

# ABC-Deploy

## System Managers Reference

Simple as your first ABC  
Flexible as an alphabet

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V8.5.6

# ABC-Deploy System Managers Reference

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
Starting the ABC-Deploy management console.....	4
Getting Started.....	5
Install Agents.....	5
Create a task with the Task Import Wizard.....	5
Assign Tasks .....	6
View Deployments rollout .....	6
Tasks.....	7
Understanding System Tasks .....	7
Understanding User Tasks .....	7
Make tasks silent.....	8
Create or Modify a Task.....	9
Task Items .....	11
Task Item Details.....	11
Deleting a Task.....	12
Redeploy Tasks.....	13
When importing from the Package Store .....	13
Redeploy a task to all clients.....	13
Redeploy only to selected clients .....	13
Assignments.....	14
Assign tasks to Computers.....	14
Assigning tasks to Users.....	16
Associate a User Task to a System Task.....	16
How linked tasks work .....	16
More about linking deployments.....	17
Assignment Objects .....	18
Client Management .....	19
Client System View.....	19
Client User View.....	19

Client Windows AD View .....	19
Inventory information.....	20
The SW Inventory.....	20
The HW Inventory.....	20
Remote Command .....	21
Remote Uninstall .....	22
Ultra VNC integration.....	23
Installing Ultra VNC.....	23
Working with cloned machines .....	24
Install the agent to clones.....	24
Before starting cloned machines .....	25

## Introduction

ABC-Deploy is a policy driven software deployment and inventory tool.

It is working in the background, executing the rules you define, keeping your environment updated and compliant.

Assign your deployments to Windows groups, OU's or single pc's and walk away.

With ABC-Deploy you can distribute all kinds of installation and management tasks.

Anything that can run unattended from a Windows command can be packed into tasks, and assigned to target computers and users.

Clients assigned for deployment tasks will be targeted whenever they are started in the network.

And you can of cause also push install tasks to online clients whenever you choose.

ABC-Deploy integrate software installations made to a PC, with automatic profile creation for the users logging on afterwards. Whenever a user logs on to a managed pc, ABC-Deploy can setup user profiles and settings for the software installed on that pc.

Most users will not even notice smaller deploys like Adobe or Java,

The ABC client on the end users pc, is discretely placed in the taskbar, providing activity information to the end user. Appearance and messages can be controlled by the manager. He can even hide the client completely if he chooses.

Minimal hardware/software requirements

- a. ABC-Deploy fits right into your existing Windows powered infrastructure
- b. All you need is a Windows file server to hold the configuration, status files and software repository
- c. A MS SQL server is required to enable some of the more advanced inventory reporting. But this is not a requirement for the system as such. MS SQL Express V2008 or higher is fully sufficient

## Starting the ABC-Deploy management console

The management console is available as "abc-deploy.exe" in the root of the ABC-Deploy share.

Every user with adequate privileges will be able to start the console by either clicking on the .EXE file, or by creating a shortcut on the desktop.



# Getting Started

## Install Agents

Clients must have an agent installed in order to deliver inventory data, and to receive deployments. Get started by choosing a handful of test pc's from the AD view, then choose "Install Agent"

## Create a task with the Task Import Wizard

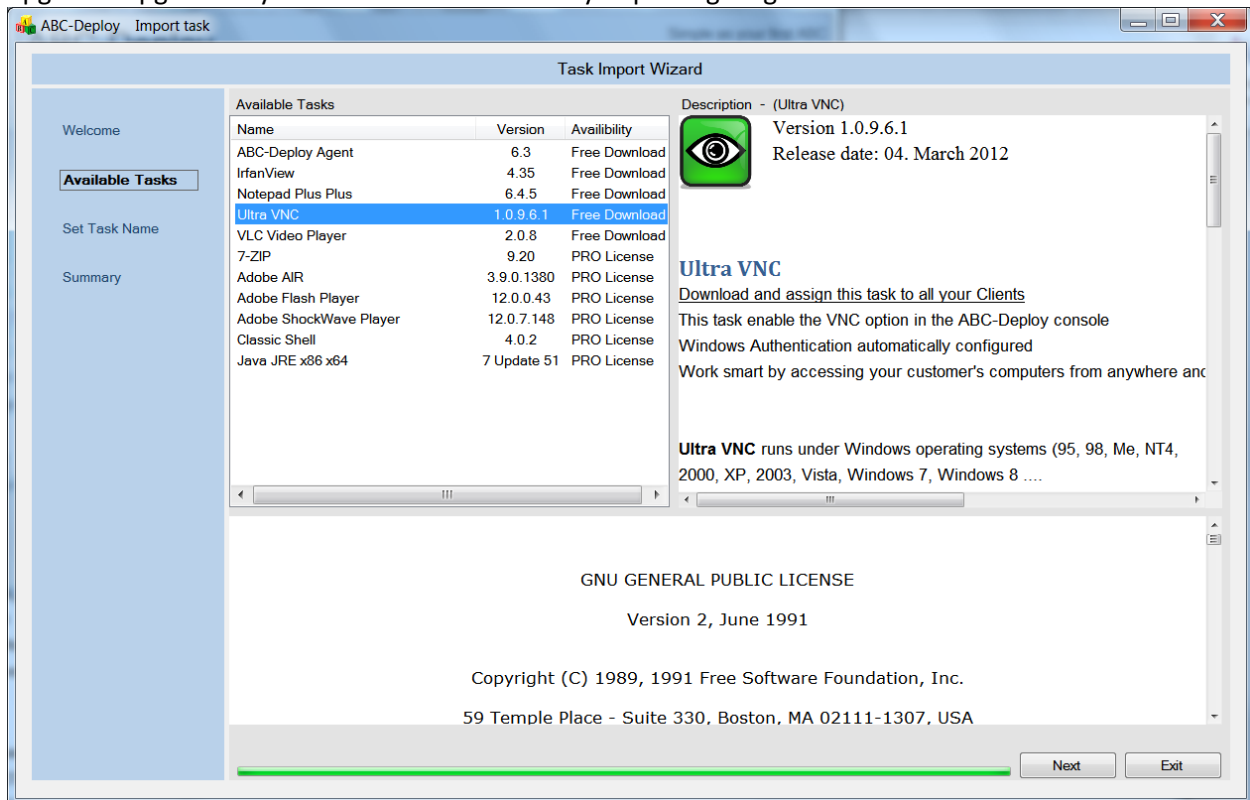
Tasks are where you define the deployments. You can make tasks from scratch, or import preconfigured tasks from our Package Store with the Task Import Wizard. The available tasks are among the ones that many IT organizations choose to install and to keep updated update to their clients. Adobe Flash, Java and more.

Standard Task configuration.

