3 Tips for Your Repackaging-Related Questions

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The following three tips were inspired by actual questions and comments from readers of the AdminLetter.

Tip 1 – How to Repair User-Specific Data for Applications without Shortcuts or Executables

Typically when deploying repackaged applications, the Windows Installer service will install the user-specific data only for the profile of the account under which the application is being installed. So, if another user logs into the machine, that user data is unavailable to the new user.

Launching the application shortcut or an application executable typically repairs the missing user data. But if the application being installed does not have any shortcut or executable, then we can follow the steps below to ensure that the user-related application data are repaired for everyone who logs into the Machine.

If you are using Windows XP then you can use the active setup feature.

1. Open the project (.ism) file in AdminStudio's Editor tool.
2. Create a new component under any existing feature in the project.
3. Go to "Registry Data" view of this new component and create the following key structure under HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE hive:

   HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Active Setup\Installed Components\[ProductCode]

4. Under this registry key, create a <new string value> such as:

   "StubPath"="msiexec /fauvs {ProductCode} /qb"

5. Build the project and deploy the package.

This key will kick off a repair of the application file or registries for every new user that logs onto the machine.

Tip 2 – What Is An Easy Way to View Changes Made by a Transform to an MSI?

You can use the utility called Orca if you want to take a quick look at the changes made by a transform (MST) to a Windows Installer package. The Orca utility is free and part of the Windows Installer SDK download.

After opening the Windows Installer package in Orca, drag and drop the transform onto this Orca tool. All the changes made by the transform are highlighted, and it's easier and faster to go through the changed rows and column.

You can get more information about how to download Orca from
http://support.installshield.com/kb/view.asp?articleid=Q107066

Tip 3 – Creating a Transforms which Includes Additional Custom Actions

If you have an existing Windows Installer package and you want to add custom actions or change the destination of existing components in the base MSI, follow these steps:

1. Make a copy of the original MSI and call it: PackageName_ForTransform.msi
2. Open PackageName_ForTransform.msi in AdminStudio's Editor.
3. Make the required changes to the package and save the PackageName_ForTransform.msi
4. In the Editor, go to the "Tools" Menu and select "Create/Apply Transform " from the dropdown list.
5. In the Transform Wizard, select the radio button "Create a transform " and click "Next".
6. In the "Specify Files" Panel, browse first for the original MSI and then for the PackageName_ForTransform.msi and select next.
7. In the "Validation Settings" Panel, select the default radio button and click "Next".
8. In the "Suppress Error Conditions" Panel, select the default radio button and click "Next".
9. In the "Specify Output File Name" Panel, specify the location and name of the transform file to be generated.
10. In the "Summary" Panel, review the settings and click "Create".
11. In the final panel, select "Finish".

This method will allow the creation of a transform which can install new custom actions and can make changes to component destination which is not available in transforms created in AdminStudio's Editor or Tuner.

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