

To create an administrative image, you simply run the configuration tool supplied by the vendor. The configuration tool lets you choose the installation options you want to have applied when the software is installed. Then it creates a network setup program on a network share that you specify. You can then install the software on a client computer by opening an Explorer window, navigating to the network share where you saved the network setup program, and running the network setup program.

## Pushing out software with Group Policy

One final option you should consider for network software deployment is using Windows Group Policy to automatically install software to network users. Group Policy is a Windows Server feature that lets you create policies that are assigned to users. You use the Windows Group Policy feature to specify that certain users should have certain software programs available to them.

Note that group policies aren't actually assigned to individual users, but to organizational units (OUs), which are used to categorize users in Active Directory. Thus, you might create a policy to specify that everyone in the Accounting Department OU should have Excel.

Then, whenever anyone in the Accounting Department logs on to Windows, Windows checks to make sure that Excel is installed on the user's computer. If Excel is *not* installed, Windows advertises Excel on the computer. *Advertising* software on a computer means that a small portion of the software is downloaded to the computer — just enough to display an icon for the program on the Start menu and to associate Excel with the Excel file extensions (.xls, .xlsx).

If the user clicks the Start menu icon for the advertised application or attempts to open a document that's associated with the advertised application, the application is automatically installed on the user's computer. The user will have to wait a few minutes while the application is installed, but the installation is automatic.

For more information about setting up Group Policy software installation, search the web for *Group Policy software*.

## Keeping Software Up to Date

One of the annoyances that every network manager faces is applying software patches to keep the operating system and other software up to date. A *software patch* is a minor update that fixes the small glitches that crop up from time to