

## FSLogix Delivers Simple Java Version Management



- Easily manage per-user application extensions like Office add-ins and browser plugins
- Massively reduce the number of Windows gold images in your environment
- Eliminate silos in your Citrix and RDS infrastructure
- Achieve 100% success with app virtualization projects
- Implement VDI and DaaS without legacy management overhead
- Ensure license compliance for all users and all apps on all Windows infrastructure
- Simplified version control and rollback on application updates

If you talk to someone in IT that is responsible for managing the desktop, and ask them how they feel about managing the Java Runtime Environment (JRE), chances are very good that you'll hear some moaning and groaning. The reason for that is very simple, there are more version of JRE on the street than anyone cares to deal with. But why is that a problem you might ask, and the answer is also quite simple...Every application that interfaces with JRE, does so with a specific version of it. This means that you could have an environment with 5 applications, all using a different version of JRE and that's just an example. No doubt there are organizations out there with even more iterations. While the explanation is simple, until the now the solution was not.

The other day I had an opportunity to join a webinar hosted by Randy Cook from FSLogix. Anyone familiar with application virtualization will recognize Randy as man who made everyone's lives easier when he created Altiris SVS, which was later acquired by Symantec and today is known as Symantec Workspace Virtualization (SWV). You can read more about Randy and other's from the FSLogix team here <http://fslogix.com/about-us>

I personally have had the pleasure of working with Randy at Symantec and have first hand knowledge of his talents, so when Randy is working on something new it goes to the top of the list as highly anticipated. Up until now I've been following FSLogix progress, but after reading about the new Java management features they added to the latest beta I had to check it out. In the webinar, Randy gave a brief demo of the Java related features and when I say brief I mean it only took about 5 minutes. The reason I say it that way is to make the point of how utterly simple it is to configure for multiple versions of Java on a machine. The agent and rule editor were installed, rules were configured and we were good to go. The ease of use is almost too good to be true. You literally don't need any advanced techie skills to get this running.

---

Later that day I got my welcome email with my very own beta download link and it didn't take me long to fire up a VM and take this baby for a test drive. Before I get into the meaty part, I want to remind everyone that this is still a beta and as with any beta I didn't have any expectation of a release ready "bug free" build. The other thing that I'd like to note is that FSLogix is still in it's early stages which is immediately apparent in the installation of the agent and rule editors. I imagine at some point there will be a single installer that will provide your run of the mill "express" install and a "custom" option to select one or more of the editors. For now however, there are three installers, one for the agent, one for the rule editor and one for the java rule editor. Perhaps the editors will some day be combined into a single interface as well. Needless to say, how an application is installed is hardly any sign of how good it is. I'm not reading this book by its cover, but rather by it's creators.

## Agent Installation

When I test new apps I like to avoid looking at the admin guide. This gives me a good idea of how easy it is to understand the application workflow. Based on what I need to reference the docs for, can provide a good understanding of the user experience for the average user.

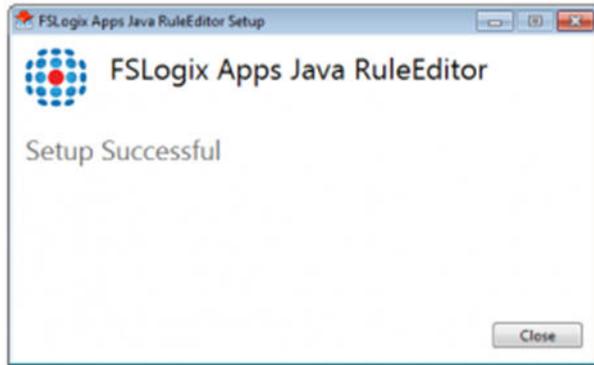
The first thing you see is a box prompting for a product key, which you simply leave blank for a 30 day full featured trial. Setup took about 15 seconds and after it was done, there is no obvious indication that the agent is running. There is no icon in the notification area and nothing in the Start Menu. I did find the process running in the windows task manager. I haven't decided if that's good or bad, but chances are that the notification icon is probably on the lower priority list and will end up on a release build. If not, well is it really needed or are we just so used to seeing something there that it seems like a problem if it's missing?

