Using Dell Repository Manager to Manage Your Repositories Efficiently

A Dell Technical White Paper

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Using Dell Repository Manager to Manage Your Repositories Efficiently

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Introduction

Dell™ Repository Manager (DRM) is an application that helps to manage system updates easily and effectively. In the latest release of Dell Repository Manager, Dell introduced several enhancements to the product to make the user experience intuitive, easy-to-use, and more responsive. This paper highlights the more prominent of these enhancements.

Tabbed Layout

The DRM has a greatly simplified user interface over the previous releases. The prominent change is a refreshing new tabbed layout. Tabbed navigation offers numerous advantages. They explain where you are and where else you can go. All major content areas present themselves as a separate tab. Every tab preserves its own state. So it is easy to switch between them.

![Tabbed Layout](image)

The figure shows a typical screen with multiple tabs open at the same time. The different type of content a tab can hold is listed below:

1. Welcome
2. My Repositories
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3. Source Repository
4. User Repositories
5. Dell Support Files Search

The figure below shows a zoomed out version of the tab headers. As seen, most tabs have a close button that lets the user dispose the particular tab when no longer required.

![Tab Close Button]

Figure 2. Tab Close Button

“My Repositories” is a special tab that cannot be closed by a user. More is explained in a following section. You can open multiple repositories at the same time, and each repository opens in a separate tab. This allows every single repository to be searched and modified independently of any other.

![A User Repository]

Figure 3. A User Repository

A typical user repository open in Data Center Version, has three tabs internally; one for bundles, second for components and last for any inventory data. The various areas on a Components tab have been numbered and explained in detail below:
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1. Repository Title: This is the user provided name for the repository.

2. Description: This is additional description that may have been associated with the repository.

3. Repository-level actions: A user can perform various actions on a repository like exporting it to catalog format, comparing with other repositories or modify its name and description properties. A source repository can additionally have an action to sync it with external source location.

4. Internal Tabs: These allow switching between bundle, component and inventory views. Inventory tab will show data if the current repository was created from Dell OpenManage Essentials (OME) or Dell System Mgmt Plug-in for vCenter inventories.

5. Component-level Tasks: User can choose to Import external DUPs into a repository, delete, download or view properties. They can also copy the components into a new or existing bundle within the same or a different repository.

6. Selection Status: View the status on currently selected components.

7. Saved Filters: User can load a previously saved filter criteria and apply it to current repository.

8. Filter Parameters: Different filter parameters are provided in DRM to find the correct set of components that a user may be interested in.

9. Listing: This grid shows a listing of components contained in the open repository. The listing is controlled by the Filter Parameters explained above.

10. Filter Actions: Saving filter criteria for later use or resetting the current filtering is achieved through these actions.

A user can even search for Dell update files outside of any catalog using the “Dell Support Files” tab. The “Welcome” is another special tab that is presented, by default, to a first-time user.

My Repositories View

“My Repositories” is the only tab which cannot be closed by a user. It is available every time DRM is running. This tab provides a complete listing of all repositories managed (created or imported) by the current user. Note that the listing will be different in two modes of operation, namely, Data Center Version and Business Client Version. The following figure shows a typical view. When DRM 1.5 is installed for the first time on a machine, this listing will appear blank. Different actions can result in adding an entry to this view:

1. Empty repository created through the “New” option.

2. Repository created through one of “Creation Wizards”.

3. Archived source repositories when a new Source repository is downloaded through “Sync Database with Source” option.

4. “Exporting” bundles in an existing repository into a new repository.

5. “Copying” components in an existing repository into a new Repository.
6. Finding components through “Dell Support Files” feature and then exporting the results into a new repository. Automating the search for Dell files can also create new repositories based on user configurations.

![My Repositories View](image)

**Figure 4.** My Repositories View

As depicted, My Repositories view displays vital information like created or imported date, the number of bundles and components in a repository. It also includes any description provided.

User can exercise options to open or delete the existing repositories. A repository always opens in a new Tab. “My Repositories” is also a starting point from where users can either create new repositories or Import Legacy Repositories from previous DRM releases into the new database format. The screen also has a Refresh button to display any new repositories created by “Scheduled Automatic Search” feature since launching DRM.

**Welcome Screen**

“Welcome” is the first screen a user will be presented with, on first launch of DRM. This tab, as the name suggests, is a quick start guide into using DRM. Whether a user has used previous versions of the product or not, they will find pointers to basic steps one would take when they start working with latest release. These pointers briefly explain the need for each of these steps and also include a shortcut link that they can directly click from the Welcome screen to achieve the tasks. Typically, when you start using 1.5, you will benefit from performing these tasks:

1. Sync or download the Dell FTP catalog (now referred as Source within DRM) to a local database.
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2. Create a new repository by using Source repository as a reference.

3. Import legacy repositories from previous versions of DRM. You would not be able to view or edit older repositories without importing them first.

Here is a snapshot of Welcome screen when you start DRM for first time:

![Welcome Screen](image)

**Figure 5.** Welcome (Data Center Version)

The Welcome tab can be closed by the user any time. It will come up every time you start DRM unless user indicates otherwise by clearing the highlighted checkbox as shown in figure below:

![Welcome Tab Options](image)

**Figure 6.** Hide Welcome Tab

Once hidden, at startup or by closing, the Welcome Tab can be re-opened through menu option Help -> View Welcome Tab.

**Jobs Queue**

Jobs Queue is another prominent feature that will make you more efficient as a system administrator. There are numerous long running operations DRM can perform on behalf of a user. Some of these operations are exporting bundles into formats like SUU, Light Weight Deployment Script, Deployment Media and Raw Driver Pack, or downloading latest plug-ins (SUU or DTK) from internet, or even
downloading the DUPs themselves. All these example tasks can take anywhere from few minutes to even hours to complete, depending on the selected user parameters and internet bandwidth available.

Previous releases of DRM performed all of these tasks; but while these were in progress the user interface would remain blocked and user would have to wait until completion to do any other task. The release 1.5 intelligently pushes all these types of operations on a background job queue for processing thereby freeing up the user interface for any newer tasks.

DRM recognizes all user actions that can potentially result into long-running tasks and queues them up for background processing. Once a job is submitted to the queue, user is prompted with a confirmation as shown in screen below:

![Submit to Job Queue](image)

**Figure 7. Submit to Job Queue**

A Jobs Queue panel is always available for the user to monitor jobs running in the background queue. This panel can be expanded or collapsed by clicking on its header. An expanded panel will show a listing of all the jobs. Here is a typical expanded Job Queue panel:

![Job Queue Detailed Status](image)

**Figure 8. Job Queue Detailed Status**

Every job is represented as a line item in this grid. The status for each job is indicated. User can stop a running task or start a running task using the action bar.

In a collapsed state the Job Queue header shows vital counts on the jobs. These statistics can be explained through the use of graphic below:
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Figure 9.  Job Queue Counts

Each of these counts is explained:

1. Pending for Confirmation: During downloads DRM verifies the certificate for each of the file copied. In a case where a new certificate is found that hasn't been accepted before, the job will enter a special status called “Confirmation Needed”. This count represents the number of all such jobs.

2. Queued: DRM processes only one job at a time. If a user submits new jobs while one is being processed those jobs get queued up and that is exactly what is represented by this count.

3. Completed: This count shows the number of jobs that have been completed to success or a failure.

Summary

Release 1.5 is a big step in making the user experience more intuitive, efficient and productive. This paper has covered some of the major enhancements in the area of usability.