All tasks are created by ABC-Deploy using standard configuration guidelines

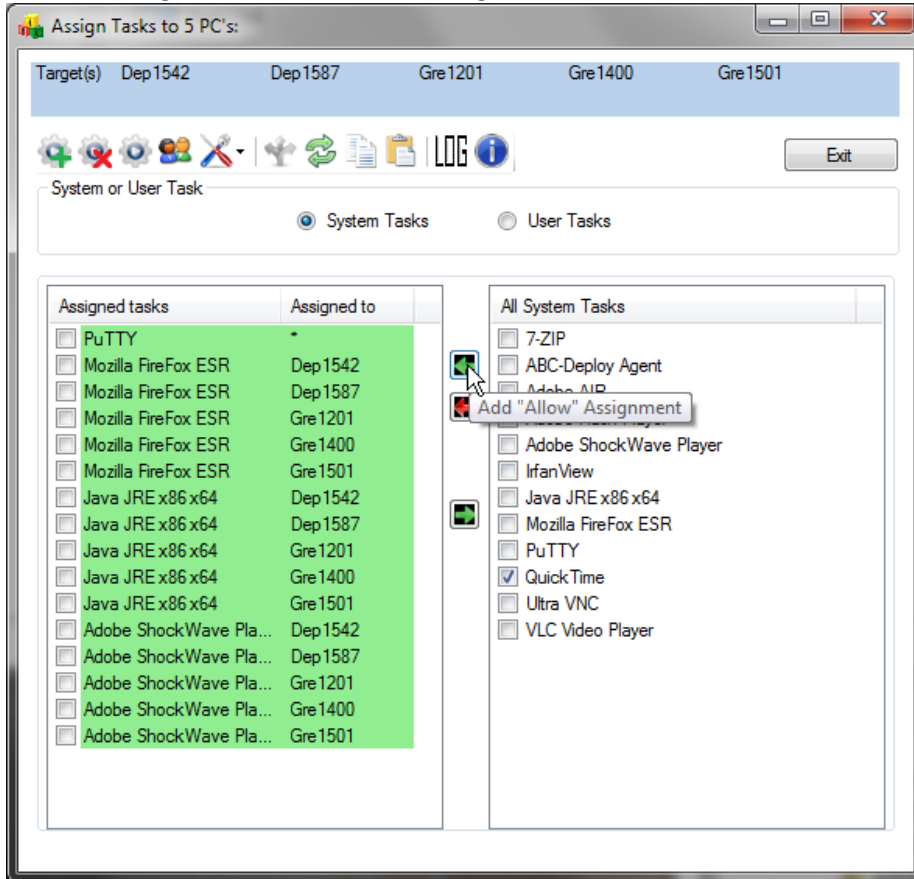
- \* All Tasks are configured to avoid automatic restart when installation is complete
- \* Auto update features are disabled wherever possible
- \* All bundled software removed (Toolbars etc.)
- \* User profile setup is included when relevant

Packages are provided with intelligence - previous versions will automatically be removed during upgrade. Upgrade any task to its latest version by importing it again.



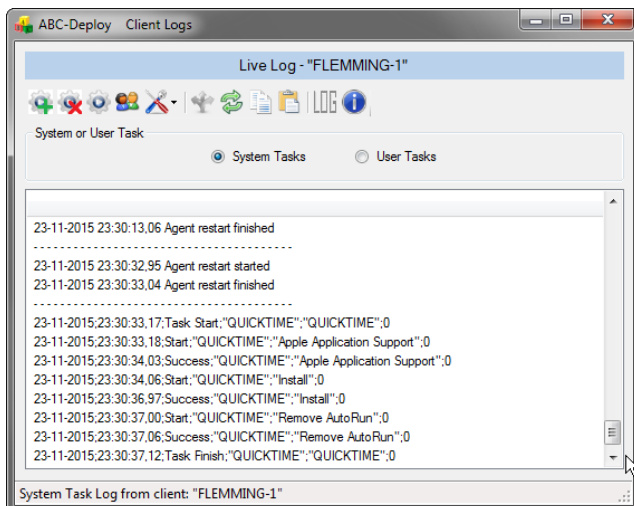
## Assign Tasks

An easy way to assign tasks is to select the relevant clients, right click and choose Assign ... This brings up a view where you can see what is assigned to those machines already. In the example we will click the green arrow button to assign the "QuickTime" task to the selected clients.



## View Deployments rollout

A live log is available for each client. And you can also go to the inventory section to see status information from all tasks (PRO Version). Here showing the live log from installing Quicktime

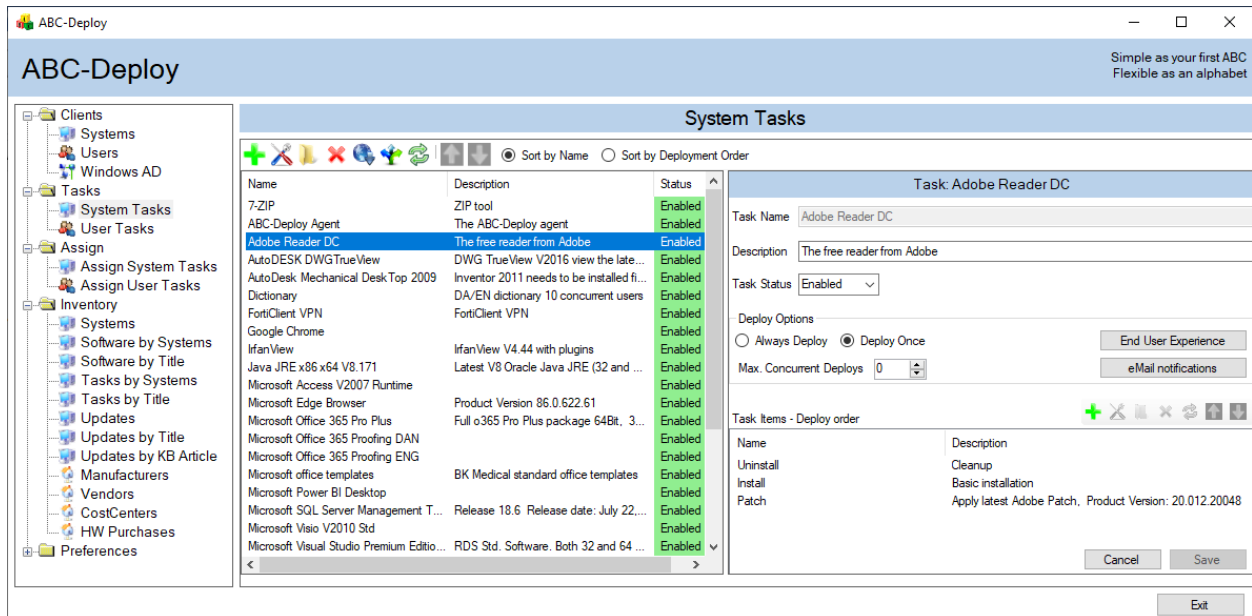


## Tasks

A Task is the definition of any action that ABC-Deploy shall be capable to initiate on any PC. Multiple actions can be bundled into one single task.

Tasks are made to install software and setting up users profiles for that software.

But a task can also be anything else like changing power schemes, alter attributes of any kind inside your operating system, or in installed programs. Anything that run unattended as a program, as a command, any type of Installer Package, or any scriptable action can run as a Task.



## Understanding System Tasks

System tasks are actions that affect the whole computer.

System tasks are always executed under the security context of the local operating system.

In technical terms system tasks will write its data to The Program Files directory on your boot drive, and will operate in the HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE part of the registry database.

System tasks are most often used for installing software, and perform other management tasks affecting the entire computer.

One example of a system task would be to install or update Adobe Acrobat Reader

## Understanding User Tasks

User tasks are actions that affect the profile of the logged on user.

User tasks are executed under the security context of the logged on user.

In technical terms user tasks will write its data to the user profile on disk.

Depending of your operating system, this could be "C:\Users\%username%\..."

User tasks operate mostly in the HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER part of the registry database.

User tasks are most often used to tweak user profile information of Software already installed.

One example could be to have Adobe Acrobat Reader NOT display its welcome screen at first start.

Another could be to place shortcuts on user desktop.

## Make tasks silent

One main goal for most deployment tools is to be able to execute and install software without disrupting the end user in his work.

MSI's install is made silently by default, but EXE files usually require a special switch to install silently. This is sometimes as simple as using a /s or /q or /quiet switch but it can vary by application and some vendors don't even support silent switches.

Here are some ideas on finding the correct silent switch.

### Idea 1 - Ask the application

Open a command window (cmd.exe) and try running the install file (setup.exe, etc.) with a /? switch. This will sometimes (not always) open a window that shows different options for installing silently as well as other options.

Some applications might list ways to auto accept license agreements, or install to different directories, etc. These extra parameters are enabled by the software vendor and do not follow any standards.

### Idea 2 - Ask the Internet

Simply Google the application name with "silent install" and you'll probably find notes from lots of admins who have asked the same question. You are not alone, and someone might have the answer.

