

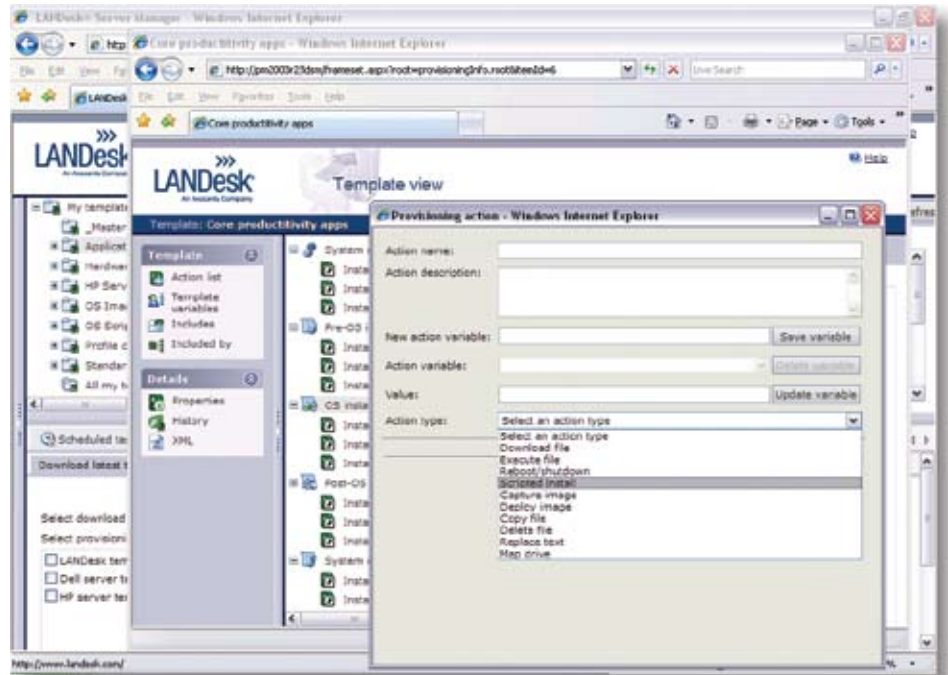
Q. What Is Provisioning with LANDesk® Management Solutions?



»» A. It's a new way to completely install and configure your systems and servers—from OS installation to application deployment, patching and configuration—using a single task.

Benefits of Provisioning with LANDesk® Management Solutions

- Offers repeatability and predictability using a consistent, template-based approach.
- Enables full system configuration with control and customization in a single continuous operation.
- Saves time by reducing total configuration time-to-readiness.
- Lets you perform configuration prep work before hardware arrives on-site.
- Makes it easier to restore machines to a known good baseline state.
- Supports full machine provisioning, simple configuration and single application deployment.
- Enables flexible OS deployment using images or scripted installs.
- Gives deployment teams maximum flexibility by supporting PXE-based boot or local media boot.



It's a way to define the optimal baseline configuration for each of your servers, desktops and laptops. And to then easily deploy and maintain that baseline using the power of LANDesk® management solutions.

You define individual configuration tasks as building blocks, then sequence them in a template that can be used for both initial system deployment and ongoing maintenance. You gain the flexibility to install only what you want and need on individual systems and servers and shorten the time it takes to make new systems ready for use and to update existing systems.

Provisioning with LANDesk management solutions breaks traditional OS imaging into operational phases that use a sequence of reusable predefined actions, then performs those actions as part of a single, continuous task. You can even perform complex hardware configuration and setup, including BIOS and RAID configuration, prior to deploying an OS and needed applications.

Instead of applying a single large image with a lot of information that may not apply to the system you're provisioning or maintaining a complex library of machine-specific images, you install only what you need on each system using an optimized template. And you do it all quickly in one step.

Q. How does provisioning with LANDesk® management solutions work?

A. Provisioning with LANDesk® management solutions is founded on configuration actions you use as building blocks. Predefined actions include download, execute, reboot, agent configuration, software distribution, registry entry and more. Combine actions to build templates that can be used individually (for instance a small, single-purpose template for driver installation) or combine multiple task templates to build modular templates—or to create a final master template.

LANDesk even provides a set of predefined templates optimized for specific server hardware and common deployment tasks through LANDesk® Updates. Use them as-is, as part of a master template or modify them to suit your company's specific standards and needs.

With LANDesk® provisioning, you combine individual actions, templates or modular templates within your master template as needed to create optimal configurations for individual machines. You can either copy component templates into your master template or you can insert source templates as references so that any changes made to a source template are automatically updated in your master template. This makes updating your baseline configuration as easy as updating a source template.

When you schedule your master template for delivery to a target device, all included templates are condensed and the file is locked into a master XML file of executable tasks. The master file is stored for permanent reference. You can then reschedule it at any time to bring a system back into compliance with the baseline configuration. You can also copy a master template to create a new master template that you can edit as needed to accommodate new hardware or new configuration standards.

