

# Group Policy New Features

- For the free video please see  
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This video looks at the new features in Group Policy that are available in Windows Server 2008 and Windows Server 2008 R2.

## New Features

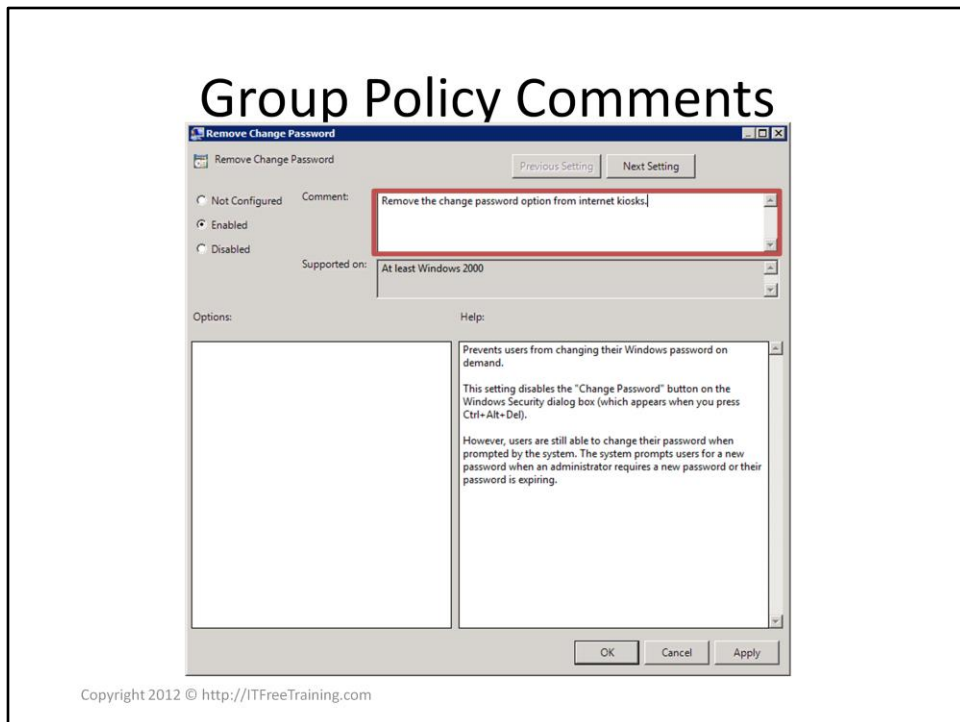
- Comments for Group Policy
- Starter Group Policy Objects
- Starter Group Policy Objects
- Preferences
- Windows PowerShell Cmdlets (R2)
- New ADMX format

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### **New Features**

Windows Server 2008 adds the following features: comments, Starter Group Policy Objects, integration with Network Location Awareness, Preferences, and the new ADMX format.

Windows Server 2008 R2 adds the ability for Group Policy to be administered from PowerShell.



## Group Policy Comments

All Group Policy settings allow comments to be added. Comments allow an administrator to leave a comment for all Group Policy settings which help other administrators understand why the Group Policy was configured the way it was.

## Starter Group Policy Objects

- A template file
  - Used to create new Group Policy

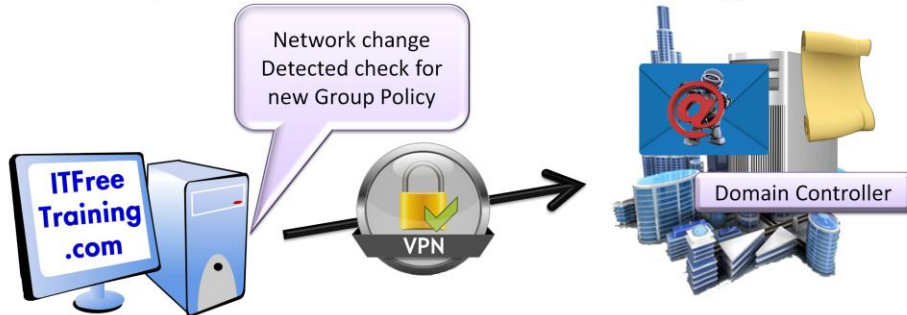
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### **Starter Group Policy Objects**

Starter Group Policy Objects is essentially a template. Once you create a Starter Group Policy Object you can copy this to a new Group Policy. Since part of Group Policy is called Administrative Templates this is probably why Microsoft uses the name Starter Group Policy Objects rather than calling it a template. The limitation with Starter Group Policy Objects is that they can only be used to configure Administrative Templates.