Good sources of information

<http://unattended.sourceforge.net/installers.php>

<http://www.advancedinstaller.com/user-guide/qa-silent-install.html>

[https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ee251019\(v=bts.10\).aspx](https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ee251019(v=bts.10).aspx)

### Idea 3 – Ask the application owner

You are most certainly not the first administrator who wants to install the software product silently. And just asking support might give you an answer.

Some application vendors refuse silent switches, often because they insist to drive the end user to their homepage for more information and purchasing options.

In these few cases you might give up and drop the automated installations, or you might want to repackage the software and build your own silent installation package.

There are many programs that can help snapshot changes made by any installation program, and package these changes into a new installer.

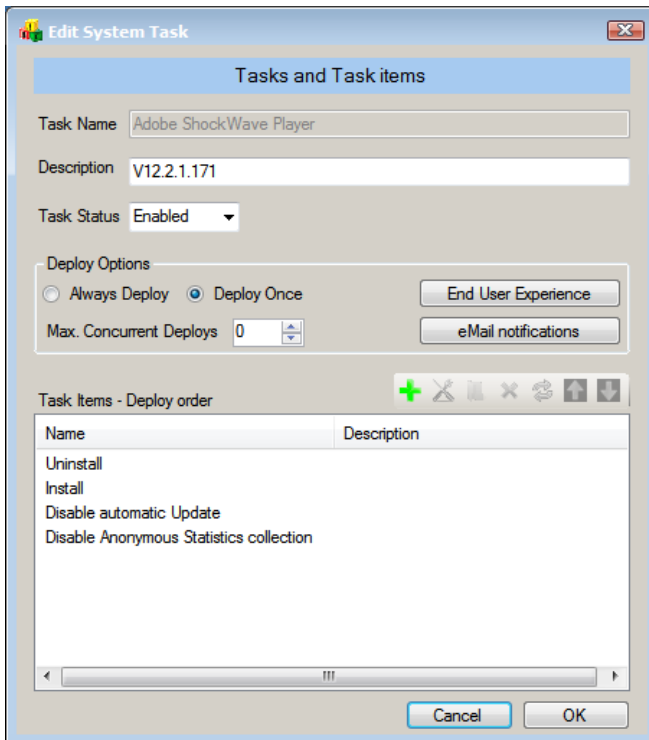
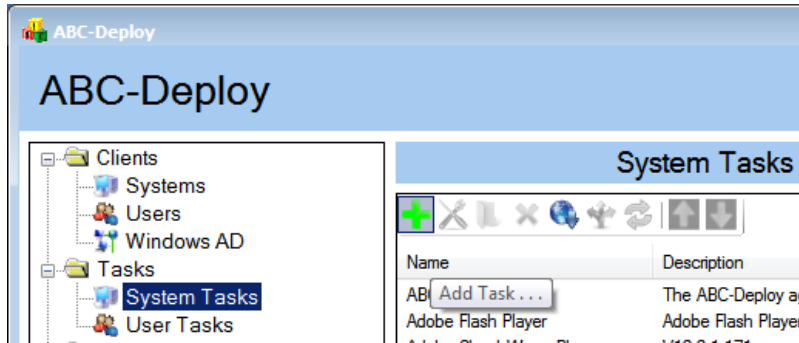
One very good (and free) program is Advanced Installer from <http://advancedinstaller.com>



## Create or Modify a Task

Tasks are created in the Tasks pane in the Management Console

New tasks are created clicking the “Add symbol”, that will display the Add Tasks window . . .  
Existing tasks are modified by clicking the “Modify Task symbol” , or DoubleClick any task to edit.  
Or import preconfigured tasks from the package library



### Task Name:

You must always name your Task  
A Task name must obey to the naming rules of filenames in Windows. “Adobe Acrobat Reader” is a valid name, “Adobe ??” is not valid  
A task name cannot be easily changed later

### Description:

Textual description as you like

### Status:

Enabled/Disabled.  
Only enabled tasks are deployed to client computers. If you experiences problems with a specific task, or want to take a task out of production for some other reason, you can disable the task.

“Deploy Once” or “Always Deploy” options:

To Deploy Once is what you want in most cases.

The task is being deployed only once for each assigned client Computer or User

If you want the task to get executed once again, you have an opportunity of redeploying the Task.

Choosing the Always Deploy option causes the task to be deployed every time the ABC-Deploy agent is running on the client computer.

System tasks assigned to a Client Computer will get executed every time the computer starts, or if the ABC-Deploy System Service is being restarted for other reasons.

User tasks assigned to Users will get executed every time a user logs on.

Max. Concurrent Deploys:

This is useful for bigger installation that you might fear will affect your network performance. Having 100 computers starting at exactly the same time to install AutoCAD might not be too healthy to your network.

However in an average office environment with a modern network, you might not need this feature at all.

End User Experience:

Control what you want the user to see during deployment of this task.

More information in the chapter: End User Experience

eMail notifications:

Control eMail notifications for this task.

More information in the chapter: eMail notifications

## Task Items

Tasks always contain one or more task items

A simple task could have just one item like:

“Run Adobe Installer”

Or it could have more Task Items in one Task like:

“Uninstall Adobe V8”

“Uninstall Adobe V9”

“Uninstall Adobe X”

“Install Adobe Reader”

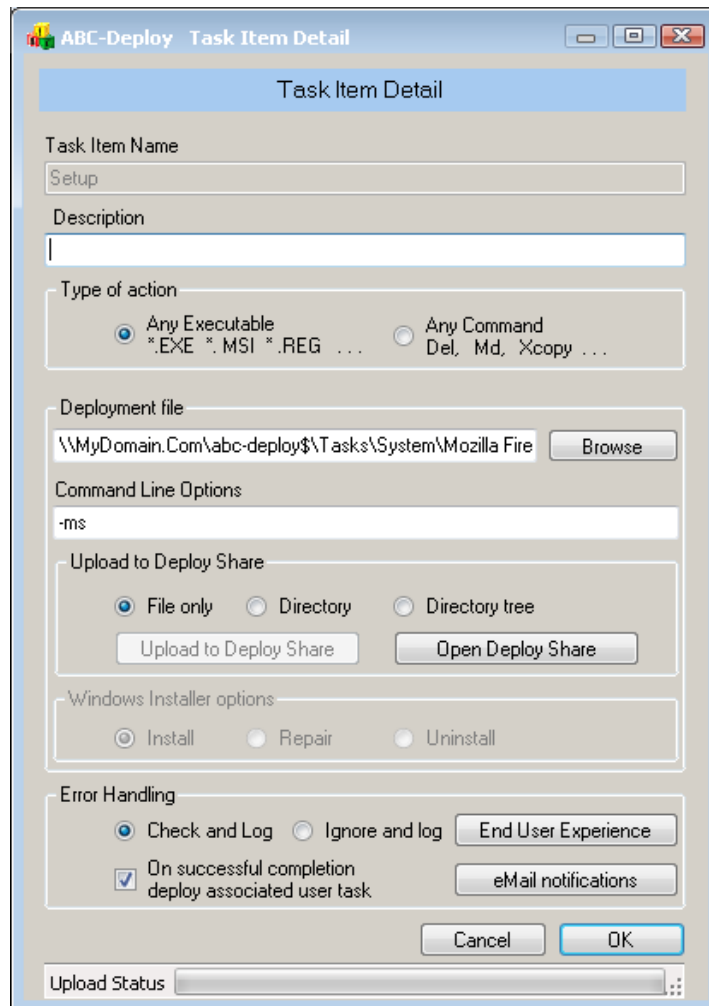
“Disable autoupdate”

Click the “Add symbol” to add new lines to the task

Click the “Tools Symbol”, or double click, to modify a task item

## Task Item Details

The Task Item Details window show detailed information for a single task item

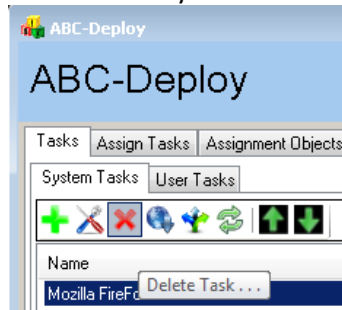


The screenshot shows the 'ABC-Deploy Task Item Detail' dialog box. It has a title bar with the text 'ABC-Deploy Task Item Detail' and standard window controls. The main area is titled 'Task Item Detail' and contains several sections:

