

Reliably Migrating Applications to Microsoft Windows® 7 with Wise Package Studio™ Professional Edition from Symantec

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Executive Summary

A critical, but often overlooked, step in the Microsoft Windows® 7 migration process is determining if your organization's myriad of applications will successfully install to Windows 7. Without investing large amounts of time and expertise in manually installing and testing applications in a prototype Windows 7 environment, it's difficult to determine the types of installation problems your organization might experience.

Some common application installation issues with Windows 7 have the potential to derail a migration. These include the inability to automate installation routines, and applications that are configured incorrectly or don't install at all. Often the IT department may not discover a configuration issue until end-users try to use a critical application and call to report problems.

Wise Package Studio™ Professional Edition from Symantec is not only a well-known tool for repackaging applications for OS migrations, but it can also analyze installations for Windows 7 issues before the packages are rolled out to the production environment. This allows IT departments to resolve installation issues early in the migration process, before problems occur. The result is installation routines that can be reliably configured for Windows 7, enabling the migration process to proceed smoothly and efficiently.

Challenges in migrating applications to Windows 7

Organizations migrating to Windows 7 must carefully consider a number of factors before beginning the migration process. One of the critical, but often overlooked, issues is determining if your organization's applications can be successfully migrated to Windows 7. This is an important point, because application installation issues have the potential to derail your migration.

Common issues include installations that must be executed manually because they cannot silently install on Windows 7, or applications that are incorrectly configured or don't work at all because the installation routine did not complete properly. Wise Package Studio Professional Edition can identify many of these issues to help ensure your applications are stable and reliable when you go live on Windows 7.

Application packaging's role in a Windows 7 migration

Migrating to a new OS, like Windows 7, is an optimal time for an organization to take advantage of application packaging. Thousands of organizations have used Wise Package Studio Professional Edition as a key tool for their past migrations to new Microsoft platforms, including Windows® 2000, XP, and Vista®. Packaging provides one of the most immediate returns on investment during a migration, because it stabilizes client endpoints, thereby reducing end-user downtime and minimizing help-desk headaches.

Wise Package Studio Professional Edition helps ensure application installations will run on Windows 7 before you install them to your production environment. Benefits include:

- More reliable deployments
- Standardized desktop configurations
- Faster software rollouts
- Easier migrations to new operating systems

Common application installation issues

Wise Package Studio Professional Edition not only repackages applications, it is also a key tool in pinpointing installation issues. By identifying installation issues early in the migration process, you have the opportunity to resolve them before they become a help-desk nightmare.

Installation issues are often related to the installation's format. An installation can either be in the setup .exe format, which is the older, traditional installation configuration, or an .MSI, which is the newer format engineered by Microsoft to work with the Windows Installer engine. Most organizations have a mix of setup.exe and .MSI installations in their environment. Each format can have its particular challenges when you install on Windows 7.

Setup.exe installations may not install silently

You may have legacy or custom vendor applications where the installation is still in the setup.exe format. The most common problem with setup.exe installations is the inability to install silently on Windows 7. This occurs because the Windows 7 User Account Control will prompt during the installation for the user to enter administrator credentials. This is

a major concern when undertaking a large scale application migration, because it prevents automation of the installation process. For organizations with globally distributed facilities, this issue could derail an OS migration.

The recommended best practice solution is using Wise Package Studio to repackage the setup.exe into the Windows Installer or .MSI format. By doing this, the installation can install silently and be automated, thereby allowing unattended, large-scale application rollout.

.MSI installations may not execute properly

Installations in the Windows Installer or .MSI format are not completely immune to issues with Windows 7. A common cause of .MSI installation failures or incomplete installations include issues with custom actions that are embedded in the Windows Installer installation. Custom actions execute parts of the installation logic. A custom action that is placed in the wrong sequence within an installation or lacks a description in the Windows Installer CustomAction table will not be executed, which will likely cause incorrect configuration of the application.

Rather than manually examine each .MSI package to identify these types of issues, it's much more expedient, reliable, and accurate to use the Wise Package Studio Package Validation tool to identify Windows 7 installation problems.

Using the Package Validation tool to identify .MSI installation issues

The Package Validation tool identifies Windows 7 installation-related issues for .MSI packages, giving you the opportunity to fix them before they are rolled out to the production environment. Based on 15 validation rules, the Package Validation tool evaluates multiple .MSIs as a single process and captures the results in a report. This significantly speeds up the process of identifying Windows 7 installation issues.

For example, assume your organization has a dozen or more critical custom applications that need to function on the Windows 7 platform. You want to determine if there will be installation issues before the applications are rolled out to production. The installations are all in the .MSI format, but you don't have the resources or expertise to install and test each one in a prototype Windows 7 environment.

By running the Package Validation tool on all of the packages, you can quickly determine what, if any, installation issues will occur. The resulting report reveals that the majority of your .MSIs contain some type of error, including improperly nested custom actions and custom actions in the InstallUISequence that are incorrectly using the AdminUser property. With this information, you can quickly resolve these issues by using the Wise Package Studio Windows Installer Editor to create a transform file (.MST) that can be applied to the original MSI.

Next steps in the migration process: application virtualization and package distribution

Once you've determined that your applications are ready to install on Windows 7, you'll need to complete the rest of the steps in an OS migration. This is an opportune time to consider the benefits of virtualized applications, and the process you'll use for distributing applications.

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Wise Package Studio Professional Edition supports creating, editing, and managing virtual software archive packages, which enable applications to run in a virtual environment when used with Symantec™ Workspace Virtualization. During a large scale migration, it's difficult to diagnose conflicts with other applications and the base operating system, but those issues are nearly eliminated when applications are virtualized.

Packages created with Wise Package Studio can be distributed by all of the leading software distribution systems, but Wise Package Studio works especially well with Altiris™ Client Management Suite from Symantec. Altiris Client Management Suite offers centralized management of your applications and endpoint devices using intelligent, policy-based software deployment to streamline your Windows 7 migration.

Additional information about migrating to Windows 7

To learn more about Symantec solutions for migrating to Windows 7, including Wise Package Studio, check out these additional sources of detailed information:

- The Windows 7 Resource Center offered by Symantec has everything you need to successfully plan and execute an enterprise-wide Windows 7 migration. It includes best practices, white papers, events, downloads, and more at <http://www.symantec.com/windows7>.
- Symantec Connect is an online community where you can collaborate, learn and share ideas about Symantec solutions at <http://www.symantec.com/community>.

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