

How to Prevent Server inaccessibility by using a secondary SSH Server access port

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One of the Debian servers's *SSH* daemon suddenly become inaccessible today. While trying to ssh I experienced the following error:

```
$ ssh root@my-server.net -v
OpenSSH_5.8p1 Debian-2, OpenSSL 0.9.8o 01 Jun 2010
debug1: Reading configuration data /etc/ssh/ssh_config
debug1: Applying options for *
debug1: Connecting to mx.soccerfame.com [83.170.104.169] port 22.
debug1: Connection established.
debug1: identity file /home/hipo/.ssh/id_rsa type -1
debug1: identity file /home/hipo/.ssh/id_rsa-cert type -1
debug1: identity file /home/hipo/.ssh/id_dsa type -1
debug1: identity file /home/hipo/.ssh/id_dsa-cert type -1
...
Connection closed by remote host
```

Interestingly only the SSH server and sometimes the mail server was failing to respond and therefore any mean to access the server was lost. Anyways some of the services on the server for example **Nginx** continued working just fine.

Some time ago while still working for **design.bg** - *web development company*, I've experienced some similar errors with SSH servers, so I already had a clue, on a way to work around the issue and to secure myself against the situation to loose access to remote server because the *secure shell daemon* has broken up.

My work around is actually very simple, I run a secondary **sshd** (different sshd instance) listening on a different port number.

To do so I invoke the sshd daemon on port 2207 like so:

```
debian:~# /usr/sbin/sshd -p 2207
debian:~#
```

Besides that to ensure my **sshd -p 2207** will be running on next boot I add:

```
/usr/sbin/sshd -p 2207
```

to **/etc/rc.local** (before the script end line *exit 0*). I do set the *sshd -p 2207* to run via */etc/rc.local* on

purpose instead of directly adding a **Port 2207** line in **/etc/ssh/sshd_config**. The reason, why I'm not using **/etc/ssh/sshd_config** is that I'm not sure if using the sshd config to set a secondary port does run the port under a different sshd parent. If using the config doesn't run the separate ssh port under a different server parent this will mean that once the main parent hangs, the secondary port will become inaccessible as well.