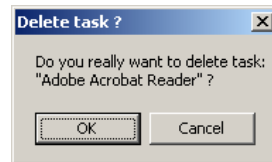
- Task Item Name:** A text box containing 'Setup'.
- Description:** An empty text box.
- Type of action:** Two radio button options: 'Any Executable \* .EXE \* .MSI \* .REG ...' (selected) and 'Any Command Del, Md, Xcopy ...'.
- Deployment file:** A text box containing '\\MyDomain.Com\abc-deploy\$\Tasks\System\Mozilla Fire' and a 'Browse' button.
- Command Line Options:** A text box containing '-ms'.
- Upload to Deploy Share:** Three radio button options: 'File only' (selected), 'Directory', and 'Directory tree'. Below are 'Upload to Deploy Share' and 'Open Deploy Share' buttons.
- Windows Installer options:** Three radio button options: 'Install' (selected), 'Repair', and 'Uninstall'.
- Error Handling:** Two radio button options: 'Check and Log' (selected) and 'Ignore and log'. There is an 'End User Experience' button. A checked checkbox 'On successful completion deploy associated user task' is next to an 'eMail notifications' button.
- Buttons:** 'Cancel' and 'OK' buttons at the bottom.
- Upload Status:** A text box at the very bottom.

## Deleting a Task

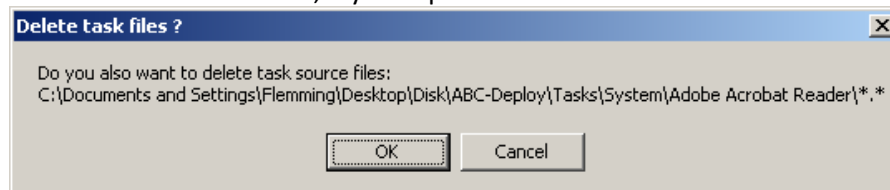
Select the task you want to delete, Click the delete symbol



Confirm deletion by clicking "OK"



And delete the file structures of the task, if you expect not to need it in the future.



## Redeploy Tasks

There are more ways to deploy a task again to assigned machines.

This is often a handy way to repair software problems to just deploy again. Or maybe the user uninstalled our software, and he asks to get it back.

When software is updated you might do so by adding an extra item line to the task containing the patch. This new extra line will automatically get deployed to all assigned clients, because clients notice that they are missing this new item.

## When importing from the Package Store

When you import a task from the package store, and overwrite an existing task with the same name , then the new task will automatically be deployed again to all assigned clients.

## Redeploy a task to all clients

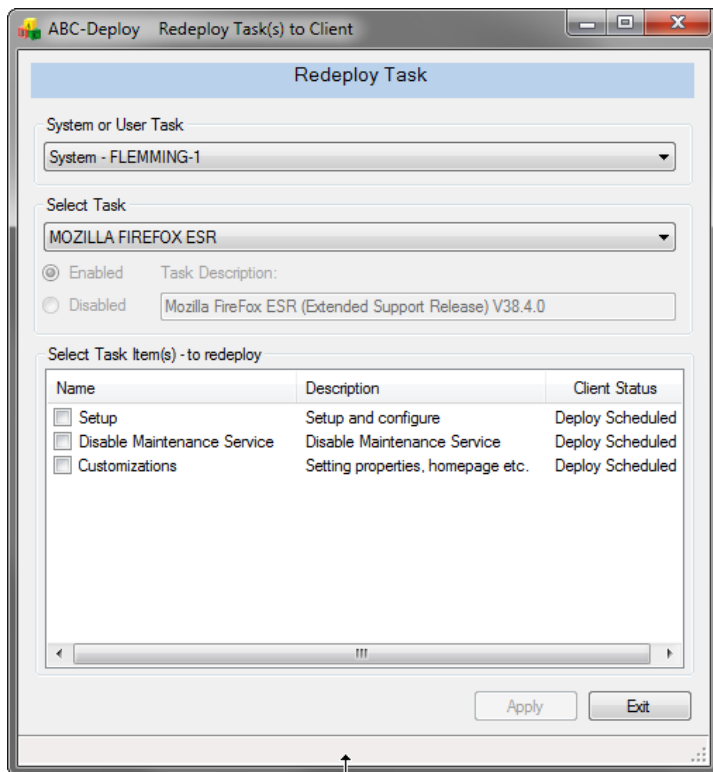
Right click a task and choose “Redeploy . . . “

Brings up a dialog that let you redeploy the task, or part of a task to all assigned clients.

## Redeploy only to selected clients

Right click the client, and choose “Redeploy . . . “

Brings up a dialog that let you redeploy a task or part of a task to the named client only.



## Assignments

The ABC Agent use data about assignments to determine which tasks is in scope for the client.

### Assign tasks to Computers

To assign a task to named computers or to groups of computers is often needed in the normal work routine in an IT department.

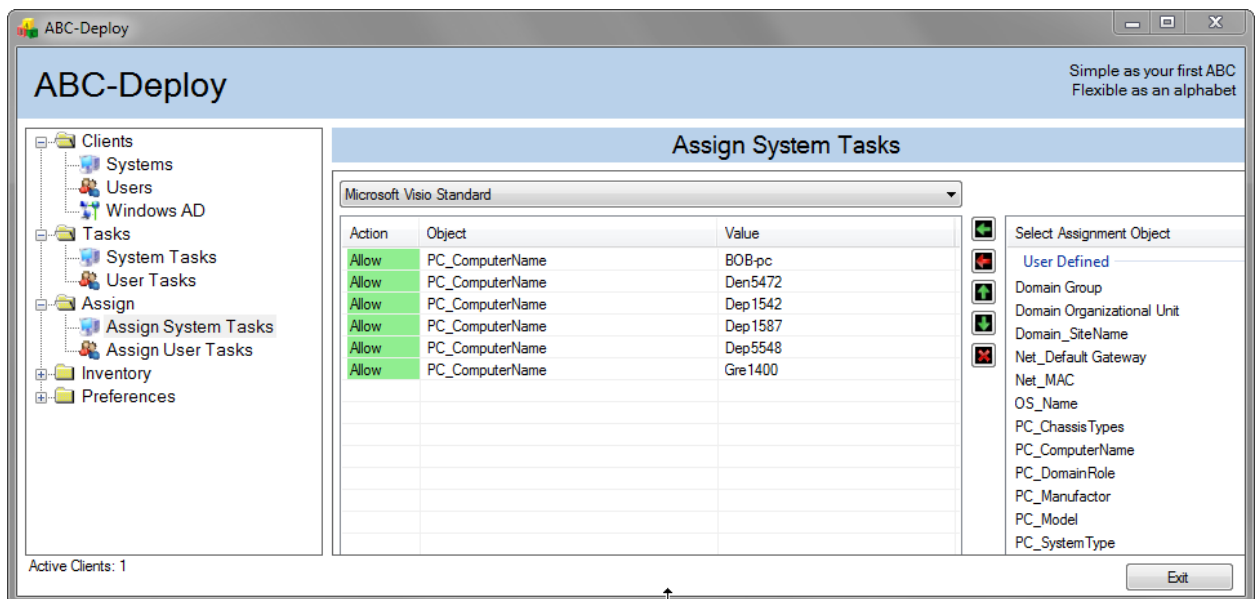
Example 1:

Bob, is being permitted by his boss to have Microsoft Visio Standard installed on his workstation named BOB-pc

The IT supporter responsible for software deployment will use the ABC-Deploy management console to assign the Visio installation to the computer BOB-pc

Go to "Assign Tasks" → "System Task Assignments"

- Select task "Microsoft Visio Standard"
- Locate the selection criteria "PC Computername"
- Click the green arrow, to add an allow assignment
- Select "BOB-pc" in the dialog that shows
- BOB-pc will now get Visio silently installed at next boot, or at next agent restart



Notice, that you have full wildcard support allowing you to select multiple computers to install to. A value like "B\*" will assign Microsoft Visio to all computers whose name starts with the letter B

Wildcards allowed

- \* Matches any string
- % Matches one character
- # Matches one digit

It is also possible to work with "Deny" assignments. (The red arrow) to deny tasks to clients. List is checked top down.

