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Introduction

Dell™ Repository Manager is an application that helps manage system updates easily and effectively. The Dell™ Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter helps with managing an entire infrastructure from firmware updates to bare metal deployment. This white paper looks at how Dell Repository Manager integrates with these two products to build local customized repositories available only in Server mode.

With Dell Repository Manager version, you can build a custom repository based on the managed system configurations that are obtained from Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter.

The benefits of Dell Repository Manager and System Management console integration are:

- A quick and easy way to build a custom repository for managed systems that you own. There is no need to remember the system models and configuration of each individual system to build a custom repository from Dell Online Repository, which is at ftp.dell.com. Dell Repository Manager leverages the system inventory data from Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter directly.
- Fully customized repository that only includes the update packages for a user system configuration. All redundant updates are filtered out. This significantly reduces the size of a custom repository, saves the resources and efforts on managing the repository.
- You can build a repository that only contains the updates for out-of-date devices; or build a baseline repository that contains all the latest updates for all devices in the system.
- Fulfills the repository management functionality for Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter.

Building repositories using a Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter Inventory

Follow these steps to build a repository using the inventory available from Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter:

Install Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter on a local system.

1. Download Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter 1.4 or greater from support.dell.com and install it on a system with network connectivity to the Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter appliance.

2. Setup Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter for inventory.

   When creating repositories from Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter inventory, Dell Repository Manager requires connection profiles to be available under the Dell Management Center as shown in Figure 1.
3. After creating a connection profile, complete an inventory job on all servers defined under the connection profile. Figure 2 shows the status of inventory jobs completed under the Dell Management Center.

Figure 2. Inventory job completion view

The Firmware view from the vSphere Client now shows the availability of inventory, as shown in Figure 3. Now Dell Repository Manager can gather the required inventory.
4. Create a new Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter repository from Dell Repository Manager.

   From Dell Repository Manager, select the Create menu, and then click Dell Management Plug-in for vCenter repository. A wizard guides you through the steps to provide the name of the new repository and the source repository from which to locate the updates.

5. Provide credentials to access Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter appliance.

   When collecting the inventory from the Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter server, Dell Repository Manager needs to connect to the server. You need the Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter server details and user credentials for accessing the Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter plug-in as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 3. Firmware inventory view for the physical server in the VMware vSphere Client console
Based on the version of Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter installed, you may need to provide the appliance administrator password for the Dell Management Plug-in in VMware vCenter. After a successful connection, view the list of servers available for inventory in the wizard as shown in Figure 5.

If you do not want to use the Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter inventory for the repository, the wizard creates a repository compatible for Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter. Choose the required platform and Dell Repository Manager filters out components that are compatible for Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter and creates a customized repository. In addition, this method for creating update repositories is compatible for platform updates using the Dell Integrated Dell Remote Access Controller (iDRAC) with Lifecycle Controller (formerly called Unified Server Configurator). You can save the repository on a USB key or network share and use it for platform updates.

6. Options to create new repository.

Dell Repository Manager provides the same options for selecting updates from the source repository updates (for all devices or only for out-of-date devices) as shown in Figure 5. You can save or load the final repository for editing.
7. The inventory collection and repository creation time can vary based on the number of servers and the size of the source repository. After a successful operation, the Dell Repository Manager creates bundles for individual servers found in the inventory and groups the updates for each of these bundles as shown in Figure 6.
Viewing and refreshing repositories created from inventory

After creating a repository from inventory available in or Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter, there can be changes to inventory data. Dell Repository Manager provides an easy method to refresh an existing repository based on the new inventory.

Loading the repository and selecting the Refresh function

1. After loading the repository created using inventory, select the Inventory menu and click Refresh. This performs a refresh operation that triggers an inventory collection from Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter. The repository is updated with new bundles and components based on the new device updates.

2. The previous selections made during repository creation are saved, thereby reducing the effort to go through the wizard again. For Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter repository creation, you still need to provide credentials to access the server.

Viewing inventory information

Dell Repository Manager also provides a feature to view the inventory information collected from these servers that are grouped under each server model (Figure 7).

1. Select the Inventory menu in Dell Repository Manager and click Information to bring up a window showing device inventory information.

Summary

Dell Repository Manager integrates with Dell system management consoles like the Dell Management Plug-in for VMware vCenter to provide an easy method for creating and maintaining repositories based on the inventory available in these consoles.