

Application Packaging - Advanced Concepts

User Context vs System Context vs Admin Context

- User Context: Runs with current user's permissions.
- System Context: Runs with SYSTEM privileges, affects all users.
- Admin Context: Elevated user with admin privileges.

Logon Scripts & Active Setup

- Logon Scripts: Run on user login, often via Group Policy.
- Active Setup: Applies per-user settings during login using registry keys under HKLM.

Windows 10 & 11 Benefits for App Packaging

- Support for MSIX modern packaging.
- Faster, incremental updates with WaaS.
- Better virtualization and clean testing tools (e.g., Sandbox, WSL).

Considerations for Application Packaging

- Use silent installs, proper versioning, and exit codes.
- Handle admin rights, user/machine install scope properly.

Handling Scheduled Tasks

- Use schtasks or PowerShell.
- Create tasks under the correct user/system context.
- Log actions for future debugging.

Sysinternals Tools for Debugging

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- AutoLogon: Auto login management
- Process Explorer: Detailed process viewer
- PsExec: Remote command execution
- PsTools: Admin utilities
- RegMon: Monitor registry activity
- SysMon: System activity logging
- Whois: Domain info lookup

Active Setup Versioning

- Version key controls if Active Setup runs again.
- Change version to reapply user settings after upgrades.

HKLM vs HKCU

- HKLM: System-wide, used for services, machine configs.
- HKCU: User-specific, used for preferences and UI settings.