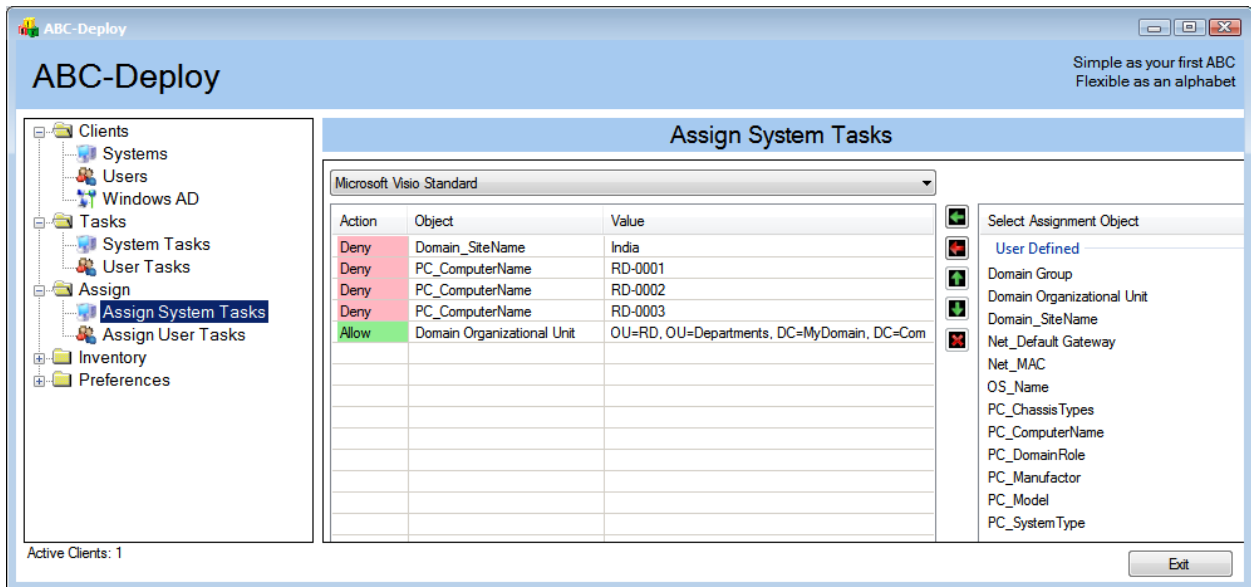
Example 2:

We want to make sure that Microsoft Visio always get installed and updated to all PC's in the R&D Department. But we will prevent installation to tree named machines RD-0001, RD-0002, and RD-0003. Also we will not install if the client is physically located in our site in India.

R&D computers are all in the same Organizational Unit (OU), so our job is to assign the Visio Task to that OU but disallow the tree named machines. And at the same time exclude clients in India.

What is really smart about this method is that whenever new computers are added to the R&D OU, then they are automatically in scope to get Visio Installed. This is what we understand by a policy driven tool.

Assignment rules are checked top down,  
The settings as described:



Because the list is checked top down we get what we want. Clients in the India site is sorted out, as well as pc's named RD-0001, RD-0002 or RD-0003

Only if the client is not denied by above Deny rules, and if it is in the R&D OU it is assigned the MS Visio task which will be installed.

## Assigning tasks to Users

Although you are able to install software as a user task, this is not too common. User tasks are most often used to maintain and update profile information for installed software.

This example show the assignment of the User Task to setup Mozilla Firefox profiles  
Every user logging on to a PC where we have installed Mozilla Firefox will get associated user profile, that could set up the Mozilla FireFox profile for the user.

The user task, and the link to the system task (that installed Mozilla FireFox) is created automatically for you, when you first created your FireFox task

## Associate a User Task to a System Task

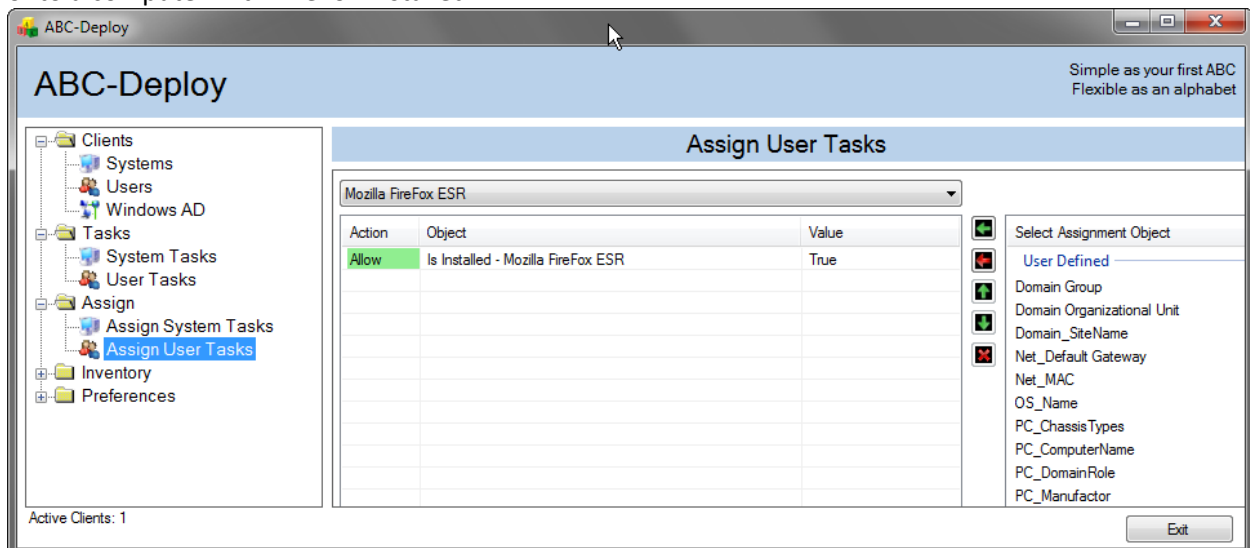
When you create a system task to install software, an associated user task is always automatically created by the system. The user task should be used to set up the user profile for your software.

If for instance you create a new system task for installing FireFox  
Then when FireFox is installed, you also want to manage FireFox profiles for each user logging on to the PC where FireFox is installed.  
A “FireFox User Task” linked to the “FireFox System Task” is used for this purpose.

When you create your “FireFox System Task”, an additional “FireFox User Task” is automatically being created for you by ABC-Deploy.  
And the “FireFox User Task” is automatically registered to be deployed for any user logging on to a computer where the “FireFox System Task” has been installed.  
This is your guarantee that all your FireFox users will get the profile that you want.

## How linked tasks work

Take a look into the “Assign Tasks” tabpage to see how the “FireFox User Task” is being linked to the “FireFox System Task”  
Observe the action list – The list defines that the User Task – FireFox is to be install for anyone logging onto a computer with FireFox installed.





