

APPENDIX C

Reference URLs

This appendix includes a number of reference URLs associated with System Center 2012 Configuration Manager (ConfigMgr). URLs do change; although the authors have made every effort to verify the references here as working links, there is no guarantee they will remain current. It is quite possible some will change or be “dead” by the time you read this book. Sometimes the Wayback Machine (<http://www.archive.org/index.php>) can rescue you from dead or broken links. This site is an Internet archive, and it will take you back to an archived version of a site—sometimes.

These links are also available “live” at Pearson’s InformIT website, at <http://www.informit.com/title/9780672334375>, under the Downloads tab. Look for Appendix C, “Reference URLs.”

General Resources

A number of websites provide excellent resources for Configuration Manager. This section lists some of the more general resources available.

- ▶ <http://www.myITforum.com> is a community of worldwide Information Technology (IT) professionals and a website established in 1999 by Rod Trent. myITforum includes topics on System Center and Information Technology.

The list of blogs and other ConfigMgr-related articles at myITforum.com is enormous. This appendix includes some specific links and pertinent information, but it does not include everything.

IN THIS APPENDIX

- ▶ General Resources
- ▶ Microsoft’s Configuration Manager Resources
- ▶ Other Configuration Manager Resources
- ▶ Blogs
- ▶ Microsoft System Center
- ▶ Public Forums
- ▶ Utilities

- ▶ A great source of information for all things System Center-related, including Configuration Manager, is System Center Central (<http://www.systemcentercentral.com>).
- ▶ If you are not already receiving email notifications of new articles in the Microsoft Knowledge Base from kbalertz, you can sign up at <http://kbalertz.com/>. You just need to create an account and select those technologies you want to be alerted about.
- ▶ The System Center Virtual User Group is dedicated to providing educational resources and collaboration between System Center users worldwide. Bi-monthly meetings present topics from industry experts, including Microsoft engineers. These Live Meeting sessions are recorded for your convenience. To join the user group, go to <http://www.linkedin.com/groupRegistration?gid=101906>.
- ▶ FAQShop.com, published by ConfigMgr MVP Cliff Hobbs at <http://www.faqshop.com/>, provides hints, tips, and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) related to Microsoft's various systems management technologies including System Center. Cliff is completely redeveloping FAQShop, which will include System Center 2012 Configuration Manager content.
- ▶ With the release of System Center 2012, Microsoft is bundling the different components as a single product. <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/server-cloud/system-center/datacenter-management-capabilities.aspx> provides an overview of the System Center components and capabilities.
- ▶ The Microsoft System Center website is at <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/server-cloud/system-center/>.
- ▶ Microsoft's jumping off point for System Center technical resources starts at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/systemcenter/>.
- ▶ Microsoft has published a whitepaper on performance tuning guidelines for Windows Server 2008 R2 at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/hardware/gg463392>.
- ▶ Here are links to previous versions of performance tuning guidelines:
 - ▶ You can download the Windows Server 2008 version from <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/hardware/gg463394.aspx>.
 - ▶ The Windows Server 2003 version is available at <http://download.microsoft.com/download/2/8/0/2800a518-7ac6-4aac-bd85-74d2c52e1ec6/tuning.doc>.
- ▶ Michael Pearson has an excellent article discussing SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS) recovery planning, available online from the SQL Server Central community (SQLServerCentral.com) at <http://www.sqlservercentral.com/columnists/mpearson/recoveryplanningforsqlreportingservices.asp>. You must register with SQLServerCentral to view the full article.
- ▶ <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms156421.aspx> discusses moving the SSRS databases to another computer.

