SIMPLIFYING IMAGE MANAGEMENT
WITH DELL IMAGEDIRECT

Image management can be complicated, costly, and time-consuming. The Dell™ ImageDirect service helps IT organizations streamline the process of securely creating, deploying, and managing software builds on Dell Latitude™ laptops, Dell OptiPlex™ desktops, and Dell Precision™ workstations—boosting productivity while helping lower total cost of ownership.

Ensuring a consistent software build throughout an organization can be tricky. Many IT departments support a wide range of client configurations that can include a variety of hardware platforms and applications to help meet the needs of diverse functional groups in several different languages. To support such a complex array of configurations, administrators must create and deploy a different software build, or *image*, for each unique combination.

Furthermore, administrators must regularly maintain each image with the latest updates such as software security patches and new driver versions, which can number in the thousands annually. They must also incorporate OS and application upgrades into existing images and test them to help ensure that all components work together properly.

Hardware upgrades can be the most challenging aspect of image management. When migrating from one platform to another, administrators must modify images accordingly—which sometimes requires upgrading application software as well as drivers and settings—and then test the modified images to help ensure that they will function as expected when deployed to client systems. This complex, ongoing process of creating, deploying, and managing images throughout an organization can take a tremendous toll on an IT department's time and resources.

TAKING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

To help simplify image management, Dell launched Dell ImageDirect, a Web browser–based service that enables organizations to securely create, deploy, and manage software builds for Dell Latitude laptops, Dell OptiPlex desktops, and Dell Precision workstations at no additional cost. In particular, ImageDirect allows administrators to upload existing images, create images with uploaded applications, access and manage current images, incorporate critical patches and OS updates, and download and test images to help ensure that they work seamlessly.

In addition, the ImageDirect service can be fully integrated into the Dell manufacturing process, allowing custom images managed using ImageDirect to be automatically loaded onto Dell Latitude, Dell OptiPlex, and Dell Precision systems at the factory.

The ImageDirect service is designed to dramatically simplify common image management tasks such as creating images, managing patch and driver updates, and transitioning to different hardware platforms. Key features include the following:

- **Easy-to-use interface:** ImageDirect employs an intuitive, icon-based interface that guides administrators quickly through tasks such as uploading, creating, and managing images (see Figure 1).
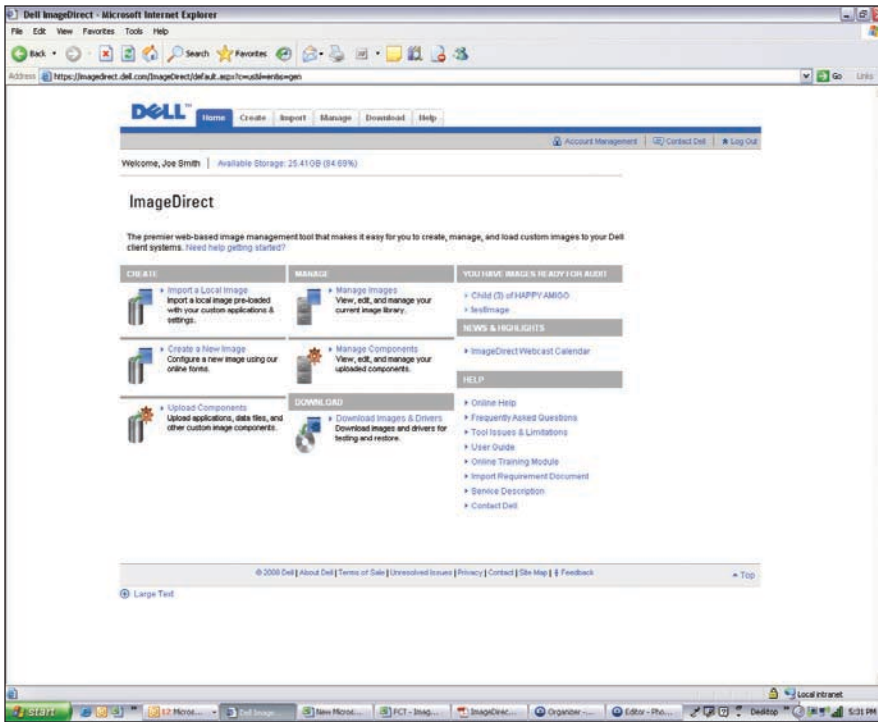
Figure 1. Administrators access the Dell ImageDirect service through an intuitive Web browser–based interface

- **Cross-platform support:** ImageDirect supports Dell Latitude, Dell OptiPlex, and Dell Precision systems and over 60 previously released hardware platforms (except for Latitude 630c and OptiPlex 745c systems).
- **Proactive patch and driver management:** ImageDirect makes current patches and driver updates available—and prompts administrators to include them—to facilitate maintenance with the appropriate drivers and OS patches for each platform. In addition, because ImageDirect supports drivers and patches for previous-generation models, administrators can easily create and download images for legacy systems.
- **Streamlined hardware transitions:** ImageDirect streamlines the task of updating images required to support recent hardware releases by making the patches and driver updates available promptly. This convenience can lead to a significant reduction in the time it takes administrators to migrate from current platforms to new platforms.

- **Parent-child image structure:** ImageDirect adopts a parent-child image structure to help simplify managing images for different workgroups or departments. With this structure, child images inherit the attributes of the parent image, and changes to the parent image can automatically propagate to child images.
- **Multiple language support:** ImageDirect supports nine languages: Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, simplified Chinese, Spanish, and Swedish.

For more information about using the ImageDirect service, see the "Seamless Factory Integration" sidebar in this article.

BOOSTING IMAGE MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY

By enhancing the efficiency of creating, deploying, and managing software builds across a wide variety of client configurations, the Dell ImageDirect service can help organizations dramatically improve productivity. ImageDirect can also help lower overall total cost of ownership by streamlining key image management tasks for hardware transitions as well as patch and driver updates—thereby freeing precious IT resources to work on value-added activities that advance enterprise and IT goals. Plus, using Dell Custom Factory Integration services, organizations can specify custom images to be preloaded at the factory, helping avoid the need to manually image hardware on-site.⏻

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