## More about linking deployments

When you use ABC-Deploy in your daily work, and define more and more tasks, you will see a growing list of Assignment Objects in the format:

“Is Installed - *productname*”

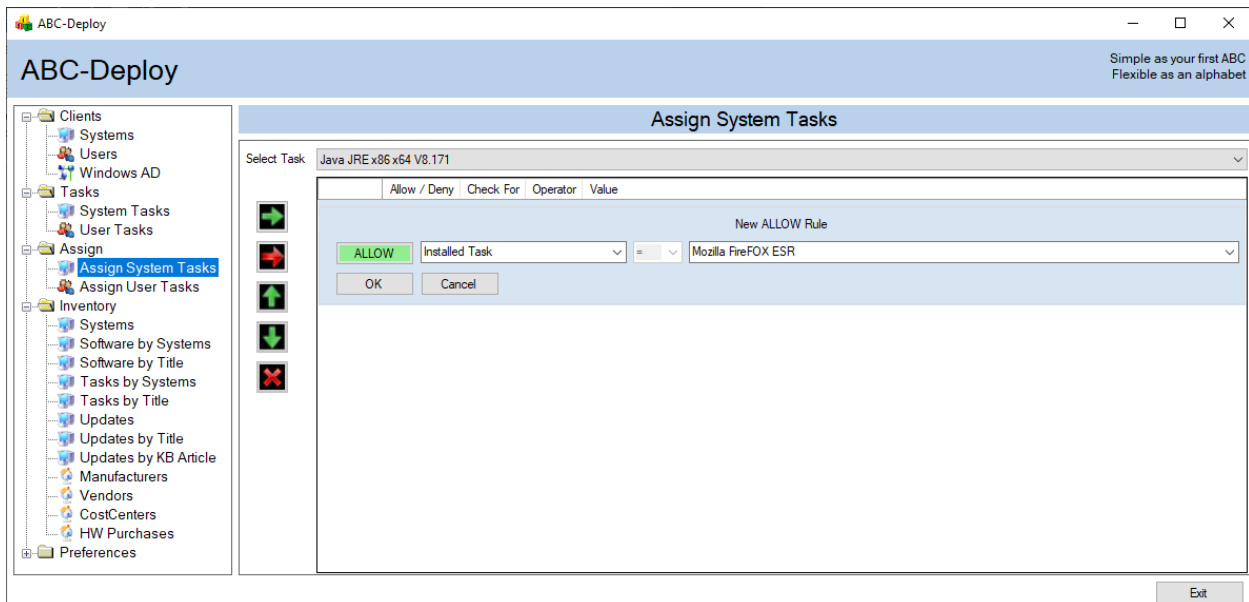
In our example there will be an assignment object called “Is Installed – Mozilla FireFox”

These objects will have a value of “True” if the named product is installed on the computer by ABC-Deploy. The software uses these special assignment objects to tailor one product to another.

In a real world scenario, you might want to bundle installations of “Sun Java” and “Adobe Flash” to your FireFox installation.

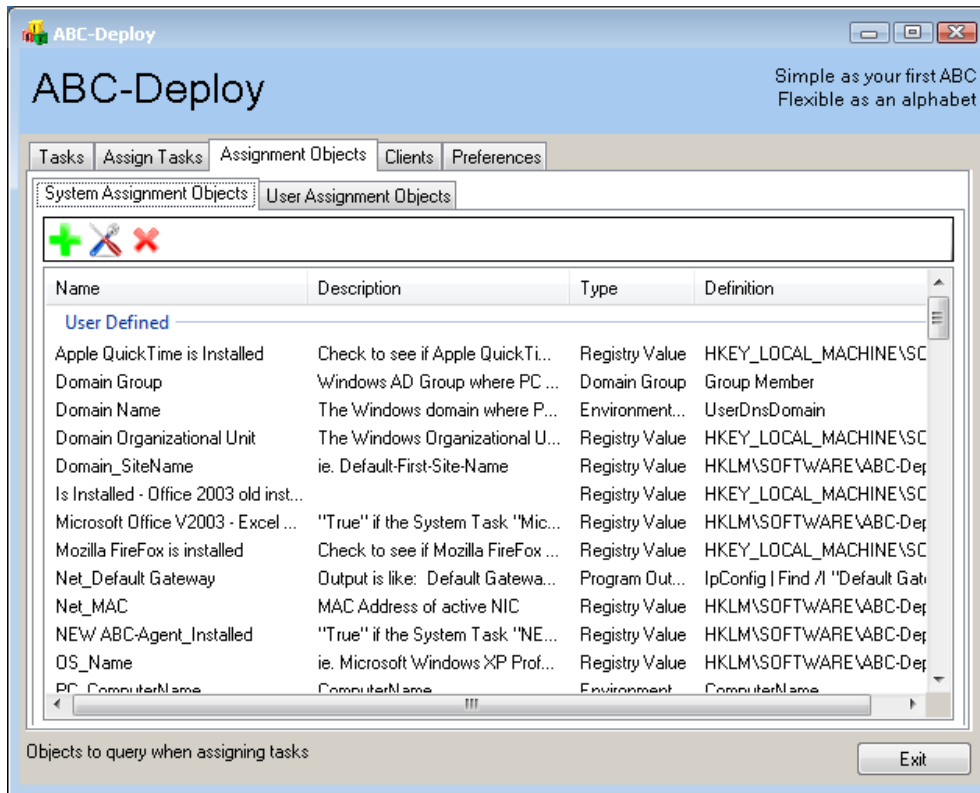
You will do so by simply assign the “Sun Java” system task, and the “Adobe Flash” system task to the object “Is Installed – Mozilla FireFox”, as shown in the screenshot below

Then these two tasks will get deployed automatically whenever FireFox is deployed

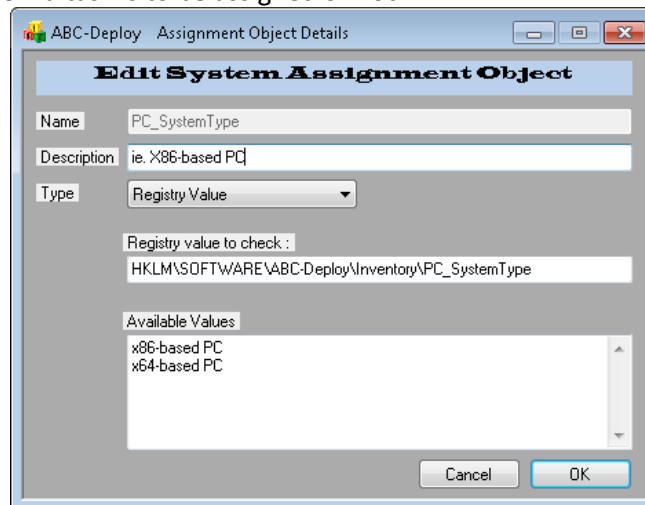


## Assignment Objects

The “Assignment Objects” TabPage in the ABC-Deploy management console lets you change or define the query objects used in task assignments.



By adding a new assignment object, you will be able to define what information the ABC-Deploy Agent must verify, to determine if a task is to be assigned or not.



## Client Management

The “Client” tab page allows you to select clients for management. You are given tree different views on your managed clients

## Client System View

The System View list managed clients sorted by computer name  
Opening a client will show which users are logging into the PC, and when they last did so.