# Network Location Awareness

- Group Policy can detect network changes



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## Network Location Awareness

Group Policy now integrates with the Network Awareness Services. This means that when a network becomes available, for example a VPN connection is established, a wireless network becoming available, or simply a network cable being plugged in, Group Policy will check for updates on the network. Previously Group Policy would only check at certain intervals and if the network was not available when it checked, then Group Policy may never be updated.

## Preferences

- Originally PolicyMaker
- Reduces the need for scripts
- Allows management of the following
  - Drive mapping, registry
- Services, Files and Folders
- Local Users & Groups
- Allows targeting

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### **Preferences**

Preferences was a 3<sup>rd</sup> party product that was integrated in Windows Server 2008 just before release. It adds a lot of flexibility to Group Policy allowing an administrator to configure settings like printers and drive mapping. Unlike Group Policy, the user is free to overwrite or delete what has been configured, however Preferences will attempt to reapply the settings at the next Group Policy Refresh. This means the user can remove settings like a mapped drive and replace it with another mapped drive if they wish. The major feature with Group Policy is that it allows targeting to particular groups, computer types, software, and hardware, just to name a few.

# PowerShell

- Requires Windows Sever 2008 R2
  - or Windows 7
- Scripting support
  - Managing GPO's
  - Settings flags
  - Creating starter GPO's

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## **PowerShell**

If you are running Windows Server 2008 R2 or Windows 7, you can perform Group Policy administration from PowerShell. Many functions are included like managing Group Policy settings and creating starter GPO's.

## ADM File

- Stored in the SysVol share
- Contains settings and interface
- Does not scale well
- Language specific



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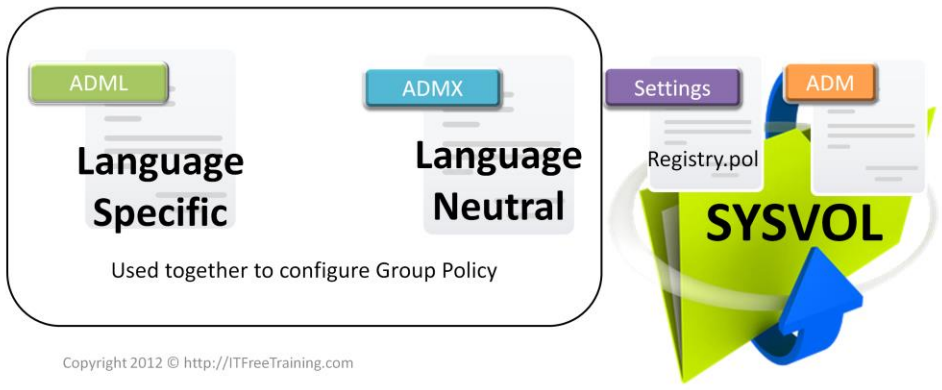
### **ADM File**

The ADM file was used with Group Policy before Windows Server 2008 was released. The ADM file contains all the settings that are found under Administrative Templates. Each time a new Group Policy is created, the settings for the Group Policy is stored in the SysVol share. The ADM file is also stored with the Group Policy setting. This means that Group Policy using the ADM does not scale well as it makes the SysVol share very large. Also once a Group Policy is created it is linked to the one ADM file. The ADM file only supports one language so if multiple administrators were working on the same Group Policy one language would need to be agreed between all administrators.



# ADMX

- Introduced in Windows Server 2008
- ADMX (XML based)
- Compatibility with existing clients
- Multiple language support



## ADMX File

The ADMX file replaces the old ADM file. It was first introduced in Windows Server 2008, however if you download the latest Group Policy Management software you can use the ADMX files in early Windows Servers. ADMX is an XML based format making it easy to edit. ADM is an in-house format so it is not as easy to work with as XML files are. The format is made up of two parts. The ADMX file defines the Group Policy settings. The ADML file contains the language to be used with the file. This means the ADMX file can easily be used with any language assuming an ADML file for the language exists. Both ADM and ADMX output the same files so regardless which format is used, they will be compatible with old and new clients.

## ADM vs ADMX

- ADMX
  - Uses less space in SysVol
  - Supports multiple languages
  - XML format
- Both formats support all clients

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### **ADM vs ADMX**

ADMX files use less space in the SysVol. You can choose to store the ADMX and ADML files in the SysVol. The difference between ADM and ADMX files is that if you choose to store the files in the SysVol, each ADMX file only needs to be stored once where the ADM files need to be stored for each Group Policy that is created.