## Agent Commands

Here the skill level requirements go up quickly. All the agent controls are done through the command line. At this point I had to look at the admin guide to see what the syntax is and how it's used. Nothing wrong with that as it can be kind of hard guessing what the command line options are. I did walk away from this portion of the guide wondering how I would utilize the agent command line. Is it something that is optional vs. using the rule editor, or does it provide some other functionality? My guess is that some of the commands can be used to perform various rule edits silently. But before I get to far into those details, I'll just stop myself and get back to the main reason I'm writing this.

## Java Rule Editor

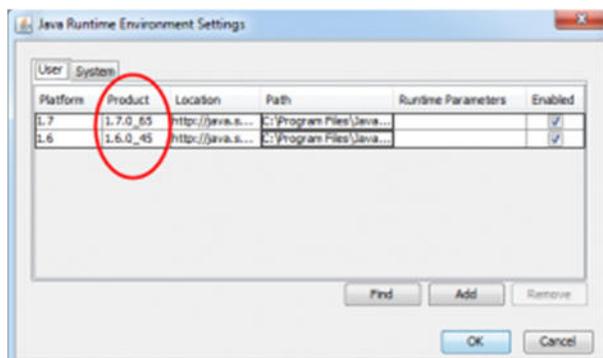
---



In the demo, Randy had some simple apps he created that use different version of Java, to demonstrate how it works with apps. I don't have any handy, so I just did the web based test and used the same URL ([javatester.org/version.html](http://javatester.org/version.html)) to tell me which version I'm hitting the page with.

Creating the rule was simple enough. It only asks for 3 things. If the type is application or URL, the path to the application or the URL if the latter and which Java Version to use, which it lists from the available versions installed on the machine. After that it's not apparent what needs to be done next. Remember, I'm trying to do this without the admin guide. I remembered Randy showed that a rule file was created, so I started looking for what will do that for me and quickly found the generate option in the file menu. It saved the project file and generated the rule, which consists of 4 files, one of which is an xml file since I'm doing a URL.

I was testing with 2 versions of Java, which you can see in the screenshot below..



The first thing I did was open that URL without any rules applied and it showed me that I'm running the highest version installed.



Time for the test and I wasn't sure what to do to apply the rule and I didn't recall what Randy did, so it was time for the admin guide. I think this is an area where it should be intuitive to the user how to to apply the rule, but it's certainly not a show stopper. After taking a peek at the guide it suddenly became obvious and I was able to continue. The files that are generated

for the rule, need to be copied into the “Rules” folder of the agent install directory. I hope this will be something that is automated in the future. Personally, I have never been someone that is picky about having to take 1 or 2 extra steps for the benefit of a great solution, but I have worked with enough people both from the customer and vendor side to know that there are plenty of folks out there that will make a lot of noise over this. But I regress...

I copied the files as required and went back to the same URL and presto I was very impressed.



Some of the other big features in this beta are reporting and font rule management. I didn't look at the reporting piece, but Randy did show a demo of the font rules and it also provides some really nice functionality. This will come in very handy when you have licensed fonts and are not paying for every user. You can still have the fonts installed on the gold image, but create rules that will only allow certain users to see and use the font.

Overall, it works and it works beautifully. I immediately see how useful this can be and have no doubts that it will be utilized by anyone that is looking for a simple way to manage this type of environment. Of course as I mentioned on a few occasions this is still in it's early stages and we'll most likely see more features in the future. One of the things that comes to mind from an enterprise perspective is backend management. Will there be a centralized way of managing the rules, or is it going to be up to the customer to decide how to deploy and manage? Most enterprise networks already have these types of solutions and even if only through AD policy's this can be managed quite nicely. I'm looking forward to seeing how development progresses and am excited to see what the talented team at FSLogix comes up with next.