Making file association when using ThinAPP

Compiled by

Aseem Anwar

aseem@virtualizeplanet.com

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Using VMware ThinApp is a convenient way of delivering applications to users in a VDI environment. ThinApp allows an application to be packaged up so that is completely portable and encapsulated away from the underlying Operating System which it is running on. The application is packaged up with all the files, directories and registry entries it would normally have if it was installed locally. When the application is executed these files etc are unpacked as needed and loaded into memory so they can be used by the app. The app can be packaged up once and copied onto either a network share or a USB pen drive. From there the app can be run my multiple users without the need to install the app. One of the issues arising from this setup is the lack of file associations on the local VDI machine. As it does not have the app installed locally it is not aware of the file types that app can run and you lose the ability to double click on for example a .doc file and for it to automatically open in your ThinApp'd copy of Microsoft Word. The solution to this is a small executable which comes with ThinApp called ThinReg. When the app is packaged registry entries for file associations are also created and packaged up into the .dat file. To create registry entries on the VDI machine you need to run ThinReg.exe passing the location of your ThinApp'd .exe files for example if you had a copy of Microsoft Office ThinApp'd on a share you can call ThinReg.exe [\\servername\share*.exe](\\servername\share*.exe) this will create the file associations for you so that you can then double file such as .doc and .ppt files as if Office is installed locally. Once you have you application packaged up and setup on a share or wherever you wish to deploy it from you then need a convenient way of delivering the shortcuts to the user and also for running ThinReg against the apps to make the file associations. A powerful and convenient way of doing this is using a product called Desktop Authority by a company called Script Logic. The product is feature rich allowing you to manipulate the user's desktop in many ways. The way I have used it with regard to ThinApp is to publish shortcuts to the apps onto the user's desktop and start menu and to run ThinReg against the executables to make the file association. The same effect could be achieved using .vbs scripts or something similar but the convenience and efficiency of using Desktop Authority makes the process of deploying ThinApp's quicker, easier and gives the administrator higher levels of control over the process.