## Client User View

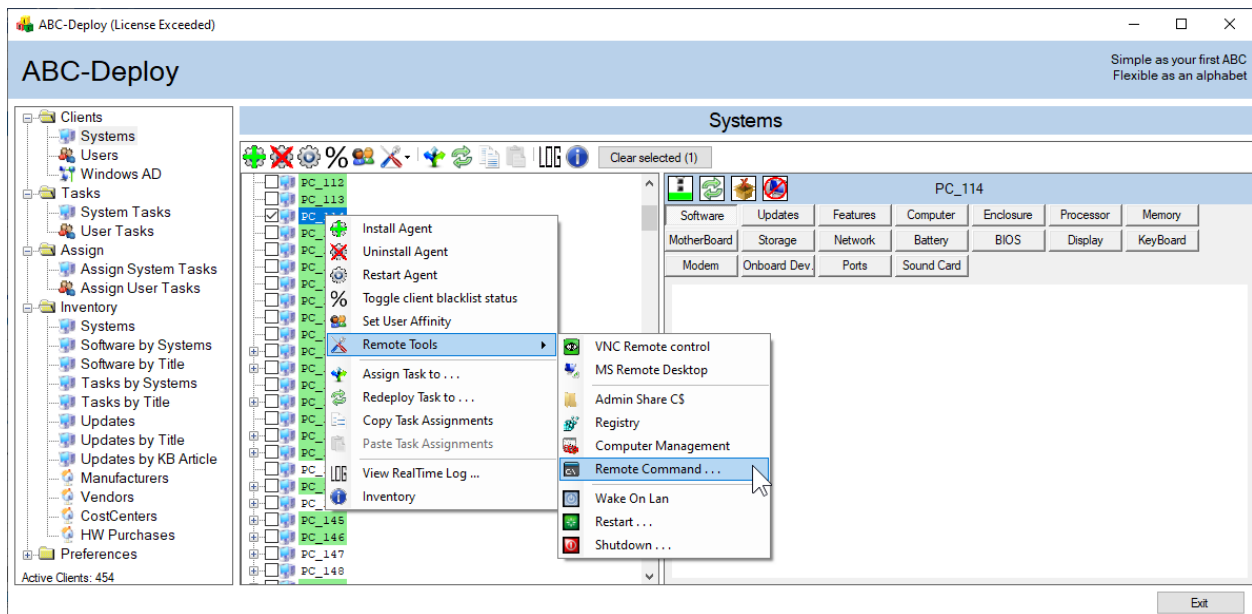
Lists all users and shows which computers they log on to

## Client Windows AD View

Choose computers, users and groups by browsing the Active Directory.  
This view contains your whole AD, and therefor also servers and unmanaged clients.

## Remote Tools

You are able to perform selected actions against a single client or to a whole OU if you prefer.  
You could for instance right click an OU to install the ABC-Agent to all computers in that particular OU  
In the client view of your choice, you have the ability to perform the following actions against any managed computer:



## Inventory information

The ABC Agent collects inventory information as part of its normal work.

Information is refreshed when one of the following is true:

1. At fixed intervals as defined in ABC Console
2. Information is missing or outdated (30 days)
3. When software is installed with ABC-Deploy
4. When software is uninstalled with ABC-Deploy
5. When client Mac address or IP address change
6. And inventory scanning can be pushed from the console at any time

## The SW Inventory

The System View list managed clients sorted by computer name

Opening a client will show which users are logging into the PC, and when they last did

## The HW Inventory

The System View list managed clients sorted by computer name

Opening a client will show which users are logging into the PC, and when they last did

The screenshot shows the 'Inventory Information for "B1095" Updated: 5/18/2013 9:03:41 AM' window. On the left is a sidebar with buttons for various hardware and software components: Software, Computer, Processor, Memory, Storage, Battery, BIOS, Display, Enclosure, KeyBoard, Modem, MotherBoard, Network, Onboard Dev., Ports, and Sound Card. The main area is titled 'System overview' and contains a table with the following data:

Property	Value
System Name	B1095
Chassis Type	Notebook
System Manufacturer	LENOVO
System Model	3680WJW
System Version	ThinkPad X201
System Serial	R93G0WV
Total Physical Memory (Mbytes)	3891

Below this is the 'Operating system' section with another table:

Property	Value
OS Name	Microsoft Windows 7 Enterprise
OS Manufacturer	Microsoft Corporation
Version	6.1.7601

A 'Cancel' button is located at the bottom right of the window.

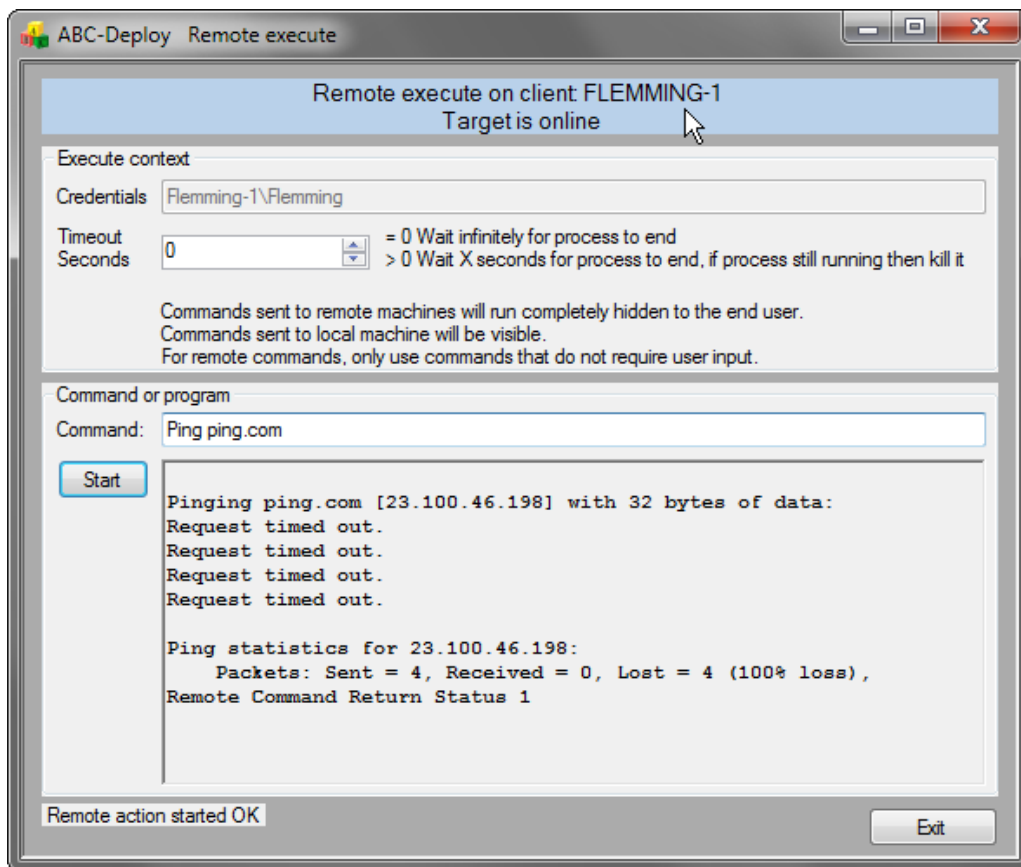
## Remote Command

Run anything on any remote computer, that is online, and where you have access.  
Use this tool to execute anything remote.

Handy in IT troubleshooting if you have a problem with a particular remote pc. Then you can send commands to the remote PC and see the results of commands.

Normal troubleshooting commands like TaskList, TaskKill, ping and IpConfig is extremely valuable.

Commands and programs are executed completely invisible to the end user when pushed to a remote machine. If pushed to the local machine it will however show it's normal GUI if any.



Timeout Seconds:

