

Mike Nelson – SVD article

## **User Profile Management Suites and Tools**

Managing user profiles in a Remote Desktop environment (a.k.a. the old Terminal Services) has historically proved itself a challenge for I.T. Administrators, and still often does even with specialized profile management tools on the market today. These profile management software packages are very robust and (mostly) easy to use, but there are still some great little tools out there (and some that are free!) that always seem to come through in a pinch. Let us take a look at some of those really helpful tools along with some tips to keep those pesky profiles inline.

When discussing user profile management software, there really is quite a wide range of options out there in the marketplace. The Windows Active Directory management architecture comes with a basic profile management function in place by default, and it is easy to use but not very functional. More advanced tools allow for a variety of settings, including multi-environment configurations, database back-ends, intelligent profiling, and much more. Here is a short list of software suites that you should take a look at if you're in the market for a solution with some personal notes if I have worked with the application in my travels (only my opinions, of course). Please refer to each vendor's website for more information, feature lists, and of course, I highly encourage you to download and trial the software in your environment extensively before buying.

[AppSense Environment Manager](#) – Top of the product food chain. I have seen this in use at a lot of shops, but with it comes complexity (too much in my opinion) and administrative overhead.

[TriCerat SimplyProfiles](#) – It is sold as a standalone product or as a component in their SimplifySuite. This application includes some cool technology called “Profile Acceleration”, which basically takes your profiles and virtualizes them.

[Immidio Flex+](#) - One of the better ones I have used. Easy to administrate, good support, and lightweight in the environment.

[Citrix – User Profile Management \(UPM\)](#) – Included with XenApp (previously Sepago Profiler). It uses shared file locations and ADM files (as do many others), but it is basic and is pretty much focused on XenApp and XenDesktop.

[Liquidware Labs ProfileUnity FlexApp](#) – I have heard that this is the most scalable solution that is offered, allowing for over 10,000 profiles to be managed in a single interface. It also includes application and patch management features.

[ForensIT User Profile Manager](#) – Simple and lightweight, it is geared more towards the SMB market and has a basic feature set that will get most small shops by.

[Scense Live Profiles](#) – A product I have not seen in the wild yet, it does look promising with low admin overhead and it appears quite easy to use.

[VMware View Persona](#) – Only for use with VMware View (very short sighted in my opinion, but par for the course with VMware).

Since we are focusing on user profiles used within a RDS type environment, which includes any technologies that utilize RDS such as Citrix XenApp, virtual desktops, or hosted desktops to name a few, we will take a look at a small sampling of the available tools to help with managing profiles in those environments. Keep in mind that some of these may only work in a certain environment since they may “hook” into the overlaying technology that sits on top of RDS to perform more specific functions.

[DelProf2 by Helge Klien](#) (FREE) – This tool is a defacto standard for anyone that works with profile management with older XP based clients. It does not work with Windows 7 or later. It basically will delete any inactive user profiles, with additional filtering if necessary, and is usually set as a scheduled task on the server.

[Microsoft's User Profile Hive Cleaner \(UPM\)](#) – If your still running on Server 2003, or I.T. god's forbid Server 2000, you will need this download that installs as a service to clean up leftover profile mater after a user logs off. Server 2008 and up have it built in.

[ForensIT User Profile Wizard](#) (FREE) – A profile migration tool that will quickly and easily migrate thousands of profiles from one domain to another.

[Sepago Profile Migrator](#) (trial) – Offering just about the same features as the ForensIT User profile Wizard, but at a cost ☹ .

[Sepago Profile Nurse](#) (FREE) – Perform registry and file operations across multiple or all profiles at one time. An example would be to add a registry key to a select group of profiles for one purpose, while adding a different key to others for the same purpose.

[TZWorks LLC "Yaru"](#) – Yet Another Registry Utility (YARU). This little utility allows you to open registry hives and perform a multitude of tasks on them including reporting, export, forensics, and more. I have this utility as a staple in my admin toolbox.

[RegShot \(FREE\)](#) – An open source project that allows you to take before and after snapshots of a registry to see what the differences are.

[Scooter Software's Beyond Compare](#) (trial) – An awesome application that does more than just registry and file comparisons. I have used this application a hundred

different ways. Not only can it compare files, but it can also compare complete directories, including users profile directories.