Object – Computer box, populate the Computer name and Computer name (pre-Windows 2000) fields with the client computer's hostname and its NetBIOS name respectively.

Note: Make sure that you type the hostname and the NetBIOS name of the target client computer correctly. In case the hostname and NetBIOS names mismatch with the actual hostname and NetBIOS name of the client computer, the pre-staging would not work whatsoever.

8. Under the User or group section, click Browse to specify the user or group that you want to authorize to add the client computer to the domain. (This step is optional.).

9. Once done, click OK to save the changes.