- ▶ For information on SQL Server best practices, see <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sqlserver/bb671430.aspx>.
The SQL Server 2008 R2 Best Practice Analyzer is available for download at <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=0FD439D7-4BFF-4DF7-A52F-9A1BE8725591&displaylang=e&displaylang=en>.
- ▶ Use the SQL Server Profiler to view SQL requests sent to a SQL Server database. See <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms187929.aspx> for information.
- ▶ To test Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) using Telnet from a command prompt, follow the steps at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa995718%28EXCHG.65%29.aspx>.
- ▶ Somewhat dated, although still useful, is an IDC whitepaper sponsored by Microsoft that quantifies how businesses can reduce costs by managing the Windows desktop. This whitepaper is available for download at http://download.microsoft.com/download/a/4/4/a4474b0c-57d8-41a2-afe6-32037fa93ea6/IDC_windesktop_IO_whitepaper.pdf.
- ▶ Read about proactive desktop management in Greg Shield's article in Redmond Magazine on best practices for desktop management, at <http://redmondmag.com/columns/article.asp?editorialid=2635>.
- ▶ According to the SANS Institute, the threat landscape is increasingly dynamic, making efficient and proactive update management more important than ever. <http://www.sans.org/top20/> provides information.
- ▶ See a Microsoft-sponsored IDC whitepaper on the relationship between IT labor costs and best practices for managing the Windows desktop at http://download.microsoft.com/download/a/4/4/a4474b0c-57d8-41a2-afe6-32037fa93ea6/IDC_windesktop_IO_whitepaper.pdf.
- ▶ For information about Active Directory in Windows Server 2008 R2, see <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsserver2008/en-us/active-directory.aspx>.
- ▶ Information regarding the Active Directory schema is at [http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms675085\(VS.85\).aspx](http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms675085(VS.85).aspx).
- ▶ Information on LDIFDE is located at [http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc731033\(v=WS.10\).aspx](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc731033(v=WS.10).aspx).
- ▶ <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/555636> describes the process of exporting and importing objects using LDIFDE.
- ▶ Interested in learning more about the Microsoft Operations Framework (MOF)? Information about version 4.0 is at <http://technet.microsoft.com/library/cc506049.aspx>.
- ▶ Information on the MOF Deliver Phase is at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc506047.aspx>.

- ▶ You can read about the MOF Envision SMF at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc531013.aspx>.
- ▶ For information on MOF 4.0 and the Manage layer, see <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc506048.aspx>.
- ▶ Information on the IO (Infrastructure Optimization) model is available at <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/infrastructure>.
- ▶ If you want to learn about Service Modeling Language (SML), see <http://www.w3.org/TR/sml/>. For additional technical information on SML from Microsoft, visit <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb725986.aspx>.
- ▶ Information on the IO (Infrastructure Optimization) model is available at <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/infrastructure>.
- ▶ Virtual labs for System Center components including Configuration Manager, Virtual Machine Manager, Application Virtualization, and more are located at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/bb539977.aspx>.
- ▶ The Windows Server technical library is located at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb625087.aspx>.
- ▶ Microsoft's TechNet Magazine is available online at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/magazine/default.aspx>.
- ▶ Microsoft's Sysinternals website is at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/default.aspx>.
- ▶ Download the Microsoft Security Compliance Manager (SCM) solution accelerator at <http://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?displaylang=en&id=16776>.
- ▶ Silect Software (<http://www.silect.com>) offers CP Studio. CP Studio, like SCM, enables authoring of configuration baselines and configuration items outside the ConfigMgr console.
- ▶ XML Notepad 2007 is an intuitive tool for browsing and editing XML documents. Read about it at <http://msdn2.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa905339.aspx>, and download the tool from <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=72d6aa49-787d-4118-ba5f-4f30fe913628&displaylang=en>.
- ▶ Windows IT Pro is an online publication including articles about System Center and other topics. See <http://www.windowsitpro.com/> for information.
- ▶ Microsoft provides an entire portal on application compatibility at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/aa905066.aspx>.
- ▶ Want to create drilldown SSRS reports? See <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd207042.aspx>.
- ▶ <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms157403.aspx> provides a complete listing of SQL Server 2008 R2 Report Server log files.

