Microsoft®

Microsoft®
Advanced Group
Policy Management

Microsoft®
Desktop Optimization Pack
for Software Assurance

···· Microsoft SoftGrid® Application Virtualization
···· Microsoft Asset Inventory Service
···· Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management
···· Microsoft Diagnostics and Recovery Toolset
···· Microsoft System Center Desktop Error Monitoring

Microsoft® Advanced Group Policy Management increases administrators' control over managing Group Policy Objects (GPOs). Through added change management of GPOs and role-based delegation, the desktop is more easily controlled, resulting in less downtime from conflicting or improperly configured GPOs.

Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management is an integral component of the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack for Software Assurance, a dynamic desktop solution available to Software Assurance customers that reduces application deployment costs, enables delivery of applications as services, and allows for better management and control of enterprise desktop environments.

Challenges in Managing Group Policy

Changes to Group Policy can affect every user and computer on a network. However, without a change control system, changes are made against live GPOs and start affecting computers even before they can be tested. If changes have an unexpected adverse impact, there is no way to quickly revert them to a known good state. Although Group Policy provides a granular delegation model, the editor role has full permissions to deploy changes to the live environment, and must do so to edit settings. With the possibility of multiple editors per GPO, there is no way to detect who has made what changes, or to accept or reject changes before they are put into effect.

Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management makes it easy for you to manage Group Policy enterprise wide.

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➔ **Enhance group policy through change management**

Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management: Advantages

With Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management, you benefit from:

Granular administrative control
• Robust delegation model
• Role-based administration
• Change request approval

Reduced risk of widespread failures
• Offline editing of GPOs
• Difference reporting and audit logging
• Recovery of a deleted GPO
• Repair of live GPOs

Enable effective Group Policy change management
• Creation of GPO template libraries
• Subscription to policy change e-mail notifications
• Version tracking, history capture, and quick rollback of deployed changes

Customer Impact: $

Increase GPO control and reduce downtime previously associated with conflicting and improperly configured GPOs, facilitating lower TCO.

Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management: Components

The key components in Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management include:

Change control
Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management provides a secure archive for controlling changes to GPOs. To change a GPO, an administrator "checks out" the GPO from the vault. When changes are complete, the GPO is "checked in" to the vault. Differences between archived versions and/or live versions are reviewed using Group Policy Management Console (GPMC)-style reports. When a GPO is ready for deployment, it can be transferred to the live environment. At any time, one or more live GPOs can be "rolled back" to an archived version.

Offline editing
Group Policy is the centerpiece of security and configuration management on Active Directory®-based networks, and, as such, configuration changes can affect a large number of computers. Offline editing enables you to configure and test changes without impacting live operations, and to deploy those changes with the knowledge that they can be quickly reverted if there are unexpected consequences.

Role-based delegation
Group Policy provides a rich delegation model, allowing administration tasks to be delegated to regional or task-oriented administrators. This is a significant advantage over scripting and utility products. However, the native delegation model allows Group Policy administrators to approve their own changes. Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management improves on this by providing an optional workflow process that includes role-based delegation, review, and approval before deployment to a live environment. At the same time, it preserves the granular delegation inherent in native Group Policy.

GPMC integration
Group Policy Management Console (GPMC) is the central management interface for Group Policy. Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management provides smooth integration within GPMC.

Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management combines with four other tools to make the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack for Software Assurance, which delivers dynamic desktop solutions: **Microsoft SoftGrid® Application Virtualization,** which dynamically streams software as a centrally-managed service; **Microsoft Asset Inventory Service,** which translates software inventory into business intelligence; **Microsoft Diagnostics and Recovery Toolset,** powerful tools to accelerate desktop repair, recovery, and troubleshooting of unbootable Windows®-based computers; and **Microsoft System Center Desktop Error Monitoring**, which enables proactive problem management by analyzing and reporting on application and system crashes.

To learn how Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management and the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack for Software Assurance can help you, go to **http://www.windowsvista.com/optimizeddesktop.**

> *"Microsoft did administrators a huge favor by introducing the Group Policy Management Console (GPMC). With Advanced Group Policy Management, they enhanced the console, integrating change control, role-based delegation, difference reporting, offline editing, workflow, templates, and more right into the existing GPMC. Because Group Policy settings changes have the ability to immediately impact every computer on a network, these features are essential to a managed Group Policy environment."*

DAN TWING
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