

For Software Assurance Customers

Microsoft® Advanced Group Policy Management

Microsoft®
Desktop Optimization Pack
for Software Assurance

- Microsoft 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** helps you drive the right security settings to the desktop by increasing control over managing Group Policy Objects (GPOs). Through added change management of GPOs and offline editing, the desktop is more easily controlled, resulting in less risk and reduced end user 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, which helps mid-sized businesses make employees more productive by improving the reliability and security of desktops, minimizing end user downtime, and helping mobile users work from virtually any location.

Challenges in Managing Group Policy

Group Policy enables an organization to manage and control the desktop environment. 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 management provides tremendous benefits to a desktop environment, the Group Policy editor role has full permissions to deploy changes to the live environment, and must do so to edit settings. There is no way to accept or reject changes before they are put into effect.

Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management makes it easy for you to manage and minimize risk and enhance governance over desktop management.

Microsoft®
**Advanced Group
Policy Management**

→ **Enhanced group policy drives the right security settings to desktops**

Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management: Advantages

Improve reliability and security

- Optimize the use of desktop GPOs
- Drive the right security settings to desktops

Reduce risk of widespread failures and downtime

- 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.

Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management

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 highly secure archive for controlling changes to GPOs and minimizes the potential for widespread Group Policy failures. 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.

Security optimization

Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management reduces risk by optimizing use of desktop GPOs, helping ensure that administrators drive the right security settings to the desktop.

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

Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management improves on the native Group Policy model 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 Application Virtualization**, which reduces downtime by helping eliminate PC application installation issues; **Microsoft Diagnostics and Recovery Toolset**, which quickly repairs and removes malware from PCs; **Microsoft Asset Inventory Service**, which translates software inventory into business intelligence; and **Microsoft System Center Desktop Error Monitoring**, for proactively correcting and preventing PC crashes and hangs.

To learn how Microsoft Advanced Group Policy Management and the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack for Software Assurance can help you, go to <http://www.windowstvista.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
VICE PRESIDENT,
ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES