

Skyrocket to efficiency with your next OS upgrade: Employ this suite of solutions

by Wendy Ross, MA, A+



AT A GLANCE

Preparing for a large-scale operating system (OS) upgrade is a time-consuming and daunting task, especially when you consider all the separate tools you'll need to inventory your computers, back up user data, create the images, and deploy them to networked computers. Fortunately, you can consolidate your efforts by using Symantec Ghost Solution Suite 2.0 for a streamlined, UI-based deployment.

To simplify your next OS rollout, we'll:

- Highlight the key benefits of the Ghost Solution Suite so you can decide if Ghost is right for you.
- Examine the hardware and OS requirements for the clients, server, and console.
- Note additional ways to get help and information on using the Suite.
- Briefly discuss the steps you'll take in the Console to create and deploy images.

To prepare for Microsoft's Windows Vista launch, Symantec has released the latest version of Symantec Ghost Solution Suite—version 2.0. Whether you're ready to deploy Vista to all your workstations, or you're just getting around to upgrading to XP, you know that a system-wide upgrade is expensive, time consuming, and requires you to learn many new tools. Worse, you'll probably find yourself simultaneously tasked with the upgrade and taking care of all your other duties. Employing Symantec Ghost Solution Suite for your next OS rollout could be a lifesaver.

The Solution Suite and its benefits

Symantec Ghost Solution Suite offers you a single console—the Symantec Ghost Console—from which you can manage system imaging and


deployment. Ghost provides file- and sector-based imaging, OS migration including user data, and system inventorying, and even allows you edit images after you create them.


Version 2.0 comes complete with support for Windows Vista and 64-bit OSs, as well as Linux. With it, you can preserve user data on the local machine to save bandwidth, if desired. It also offers image multicasting—a feature you won't get from Microsoft until it releases Longhorn.

OS migration made simple

In short, Ghost helps you streamline the following deployment tasks by using a single console instead of several different tools:

- Inventory computer hardware to find computers that you can upgrade
- Capture application settings, user settings, and profiles

 **Application:**
Symantec Ghost Solution Suite 2.0

 **Operating Systems:**
Microsoft Windows 98/2000 Professional/XP SP2/Server 2003/Vista

- Multicast images to designated computers
- Reapply captured settings

Ensure your systems meet Ghost specs

Ghost has different requirements for client machines and the server and console machines. You can run the Symantec Ghost Console on your server, if desired.

Client requirements

- Windows 95b, 98 SE, NT 4.0 (SP4), 2000 Professional (sp1), XP Professional, XP Tablet PC Edition, or Vista
- 133 MHz Intel Pentium processor
- 32 MB RAM
- Available disk space to equal twice the size of the largest file to be

Ghost targets specific customers

For mid-sized businesses with 50 to 1,000 machines, Symantec's Ghost Solution Suite is a total solution. But for enterprises larger than 1,000 machines, you can still use the Suite. For example, you could use its imaging functionality along with SMS or use it for one-off jobs. If in the past you've used Ghost.exe to image a machine for a backup, you'll find the functionality still exists in this updated program.

What does it cost?

Symantec Ghost Solution Suite costs \$39.20 per license. Symantec's licensing rules include:

- **Standard Licensing.** One license per managed machine. Licenses don't expire
- **VAR Licensing.** Bulk/single use license pricing and pass through licensing available

migrated on the C: drive when restoring a package

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.01 (SP1) or higher

OS warning: Ghost Solution Suite doesn't support Windows Me and XP Home. It also doesn't support any client machines with pre-release versions of Vista.

Console and server requirements

- Windows 2000 Professional SP3/ Server SP3/2000 Advanced Server SP3, XP Professional SP2, Windows Server 2003 Standard and Enterprise Editions SP1, or Vista
- Pentium III or higher processor
- 512 MB RAM
- 10/100 - MBPS NIC
- CD-ROM drive
- The amount of disk space required depends on the number of planned client migrations and average package size
- Internet or intranet connection

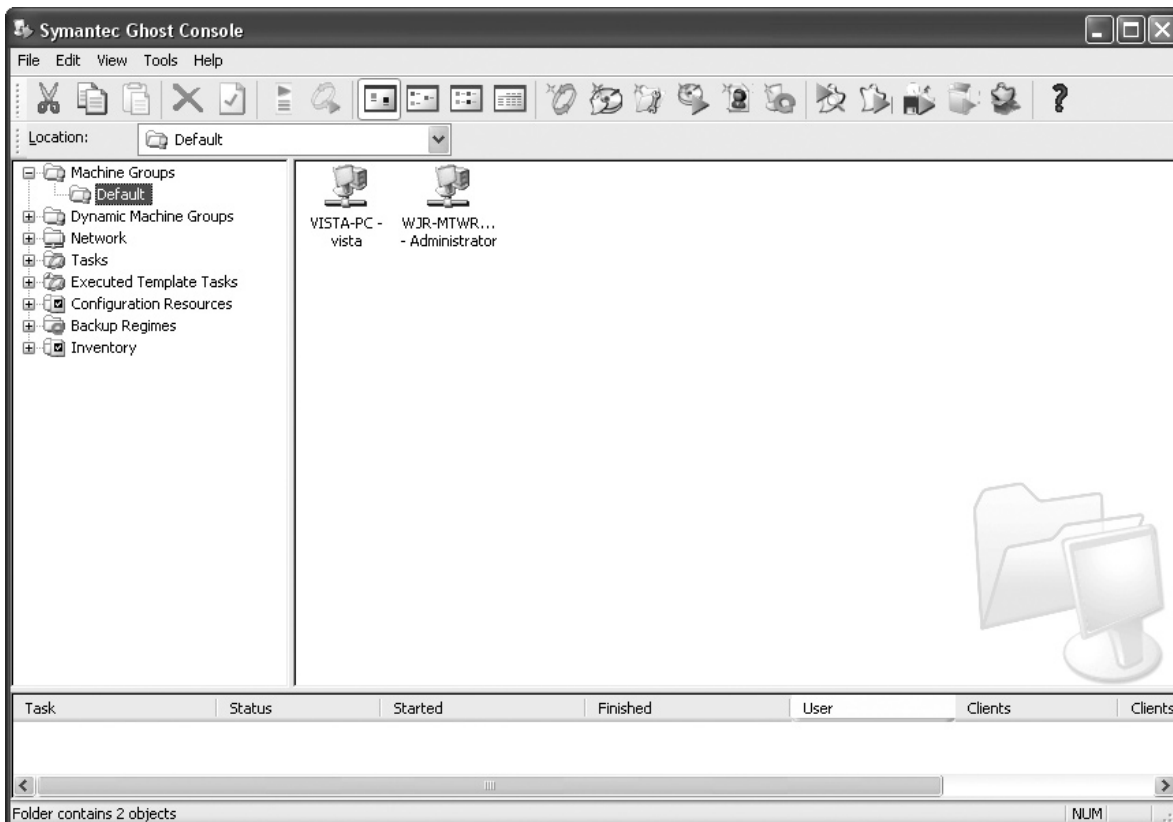
Get started with Ghost

You must install the Ghost console on the machine from which you want to manage your enterprise solution, and install the client software on every client. You can download a trial version by pointing your browser to www4.symantec.com/Vrt/offer?a_id=32763 and clicking on the Download Now link. You must sign up for an account with Symantec, but otherwise the download and installation process is straightforward.

Run through the tutorial

One aspect of the updated Solution Suite that busy IT pros will appreciate is the optional tutorials. Because Ghost offers so much functionality, the PDF user guide—which you can launch from the CD or from the Help menu—is over 700 pages long. Before you get started, you can run through a tutorial that will answer most of your initial questions in about 10 minutes.

To launch the tutorial, simply open the Ghost Console by selecting Start | (All) Programs | Symantec Ghost |



A: Make Symantec Ghost Console the hub of your OS upgrade process.

Ghost Console to open the Console window shown in **Figure A**. Then select Help | Tutorials.

Break down the steps

Once you install the client program on the client machines, they automatically add themselves to the Default Machine Group on the Console. You'll use Machine Groups and Dynamic Machine Groups to define groups of computers that meet certain criteria, such as Vista-capable computers. When you select a particular Group, the computers in that Group appear in the Object pane of the Console, as shown on the right side of **Figure A**.

Inventory your systems

The next step you need to take is to inventory your systems. When you do this, you'll create an Inventory Task to display specific information you need to know about your target computers.

For example, let's say you want to locate Vista-capable computers, but you also want to review their video controller specs. You want to separate machines into Machine Groups based on if they'll run Aero. To do so, you'll simply designate a Filter and a View in your Inventory Report, as shown in **Figure B**.

