FileZilla Vs. FileZilla - Battle of the Century

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Here's a problem that comes under the heading of the right hand being unaware of what the left hand is doing. Seriously the right hand is like sitting back, relaxing, maybe pushing the remote and the left hand playing the drums, waving at passers-by and tap-dancing wearing a little tuxedo. The right hand says, "Hey.. what in the ham sandwich is going on over there?" And the left hand says... Eh... I'd say that is as far as I want to go with the whole left-hand-right-hand thing.
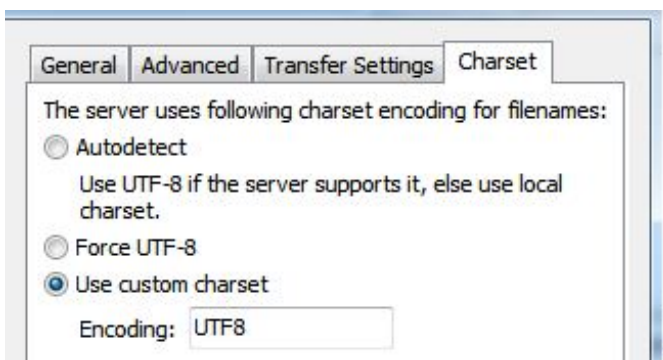
The Problem

From time to time I end up troubleshooting an FTP connection. Like most system admins I hate FTP with a capital ick. Insecure, clunky, fault intolerant... It's like arriving at the Oscars in a VW Bus. It gets you there but there has to be a better transport than this! Where we need to support FTP (and always through a VPN please - do the rest of us a favor!), we use a product called **FileZilla FTP Server**. It's a great product and you can be up and running in about 5 minutes on just about any windows platform. Simply add users, folders, IP restrictions etc. and you are off and running.

The only problem is that occasionally people will call and simply can't get connected. The server is able to recognize them and verify their credentials but when it issues its first server side command (list I think) it times out and drops the connection. After a while I realized that the folks who were experiencing this problem were people running the FileZilla *client*. That's right - the FileZilla client has trouble connecting to the FileZilla server. If I asked them to use a different client the problem went away.

The Solution

A few weeks ago I finally figured out the solution based on a comment by super-genius-guru Wil Genovese of **Trunkful.com** who (I'm thrilled to say) works for the Muse and does miraculous things almost every day for our company and staff. He mentioned the problem with FileZilla and UTF-8 encoding. Some experimentation helped me determine an actual fix. Apparently the FileZilla client is passing the string UTF-8 for encoding (which looks ok to me) and the FileZilla server is expecting "UTF8". Fortunately the site manager has a way of specifying a "custom encoding" string. Click on a site then click on the "charset" properties tab. One of the choices is "custom character set". Choose it and enter UTF8 (without the dash). You should be able to connect fine after that.

Note: this problem doesn't exist with every version of client and server combination.