Highlights from a recent webcast on Endpoint Systems Management

DELL KACE: ENDPOINT SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT: COVERING THE FULL LIFECYCLE

Nick Cavalancia, Techvangelism, and Brandon Whitman, Dell ESM Sales Engineer, discussed how today there is no end to endpoint management and offered solutions to improve ESM to meet the increased expectations on IT.

Before the advent of B.Y.O.D. the demands of endpoint systems management hadn't changed much in the past decades. When the desktop PC was king, IT professionals had to deploy machines, install applications, and keep them secure and updated. Those tasks still have to be done today but the demands to manage the growing number of user-owned tablets and smart phones, has added new layers of complexity. So it's become more important to ensure you have the entire lifecycle of a wide variety of endpoints under management.

Today there is no end to endpoint management. With the increased expectations that have been put upon IT including managing the growing number of mobile devices, keeping them safe from security threats, and holding down costs. Those expectations have taken endpoint management beyond just updates, deployments, an occasional patch, and maybe a little configuration management. Today the focus is so much more than how do I get that machine into a consistent state. It's also about security, especially if the "machine" is a user-owned smart-phone or tablet. That's a big issue especially with growing external malware and ransomware threats,

and even the possibility of an insider threat.

Endpoint Systems Management Lifecycle

The Endpoint Systems Management Lifecycle is designed to manage:
- Desktops
- Laptops
- Tablets
- Servers
- Smartphones
- Virtual Machines
- Network Assets

The ESM lifecycle is made up of four major sets of tasks:
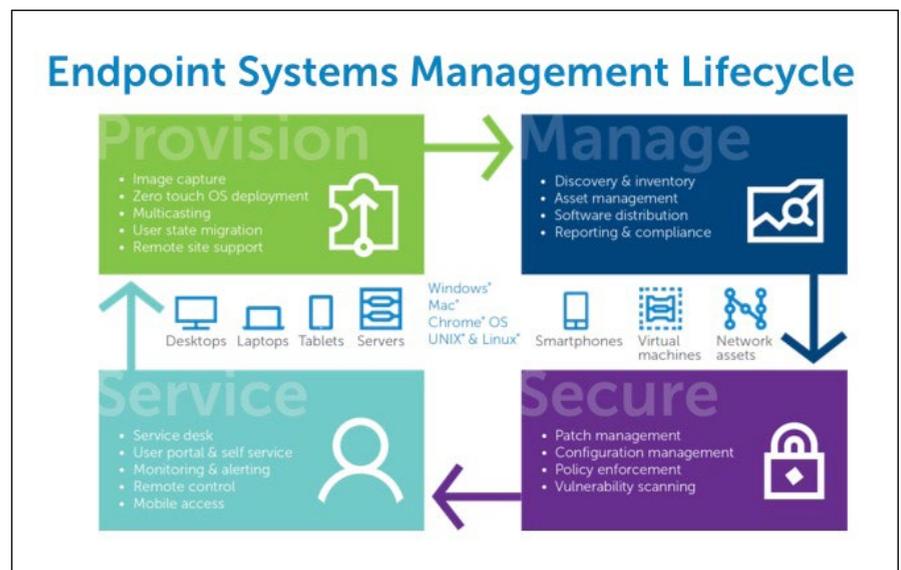
Provision
- Image capture
- Zero touch OS deployment
- Multicasting
- User state migration
- Remote site support

Manage
- Discovery & inventory
- Asset management
- Software distribution
- Reporting & compliance

Secure
- Patch management
- Configuration management
- Policy enforcement
- Vulnerability scanning

Endpoint Systems Management Lifecycle

Service
- Service desk
- User portal & self service
- Monitoring & alerting
- Remote control
- Mobile access

> "Patching won't be able to be done properly because if you don't have all the machines inventoried, you can't actually patch every machine and that impacts your security standard."
> —*Nick Cavalancia*

Focus on the User

Because of the changing nature of end-points, which can be anything from the tried-and-true desktop PC to a smart phone, you do not want your father's ESM solution. It's no longer about assigning machines to new employees and retrieving them from departing ones. In the B.Y.O.D. world, ESM needs to focus on what the user needs to be productive while ensuring that whatever the device is, it doesn't open the network to a security threat.

That is why it is important to take a lifecycle approach to ESM rather than treating it as a losely organized group of tasks.

"If one of those boxes goes away then our IT world supporting end users falls apart," said Brandon Whitman, Dell ESM Sales Engineer.

In the desktop PC world, IT didn't need to do much more than keep an accurate count of how many machines were on the network. But with employees accessing email from smart phones, it is critical to keep tabs on who has what.

"In my mind one of the most important pieces is the inventory," Whitman said. "If you don't know what you have then the rest of the lifecycle is irrelevant. You remain in an ever-reactive state with focus on individual incidents and you never get to see the larger picture."

Two Keys to Success

Two keys to a successful ESM strategy were outlined by Nick Cavalancia of

Techvangelism:
1. Starting fast
2. Ease of use

Starting fast: Even if you are getting things in place, if you are not doing it quickly, it can be a problem. Take inventory, for example. If you are doing it manually and thus slowly, there's a danger that all the other steps in the ESM lifecycle will fall behind as a result.

"If inventory is done slowly, start looking at the ripple effect," Cavalancia said. "Patching won't be able to be done properly because if you don't have all the machines inventoried, you can't actually patch every machine and that impacts your security standard."

Without an accurate up-to-date inventory, IT faces a host of problems, including not knowing when:
- hardware needs service
- CPU utilization is too high
- memory is going bad
- updates need to be done on what machines
- licenses need to be maintained
- software needs upgrading
- machines are retired

While using inventory as an example, Cavalancia noted that the need for speed is key for all aspects of the ESM lifecycle.

Ease of use: Going hand in hand with starting fast is ease of use. It is hard to imagine how you could start fast with a system that is hard to use. The wide range of tasks in the ESM lifecycle will consume all your time if done manually. So an automated solution is a must. But

if you don't have the right type of automation, you don't have the right type of solution.

"Ease of use, which ties into fast implementation, ties into automation, is an interwoven concept," Cavalancia said. "And it ends up reducing your TCO (total cost of ownership) dramatically."

An ESM solution lets IT professionals know that systems are all consistent. When the ESM solution is doing its job, support knows exactly what to expect. They know where an application is going to go when they install it. They will know where to go to fix that application. They know what updates you should have on the system because everyone should have the same updates.

"Time after time after time it's going to reduce your total cost of ownership," Cavalancia said of the automated ESM solution. "Ease of use becomes critical here."

The Dell KACE K1000 Solution

Dell KACE K1000 provides a structured jump-start program that gets you off the ground quickly. At the end of 12 hours you will know how to use K1000 for endpoint management. You will have it running and be able to completely administer as soon as you complete that jump-start program.