

What's new: AppSense Environment Manager 8.1



What's new

AppSense continues to deliver significant new features and enhancements



Release highlights include:

- New modular architecture design
- Expanded policy and personalization capabilities
- New Trigger and Condition options
- Advanced administration and management tools
- User experience improvements

Introduction

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 enables enterprise IT teams to reduce cost and complexity through standardized desktop images while providing a personalized desktop experience that end-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 unrivaled experience managing one of the most complex, diverse and unpredictable elements of the corporate IT environment - the user.

Drawing from this extensive customer experience and feedback, AppSense has made significant architectural and feature enhancements in AppSense Environment Manager Version 8.1 which both improve existing capabilities and provide an enhanced user virtualization platform that meets the needs of both today and tomorrow.

New modular architecture design

AppSense Environment Manager 8.1 introduces a completely redesigned foundational architecture, the culmination of a two-year effort to prepare the User Virtualization Platform for the next stage of customer growth, rapid addition of new features, and future expansion into the cloud, mobile, and tablet computing.

As part of the architectural redesign, the core EM functionality, services, agents were enhanced to:

- Segment key product capabilities into more granular modules with dedicated communication functions
- Eliminate dependencies between the conditions that IT administrators can use to trigger policy actions, greatly simplifying the addition of new triggers, conditions, and actions

- Reduce desktop resource consumption and improve processing efficiency
- Reduce server-side memory footprint and CPU consumption
- Reduce network traffic and increase the speed of client/server communications
- Simplify the configuration of advanced features such as profile archiving and snapshotting
- Provide a single agent across 32-bit and 64-bit operating systems

These changes improve overall system performance, scalability, and reliability. Moreover, by shifting to a modular architecture, AppSense will greatly accelerate the development of new product features in response to future customer feedback while preserving the integrity of the core platform through focused quality assurance testing.

Expanded policy and personalization capabilities

The improved architectural flexibility in AppSense Environment Manager 8.1 has already yielded a collection of new policy automation Conditions and Actions designed to enable even greater flexibility and control for IT administrators.

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.

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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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 Condition options

A number of frequently requested condition options are now available with AppSense Environment Manager, including:

- Operating system
- Date and time
- Confirmed existence of a specified file
- Confirmed existence of a specified folder
- Confirmed existence of a specified registry key
- Confirmed existence of specified variables within a text file search

These new conditions may be included in policy definitions created within the AppSense Environment Manager console, eliminating the need for complex scripting and ensuring that checks on these conditions have no noticeable impact on logon time or any other aspect of the user experience.

This additional flexibility also improves the administrator's ability to reduce the complexity of policy definitions, in many cases establishing a single configuration that can be utilized across the complete desktop estate.

New Action options

AppSense Environment Manager 8.1 administrators may also take advantage of two new Action types when defining policies:

- Text File Update
- Session values

The Text File Update option performs an automated update of a text file, such as a .txt, .ini, or .log file either during logon or post-logon based on any Triggers (e.g., application launch, desktop unlock). This enables standard application configurations to be dynamically configured based on the context of the user or device at the point of application access.

Session Values enhance the widely utilized environment variable actions and conditions capability, enhancing how and when user-specific variables can be used throughout the configuration. This further supports the aforementioned goal of achieving a standardized configuration across all user, desktops and devices.

Advanced administration and management tools

This latest release includes a number of new administration and management options designed to simplify initial implementation and ongoing management of complex desktop environments.

Roaming certificate support

AppSense Environment Manager 8.1 is built with even tighter integration with the operating system which enables full certificate support, including certificate merging when roaming from one machine to another. By taking advantage of standardized Windows components and APIs, AppSense provides greater stability within large, complex environments.

Improved management of desktop settings and session data

For each user, AppSense manages a collection of core desktop settings that are OS-specific and must be delivered during the logon process. Common elements of desktop settings include wallpaper, mouse layout, and language settings. The highly visible desktop settings are automatically applied, and any further changes made by the user are captured and transmitted to the AppSense management database for future use in other desktop sessions.

A more sophisticated architecture for performing this critical function has been added in AppSense Environment Manager 8.1. The new approach is capable of both replacing and merging registry keys and includes greatly simplified user interface. A similar approach is now used to capture session data, extending the approach to registry keys outside of the primary desktop environment. For example, session elements such as users' profiles can roam while remaining available to other applications by effectively capturing and managing the Windows Messaging Subsystem key.

Expanded administrative tool suite

Based on customer and partner feedback, AppSense Environment Manager 8.1 includes a greatly expanded suite of advanced administration tools and utilities. The popular Configuration Assistant tool has been enhanced with new capabilities, and a number of new tools have been added, including:

- Debug Setup Tool
- Log Viewer
- Database File and Registry Import/Export Tools
- Database Migration Tool
- File-Based Registry Explorer

These expanded capabilities greatly improve administration efficiency and visibility, particularly in more complex environments.

End-user experience improvements

AppSense user virtualization is recognized as a world leading user personalization solution for its ability to provide a personalized and highly responsive user experience even as users roam across a standardized IT fabric. This point of differentiation is further extended in AppSense Environment Manager 8.1 with significant improvements to the desktop logon and logoff experience.

Improved logon speed

With AppSense Environment Manager 8.1, more Conditions and Actions can be executed simultaneously than ever before. Dynamic assignment of resources during configuration processing results in lower overall resource utilization. This means that larger configurations can be processed in shorter time with less resource utilization. This translates into a fast user logon experience even as the configuration grows in sophistication.

Enhanced logoff and shutdown experience

It is essential for a user virtualization solution to be transparent to the user and reliably capture all user personality elements regardless of whether a desktop session is disengaged via sleep, hibernate, logoff, or shutdown. In AppSense Environment Manager 8.1, the logoff experience has been further integrated with the operating system to:

- Blend any AppSense-related user notifications into a standard Microsoft Windows logoff look and feel.
- Ensure that user personalization attributes for any remaining open applications are efficiently and reliably captured and synchronized prior to system shut down.

The result is a high degree of reliability that does not come at the expense of user frustration.

Conclusion

AppSense is recognized as the world leading user virtualization solution provider to enterprise organizations, and AppSense Environment Manager 8.1 is the result of years of feedback from the collection of over 5,000 organizations. AppSense Environment Manager 8.1 further simplifies the management of the most costly and complex component of the desktop; the user, while also introducing a next-generation foundational architecture for the AppSense User Virtualization Platform that will greatly accelerate the addition of new features moving forward.

Visit www.myAppSense.com to download AppSense Environment Manager 8.1.