June 14, 2021

RISA product installer fans,

This email is to give you a heads up regarding the changes coming to silent install under our new installer platform, Advanced Installer.

Summary:

1. most changes are minor; for example, the names of command line switches will change. Detailed below.
2. there is one minor, existing feature we would prefer to retire  - ProgramGroup (discussed next).
3. a major enhancement was developed, providing an alternative to Setup.ini (the traditional way to specify silent install). Fear not: Setup.ini still works.

The minor feature we want to push back on is the ability to specify a Windows "Program Group". This is where product short cuts are written. Implementing this is extra work for us, and is not supported during a "Loud" install (the customer can't change the program group during a normal install with dialogs). During Loud Install, shortcuts are written to either RISA or RISA Demo, and silent will do the same. If this requirement could be dropped, we'll rejoice.

The major enhancement is the option to do away with Setup.Ini entirely and specify all inputs directly on the command line. Setup.Ini doesn't scale well with large customers who use a Microsoft tool called SCCM ("system center configuration manager") to publish / install products to large numbers of workstations in their network. These customers have to go through extra steps to coordinate the installer exe file with a setup.ini file. The good news is that Setup.ini will still work as before, it's just that you will now have this other, command line option you can also provide to our customers. The choice to do this and when, is yours.

Command line changes:

* silent install is requested via the /qn switch:
  + cmd> install\_3D\_1904.exe /qn
* as before, silent will look for setup.ini in the same directory as the installer exe, or it can be specified on the command line:
  + cmd> install\_3D\_1904.exe /qn sinfi="G:\Shared Files\Tech\MySetup.Ini"
* (7) command line keywords are provided, such as SINFI above, to specify inputs to silent install
  + the letter case of the keywords and their values is irrelevant, upper / lower / mixed is fine
  + keywords appear in key-value pairs
    - the value must be enclosed in double quotes and appear after an equals sign
    - key-value pairs are separated from other command line elements with one or more spaces
    - example from above: SINFI="g:\Shared Files\Tech\MySetup.Ini"
  + keyword names all begin with SI and all are 5 characters long
    - this syntax was adopted to convey a consistency to make errors easy to spot
    - consistent names are a best programming practice that reduces confusion
    - brevity was favored over the wordiness of Setup.ini, in order to keep the command line short
    - the names can be changed
  + keyword values are the same as those defined for Setup.ini; however they can now be entered in mixed case
  + keywords:
    - SIDIR - installation directory
    - SIGRP - product group - valid keyword we hope to retire
    - SIRGN - region code, same single digit codes as in Setup.ini
    - SIUPD - auto update the product, yes or no
    - SILTY - license type, one of: Subscription, Network, or Key
    - SILOG - log filename for silent install
      * the special value DESKTOP is supported
      * SILOG="DESKTOP" will write a log to the user's desktop.
      * Desktop file name will be the same name as the installer exe, ending with .log: install\_3D\_1904.log
      * Specifying a log file is recommended for diagnostic purposes (if something goes wrong).
    - SINFI - setup.ini filename
* example:
  + cmd> install\_3D\_1904.exe /qn  SILOG="C:\MyLogs\3D1904.log"  SILTY="KEY"  SIDIR="C:\RISA"

Silent won't be completely invisible to those customers doing a "Loud" install (dialogs).

Parts of Silent are implemented as "pre-requisites", which will appear in Advanced Installer's pre-requisites screen:

This screen typically displays more conventional pre-requisites, such as a .NET Framework or VC++ runtimes to be installed. The two "RISA-Silent" pre-reqs will always appear, although their names can be changed. The customer cannot uncheck them. They will briefly run even during a Loud Install, and exit, as soon as they determine that silent install isn't requested.

I don't know if the pre-reqs screen can be hidden from the customer, although something needs to be visible (from a UX standpoint) while pre-requisites install.

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Let me know if you have any questions, want changes, or would like to meet about this. At minimum, the documentation for silent will need to be revised per the above.

We expect to include silent in our first production installer, targeted to be the next RISA Connection release.

Kirk