Q. How does provisioning perform tasks—is there a client agent?

A. LANDesk provisioning is enabled by an agent that runs on the target system. You can create a bootable image on CD or USB media or use PXE services to load a preconfigured preboot environment that contains the provisioning agent. LANDesk provisioning includes all the tools you need to create that bootable image and provides a simple user interface for downloading the boot image from either the Web or Windows management consoles.

Because provisioning is controlled by an agent on the target system, if the system has to be rebooted your provisioning template continues from exactly the point where it left off. And if a system crashes during provisioning, you can immediately identify the exact point in the process where the crash occurred to more easily troubleshoot the problem and create a fix.

Q. Can the provisioning process be audited?

A. Provisioning with LANDesk® solutions saves a log file of every event that happens during the provisioning process. You can check the status of a recent task, see how a particular system or server is provisioned and see which systems or servers were provisioned using a specific template. With a history of what's happened, you can easily rerun a template if you need to put a system back to a known state. And you can redeploy a template regularly—either manually or as a recurring scheduled task—to ensure that systems or servers are kept within your established standards.

Q. Does provisioning with LANDesk® management solutions require PXE?

A. Provisioning with LANDesk® management solutions can use PXE as a boot medium, but doesn't require it, even to provision bare metal systems. To provision your systems without PXE, simply boot them using a LANDesk provisioning CD or USB boot media that includes the LANDesk provisioning agent. On startup, the agent contacts your core server and executes the scheduled provisioning template. The agent then notifies you when to remove the media and reboot the target system.

Q. What are the advantages of scripted provisioning installations versus deploying OS images?

A. Creating templates using LANDesk's provisioning capabilities is faster and easier than creating images. Say you have to create 30 unique configurations for your environment. Creating 30 templates is faster, easier, and more customizable than creating 30 images. Since templates are formatted as XML documents, and actions can be shared between templates, you can easily review and edit templates for consistency rather than rebuilding or recapturing 30 unique images. Templates can also be created and scheduled in advance. And because each system is unique, sharing a general image between systems can lead to performance and compatibility issues. Templates can quickly and easily be customized to meet a system's exact requirements.

Set Up Provisioning *Before* Systems Arrive On-Site

Provisioning with LANDesk® management solutions lets you prepare everything necessary to fully configure a system before it arrives on-site—even scheduling the provisioning task itself.

Simply go to the "My device list" and add a "bare metal server" or "bare metal system" using the system identifier supplied by your vendor (MAC address, serial number, IPMI GUID or AMT GUID). A unique record is created for that system, so you can associate incoming systems and servers with a provisioning template.

Once the systems arrive, simply insert the LANDesk® provisioning boot CD or bootable USB drive and turn on the system to run the scheduled provisioning task. Your new systems and servers are properly provisioned and ready for use in minutes.

Q. Does provisioning with LANDesk® management solutions give administrators the ability to control who has rights to provision systems?

A. Provisioning with LANDesk® management solutions includes role-based administration to let administrators decide who has the right to schedule provisioning tasks as well as who has the right to edit provisioning templates.

Q. Which operating systems is provisioning with LANDesk® management solutions compatible with?

A. LANDesk® management solutions can provision systems to run either Windows or Linux. LANDesk supplies both Linux-based and Windows PE-based preboot environments to give you maximum flexibility and control of each target device.

Q. How does provisioning with LANDesk® management solutions compare to OS deployment with LANDesk management solutions?

A. The main difference is that while OS deployment relies on creating and maintaining often large, fairly generalized images and applying one image to many machines at once, provisioning lets you create highly customized, easily editable scripts using actions and other component templates as building blocks. Currently, these scripts are optimized for deploying one script to one server or to a few desktops in a unique desktop environment. While image-based deployment is currently faster and less bandwidth intensive, it doesn't offer the customization or absolute control that provisioning does. For bare-metal machines, image-based deployment relies on a PXE server to boot the target system into the correct preboot environment, while provisioning can work either with or without a PXE server in the environment.

Q. Does provisioning with LANDesk® management solutions offer predefined content?

A. Yes. LANDesk works with server vendors to provide you with predefined vendor-specific templates. You get access to the optimal hardware configuration based on the server vendor's recommendations, for example a Dell 1850. LANDesk maintains this content, keeps it up-to-date and makes it available to you via LANDesk® Updates. In the future, LANDesk also plans to make predefined desktop configurations available along with common meta templates (for example, for deploying Vista) in a generic framework that lists out all components.

System Requirements and Platform Support

Provisioning capabilities are available in both LANDesk® Management Suite 8.7 and LANDesk® Server Manager 8.7. For a complete list of core server and console requirements and operating systems; supported databases, directories, Web servers and reporting engines as well as the most current language and client platform support, see the LANDesk Web site at www.landesk.com.

Pricing

For information on per-node pricing for LANDesk® Management Suite and LANDesk® Server Manager, contact LANDesk or your LANDesk® Solution Provider.

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