Create an image

During the image phase, you'll use the Console's Configuration Resources to allocate a location on the Ghost server

to store your images. Then, you'll designate the unattend file you want to use for installation. Finally, you'll create an Image Task in which you set the client from which you want to take the image.

Vista's Sysprep: You create an unattend.xml file with Vista's Windows System Image Manager

Migrate user data

You can use Microsoft's free User State Migration Tool to migrate user settings from an existing machine to a newly installed Vista machine. As we showed you in the September 2006 article "Jumpstart your OS upgrade with this easy-to-implement migration tool," USMT isn't difficult to use, but it does require a lot of command line-intensive setup time.

With Ghost Console, you'll find the process much smoother because you'll use the UI to designate the computers and users from which you want to grab settings, where to store the settings, and to which computers you want to apply them.

Deploy the image

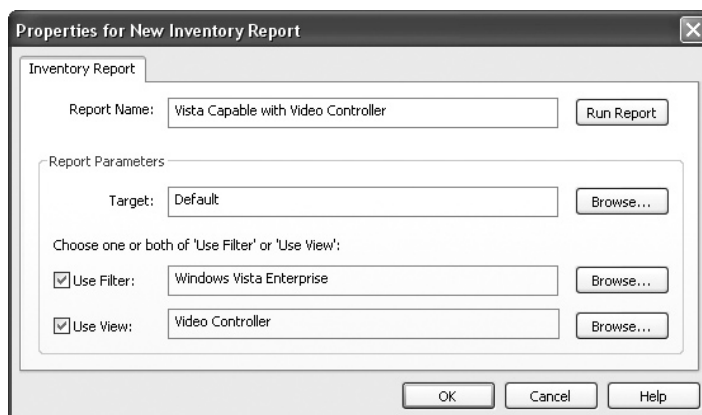
In the last step in the process, you'll deploy the image. You'll create a new Task for the deployment, as shown in **Figure C**. Here you'll select the Task Steps, which appear in

alphabetical order but run in the proper order—rest assured Ghost captures the user's data before it clones the machine. Ghost indicates the tasks you must configure by placing an icon next to the corresponding check box, as it does here for the Clone and User Migration: Capture tasks.

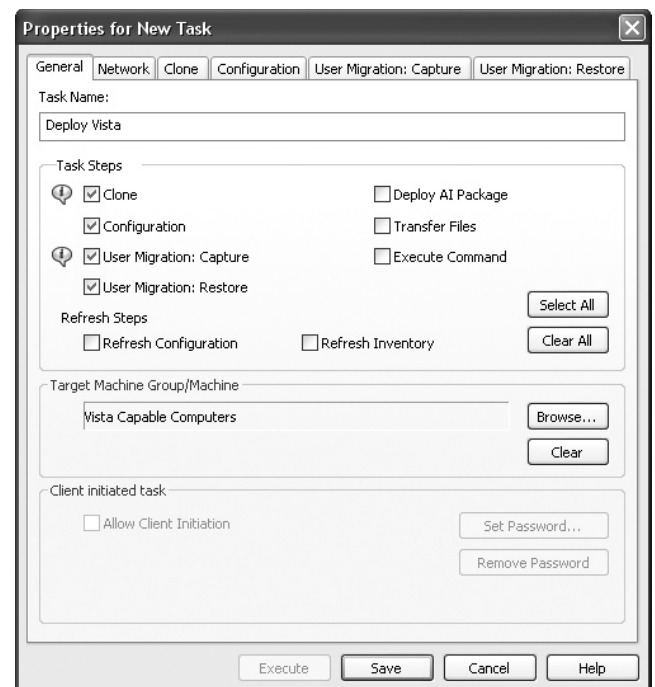
Bonus: Unlike with Microsoft's tools, you can choose to store the user's data on the local machine instead of the server—a real bandwidth saver. Furthermore, you can preserve the data, which means the deployment won't continue if the Ghost Console can't confirm that it collected the data properly. Microsoft's deployment tools offer no failsafe in this regard.

Need more information?

If you need to know more about Symantec Ghost Solutions Suite or you're ready to buy, point your browser to www.symantec.com/smb/products/overview.jsp?pcid=cli_mgmt&pvid=ghost.



B: Set a Filter so you can locate computers that meet the specs you need, and a View so you can see specific details you want.



C: You select the deployment options, and then configure the tasks that need your input. Don't forget to preserve your User Migration Package.

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