

What's new: AppSense Environment Manager 8.2



What's new

AppSense continues to deliver significant new features and enhancements



Release highlights include:

- New actions
- New conditions
- Web-based console for personalization support
- Enhanced file & folder management
- Enhanced personalization import & export
- New PowerShell support
- Enhanced API documentation
- Improved SQL mirroring

Introduction to AppSense Environment Manager

AppSense Environment Manager is the world leading user virtualization solution to enterprise organizations. It decouples all user aspects of the corporate desktop environment and manages them separately from the operating system and applications. User attributes are managed via the user virtualization platform, a centralized management framework that efficiently applies user personality on-demand across all desktop and application delivery methods. This ensures that no matter how a desktop or application is delivered to a user, or the device the user is utilizing, all components of the desktop are automatically dynamically configured and personalized based on the context and the needs of the user at that very point in time.

By managing the user separately, IT can transform the delivery model to a true IT-as-a-Service strategy, focusing on the needs of the user, rather than managing the user multiple times across various deployment options and accessing devices. By doing so, IT teams reduce cost and complexity through standardized desktop images while providing a personalized desktop experience that users will embrace.

AppSense Environment Manager is used in some of the world's largest, most complex and most demanding computing environments, providing AppSense with unrivalled experience managing one of the most complex, diverse and unpredictable elements of the corporate IT environment - the user.

AppSense Environment Manager 8.2

Drawing from this extensive customer experience and feedback, AppSense has made significant feature enhancements in AppSense Environment Manager Version 8.2 which both improve existing capabilities and bring new features to market.

AppSense Environment Manager 8.2 comes hot on the heels of the 8.1 release that provided a new and improved architecture for policy and personalization. That re-architecture provided a future-proof platform for the rapid delivery of new functionality that scaled and performed exceptionally in large enterprise deployments, alongside a modularization of our code base that enabled quick delivery of new and richer features.

Building on this optimized architecture, AppSense Environment Manager 8.2 takes advantage of this platform to deliver a new set of features in response to customer demand. This includes:

- Enriching our actions and conditions to extend the capabilities of policy configuration while at the same time improving ease of implementation and maintenance.
- For personalization, this release also provides functionality that both simplifies and speeds up implementation and deployment, as well as further simplifying the ongoing management and support of the deployed system.

About AppSense

We are the leading provider of user virtualization technology to enterprise organizations. User virtualization is a way of managing user-specific information independent of the desktop, and applying this information into any desktop (local install, virtualized, published, streamed etc) on-demand. This enables IT to standardize the desktop build, automate desktop and application delivery, and migrate users to new desktops – all while ensuring the user experience is seamless, personal, predictable and easily manageable.

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New features and enhancements: Policy



Background information: Triggers, conditions and actions explained

Triggers, conditions, and actions are central elements to the AppSense Environment Manager policy management and automation framework. They are used in combination with one another to create dynamic rules that automatically execute IT-defined policies based on the specific context of desktop usage scenarios.

- Triggers are the set of activities that are actively monitored and can be used to initiate a policy action.
- Conditions are qualifiers that can be placed on triggers to apply a more granular focus to the circumstances in which automation occurs, as well as the type of automation performed.
- Actions are the specific automated responses that can be performed based on prescribed combination of triggers and conditions.

For example:

Trigger	Condition	Action
User logon	User = User name	Map a specific drive

In the above example, the key trigger is a user logon. When a logon occurs, this trigger is evaluated against the more granular condition that a specific user performed the logon. Without the condition, the drive would be mapped for all users. With the condition in place, the drive mapping only occurs when the specified user accesses their desktop.

New enhancements & features across policy

PowerShell support for custom conditions and actions

Many customers have invested in training to take advantage of PowerShell scripting capabilities. In addition to the existing support of JScript and VBScript, AppSense Environment Manager 8.2 now provides support for PowerShell when writing custom conditions or actions - allowing our customers to take advantage of in-house skills when defining complex logic.

API documentation for conditions and actions

As previously mentioned, AppSense Environment Manager 8.1 introduced a new architecture for actions and conditions. These were provided in an isolated modular format as COM objects - providing increased agility to extend the set of conditions and actions in response to customer requirements.

With AppSense Environment Manager 8.2, we are empowering customers by supplying API documentation in response to market demand. With this documentation, you can generate a script that calls AppSense Environment Manager conditions and actions as COM objects. For large organizations with a highly skilled administration team, this provides extended control over the behavior of the policy they apply.

New conditions

"If...Else" condition statements

AppSense Environment Manager has always contributed towards eliminating the need for complex scripting within an environment. The conditions framework enables you to apply context aware policy actions based on the predetermined condition being evaluated. The condition options have been further enhanced by providing "If...Else" condition statements (including an "Else If" block).