- ▶ Trying to understand licensing?
 - ▶ General licensing information is at <http://www.microsoft.com/licensing/default.aspx>.
 - ▶ <http://www.microsoft.com/calsuites/en/us/products/default.aspx> discusses Server CALs (Client Access Licenses) and the suites they may be included on. The most current list of Microsoft CAL suite technologies can be found at http://download.microsoft.com/download/3/D/4/3D42BDC2-6725-4B29-B75A-A5B04179958B/Licensing_Core_CAL_and_Enterprise_Suite.docx.
 - ▶ System Center volume licensing is discussed at <http://www.microsoft.com/licensing/about-licensing/SystemCenter2012.aspx>.

Microsoft's Configuration Manager Resources

The following list includes some general Microsoft resources available for System Center 2012 Configuration Manager:

- ▶ Microsoft's Configuration Manager website is located at <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/server-cloud/system-center/configuration-manager-2012.aspx>.
- ▶ For an overview of System Center 2012 Configuration Manager's capabilities, see <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/server-cloud/system-center/configuration-manager-2012-capabilities.aspx>.
- ▶ Find Microsoft's Configuration Manager TechNet main library page at <http://technet.microsoft.com/library/gg682129>.
- ▶ What's new in Configuration Manager? See <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg699359.aspx> and Meged Ezzat's posting at <http://blogs.technet.com/b/meamcs/archive/2011/08/10/what-s-new-in-configuration-manager-2012-sccm-2012.aspx>.
- ▶ The documentation library with links to the different technical guides is at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg682041>.
- ▶ For a list of technical publications for Configuration Manager, see <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/hh531521.aspx>.
- ▶ Information on supported configurations for Configuration Manager is available at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg682077.aspx>.
- ▶ Microsoft has created a survival guide for Configuration Manager at <http://social.technet.microsoft.com/wiki/contents/articles/7075.system-center-2012-configuration-manager-survival-guide.aspx> (you can also access the survival guide at <http://www.configmgrsurvivalguide.com>). This is a pointer to information on the Internet regarding System Center 2012 Configuration Manager.
- ▶ Documentation on planning for software updates and Windows Server Update Services (WSUS) is at http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg712696.aspx#BKMK_SUMCapacity, and <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/>

dd939928(W.S.10).aspx documents WSUS 3.0 system requirements. You may also want to view <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/hh237372.aspx>, which lists prerequisites for software updates.

- ▶ Steve Rachui has written a series of blog posts on the software updates process as viewed through the log files. See
 - ▶ <http://blogs.msdn.com/b/steverac/archive/2011/04/10/software-updates-internals-mms-2011-session-part-i.aspx>.
 - ▶ <http://blogs.msdn.com/b/steverac/archive/2011/04/16/software-updates-internals-mms-2011-session-part-ii.aspx>.
 - ▶ <http://blogs.msdn.com/b/steverac/archive/2011/04/30/software-updates-internals-mms-2011-session-part-iii.aspx>.
- ▶ Microsoft recommends installing the reporting services point on a remote site system server for improved performance. See <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/hh394138.aspx>.
- ▶ SSRS should be installed in native mode for System Center 2012 Configuration Manager; this is discussed at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms143711.aspx>.
- ▶ You can script report backups using RS.exe. Documentation is available at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms162839.aspx> and <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms159720.aspx>.
- ▶ You should always verify your reporting services installation before installing the reporting services point. <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms143773.aspx> discusses the steps to take.
- ▶ Configuring reporting in ConfigMgr is discussed at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg712698.aspx>.
- ▶ Hardware sizing information for site systems can be found at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/hh846235.aspx>.
- ▶ Ports used by Configuration Manager are discussed at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb632618.aspx>. Information on configuring ports for Network Access Protection (NAP) is located at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb694170.aspx>.
- ▶ See http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg712701.aspx#Support_Internet_Clients to plan for implementing Internet-based client management.
- ▶ Configuring a service principal name (SPN) for SQL Server site database servers is discussed at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb735885.aspx>.
- ▶ Guidance for securing specific site system servers is at http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg682165.aspx#BKMK_Security_SiteServer.
- ▶ Best practices for collections are at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg699372.aspx>.