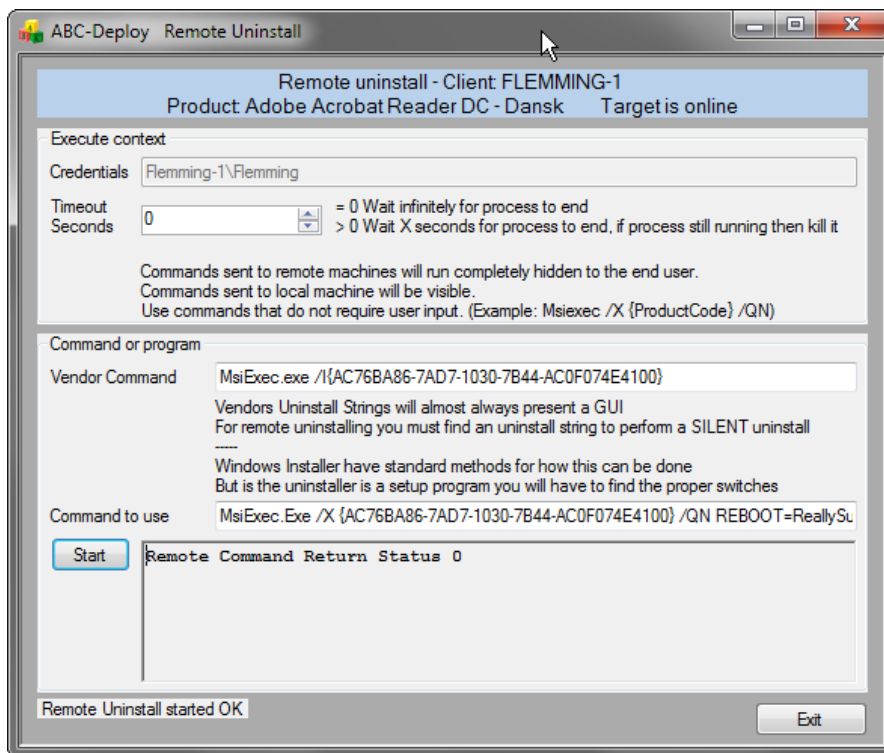
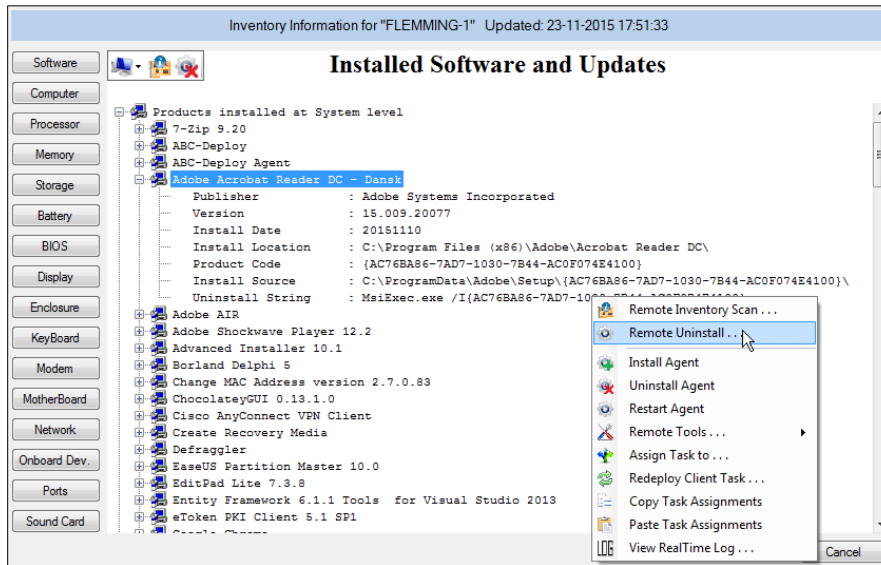
If set then the remote command will be killed if it do not finish itself within that timeframe.

Command:

Can be any command or program. Remember to "quote" filenames if they contain spaces.

## Remote Uninstall

Started from SW Inventory and right click Software title, choose remote uninstall. The system will then try to find the most accurate uninstall string to execute from the collected information.



TimeOut Seconds:

If set, then the remote uninstall program will be killed at that time if it is not completed.

Command:

The command used to uninstall selected software.

## Ultra VNC integration

ABC-Deploy integrates with Ultra VNC – If you have Ultra VNC installed

Information about Ultra VNC from the homepage (<http://www.uvnc.com>):

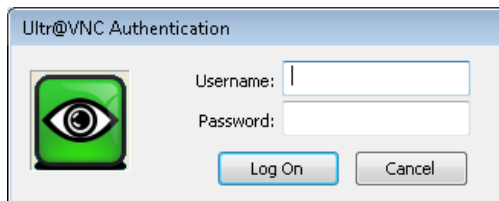
UltraVNC is powerful, easy to use and free software that can display the screen of another computer (via internet or network) on your own screen. The program allows you to use your mouse and keyboard to control the other PC remotely. It means that you can work on a remote computer, as if you were sitting in front of it, right from your current location.

Ultra VNC can be configured in many ways.

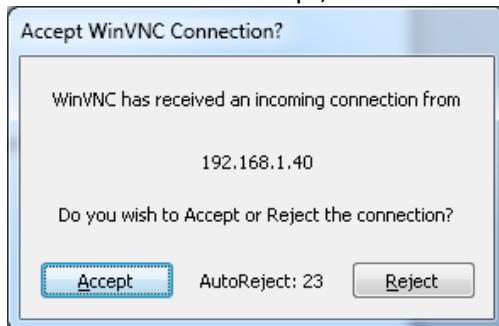
The remote control flow using standard settings is as follows:

- Right Click any computer,
- Choose "VNC Remote Control"

If you have VNC installed, you will be asked to identify yourself to the remote computer



- Prompting on the remote client will ask the user to confirm the session to be established
- When the end user accept, the connection is established



## Installing Ultra VNC

Ultra VNC is free software. One of many free VNC versions out there, but definitely the best of the many implementations we checked out before finally choosing Ultra VNC.

Check out their homepage at <http://www.uvnc.com>

If you want Ultra VNC integration you must assign an Ultra VNC task to your client computers, and also the workstation used for management should have Ultra VNC installed.

The easiest way of setting up an Ultra VNC task is to import it from the ABC-Deploy Package store. This will give you a task that is tested in many different environments. You might use it as delivered, or experiment with your own enhancements later.

## Working with cloned machines

PC Cloning is a technique used to copy one reference machine onto one or more target machines. Target machines will be identical to the reference machine in respect to programs installed and configuration of software and user profiles. Most important difference after cloning are the machine name (which is of course changed) and the unique GUID that define the machine in a Windows AD domain. PC cloning is a complex process, and other differences apply also but they are not relevant to ABC-Deploy.

### Install the agent to clones

- By having ABC-Deploy agent installed on the reference image  
The clones will then all have a working agent as they are created.  
The first time they boot into Windows AD the agent will start to collect inventory information and install/update assigned software.
- Or install the agent after cloning  
If the reference image does not have the agent installed, then an easy option is to use the ABC management console, locate the new clone in Windows AD, and push install the agent.

When the reference image is created it is tempting to install all the software that is used by the type of PC we are dealing with. No need to install all that standard software later on when it can be easily embedded in the reference image.

Be a bit cautious when you choose which software to embed in the reference image. Some software types are bound to hardware like MAC address or other HW specific data. And this type of software is not a good candidate for cloning. Example could be "Nitro PDF" which has a license bound to hardware. This type of software must be pushed to the clones afterwards as a normal installation.

But most of the "normal" stuff you install to all PC's can be put into in the reference image before cloning and save time when rolling out the clones. Testing is your friend in choosing what to embed, and what not to embed.

Even if you embed all software in the reference image, you will still need ABC-Deploy on the clones to collect inventory information and install/patch software.



## Before starting cloned machines

When the clone machine (with a new name) starts for the first time, and ABC-Deploy sees that it do not have previous loaded inventory information. And it will then start these two processes inventory and installations.

When it comes to determining which installations to perform, the agent will register that it has no previous status and it will then start to install all assigned software.

Often we want the new clone to have the same assignments of software that we had for the reference machine.

1. Install reference machine Name "REF1"
2. Assign software to "REF1"
3. Let ABC-Deploy push software to reference machine
4. Clone reference machine
5. Copy assignments from "REF1" to the clones by using the copy/paste function in ABC-Deploy

We want the new clone to have the same status of which software is installed so that ABC-Deploy will not install software again, but only keep software updated.

1. Ensure that the status directory for the clone allow writing from the operating system on the clone. Grant full control to the Clone\$ machine account

Many ways to skin a cat, this is one:

```
C:\>
```

```
C:\>md \\Server\ABC-Deploy\$\Status\Clone1
```

```
C:\>icacls \\Server\Abc-Deploy\$\Status\Clone1\ /Grant Domain\Clone1$: (F)
```

```
processed file: \\Server\Abc-Deploy\$\Status\Clone1\
```

```
Successfully processed 1 files; Failed processing 0 files
```

```
C:\>
```

2. Copy all status information from "REF1" to the status info for the new clone  
Xcopy [\\Server\Abc-Deploy\\$\Status\REF1\\\*.\\*](#) [\\Server\Abc-Deploy\\$\Status\Clone1\](#)