In the conditions flow control, an intuitive expression builder can be used to build complex logic that, nevertheless, remains easy to understand and manipulate in the console user interface. In this manner, more deterministic behavior can be applied when, for example, matching a user against multiple groups. The expression builder can also take advantage of the existing re-usable conditions. Once again, this new functionality will simplify definition and maintenance of policies and improve performance by more sophisticated flow control.

In the screenshot below, the administrator has used Process Start = Winword.exe as a Trigger, and then taken advantage of the If Else condition to logically evaluate which group member the user is part of and dependent on the outcome, various map printer actions dynamically occur.

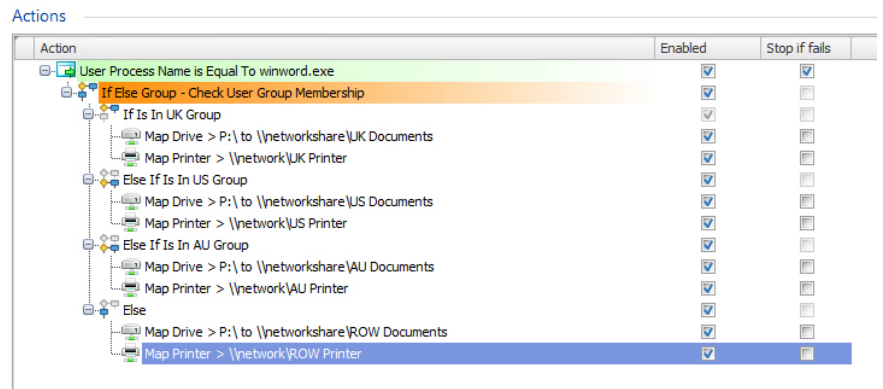


Figure 1 - Configuration of the If Else condition

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New actions

Enhanced file & folder management

Based on customer feedback there are several new enhancements to the file & folder actions to provide further granular control within your environment. These new features enable data to be replicated in a number of ways across computing platforms - ensuring availability between server based computing platforms, virtual desktop environment and physical desktops. New file & folder action capabilities include:

■ Change copy

An option is now available to “only copy new or changed items”. AppSense Environment Manager 8.2 will check to see if there has been a change to the source file, and if there are changes, it will only copy changed items from the source folder to the target folder. In this manner, performance is further improved by removing redundant copy operations and reducing resource consumption.

■ Mirror Folder

The new “Mirror folder” action creates a replica of the source in the target folder. This differs from the standard copy action in that files and folders can be removed from the target folder to ensure it matches the source folder, rather than continuously adding new items to the target.

■ Synchronize folder

In addition to change copy and mirror folder, a source and target folder can now be synchronized with each other. Unlike the mirror folder action, the synchronize folder action is a two-way process: if files or folders exist in the target, but are missing in the source, they will be copied into the source.

When combined, these new file & folder action enhancements provide rich functionality and improved performance for our customers.

Personalization

Role based access: First line personalization support web console

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting our large enterprise deployments, we are introducing a new web console for a first line support role. This allows large enterprise deployments to separate the configuration and design of AppSense Environment Manager policy and personalization from the ongoing maintenance and support of a user's personalization.

The new web console (supported in Microsoft Internet Explorer 7 or above) provides rapid search capabilities for users, personalization groups and applications, so that a first line support operative can archive and/or rollback a user's personalization settings quickly and efficiently, without having to access the main AppSense Environment Manager console.

It was designed from the ground up to help first line support to carry out basic personalization tasks and was developed in conjunction with feedback and review from the AppSense Customer and Partner Community. The web console reduces training requirements for first line support staff; reduces time and cost in resolving support calls for personalization issues; and provides enhanced delegation of responsibility within the enterprise.

Integrated personalization import & export

In this new release, we have included functionality within the user interface to selectively export personalization configuration. The exported file can be imported into a new environment, providing simplified and rapid implementation of the user virtualization platform. It enables organizations to seamlessly import & export personalization information between their deployment cycles such as; from development to pre-production to live-production.

Similarly, when implementing AppSense personalization for the first time, AppSense best practice templates can be imported and merged into a configuration – both speeding up and simplifying the deployment.

Configurations for application settings, desktop settings, session data and personalization groups can be exported and imported, selectively overwriting or merging with the target environment configuration.

Native support for SQL mirroring

AppSense Environment Manager 8.2 now provides built in support for SQL mirroring. In the event of a failover, it will automatically connect to the mirrored failover server without the need for manual intervention.

Conclusion

AppSense is recognized as the world leading user virtualization solution provider to enterprise organizations, and AppSense Environment Manager 8.2 has been built based on key feedback from the collection of over 6,000 organizations. It further simplifies the management of the most costly and complex component of the desktop; the user.

Visit www.myAppSense.com to download AppSense Environment Manager 8.2