- ▶ Tips on installing and configuring distribution points are at http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg682115.aspx#BKMK_InstallDistributionPoint. You may also want to view <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/hh272770.aspx>, which discusses installing and configuring site system roles.
- ▶ Read about operating system deployment (OSD) and multicast at <http://blog.configmgrftw.com/?p=299>.
- ▶ <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb932135.aspx> is a list of log files for OSD.
- ▶ http://blogs.technet.com/b/inside_osd/archive/2007/12/13/troubleshooting-tips.aspx discusses OSD troubleshooting tips.
- ▶ Microsoft provides guidance on upgrading from Configuration Manager 2007 to System Center 2012 Configuration Manager at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg682006.aspx>. Related is <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg712336.aspx>, which discusses security and privacy for migration to ConfigMgr 2012. The article at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg712275.aspx> discusses planning for content deployment during your migration.
- ▶ Troubleshooting your ConfigMgr migration? See <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg712297.aspx>.
- ▶ Prerequisites for deploying the ConfigMgr client are discussed at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg682042.aspx>.
- ▶ Need help with troubleshooting client push installation? Check out <http://blogs.technet.com/b/sudheesn/archive/2010/05/31/troubleshooting-sccm-part-i-client-push-installation.aspx>.
- ▶ A step-by-step guide on using software metering is available at <http://blogs.msdn.com/b/minfangl/archive/2011/04/29/step-by-step-on-how-to-use-software-metering.aspx>.
- ▶ <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/hh427342.aspx> is a technical reference for ConfigMgr log files.
- ▶ See <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb680409.aspx> for the locations of log files on managed mobile devices.
- ▶ Task sequence variables are documented at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg682064.aspx>.
- ▶ For a TechNet webcast on how Microsoft IT (MSIT) is deploying System Center 2012 Configuration Manager, see <https://msevents.microsoft.com/CUI/EventDetail.aspx?culture=en-US&EventID=1032498175&CountryCode=US>.
- ▶ Microsoft's IT showcase for Configuration Manager is available at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb687796.aspx>. It includes MSIT's early adopter experiences, best experiences, and lessons learned from their deployments of System Center Configuration Manager.

- ▶ To configure SQL Server site database replication, check out <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb693697.aspx>. <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb693954.aspx> discusses disabling database replication.
- ▶ A TechNet virtual lab introducing System Center 2012 Configuration Manager is available at <https://msevents.microsoft.com/CUI/EventDetail.aspx?EventID=1032499898&culture=en-us>.
- ▶ Here are some videos on System Center 2012 Configuration Manager:
 - ▶ Wally Mead presents a ConfigMgr 2012 administration overview at the Belgian System Center Day 2011 on November 3, 2011; this was organized by the Belgian System Center User Group (<http://scug.be/>). See <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/edge/Video/hh536213>.
 - ▶ Kenny Buntinx presents a deployment and infrastructure technical overview at the June 15, 2011 “Best of MMS” event, available at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/edge/video/configuration-manager-2012-deployment-and-infrastructure-technical-overview>.
- ▶ The different database roles used in Configuration Manager are discussed at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb632943.aspx>. Although referring to ConfigMgr 2007 when this appendix was written, the information is still applicable.
- ▶ Information on managing mobile devices in Configuration Manager is at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg682022.aspx>.
- ▶ To identify the Windows groups and accounts used in Configuration Manager and any requirements, see <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/hh427337.aspx>.
- ▶ Configuration packs can be found at the System Center Marketplace; see <http://systemcenter.pinpoint.microsoft.com/en-US/applications/search/configuration-manager-d10?sort=released&q=partnername%3aMicrosoft+System+Center>.
- ▶ Information on Windows Management Instrumentation (WMI) is available at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa394582.aspx>.
- ▶ [http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa394564\(VS.85\).aspx](http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa394564(VS.85).aspx) discusses WMI logging.
- ▶ For a discussion of User Account Control and WMI, see [http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa826699\(VS.85\).aspx](http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa826699(VS.85).aspx).
- ▶ Command-line tools to manage WMI can be downloaded at [http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa827351\(VS.85\).aspx](http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa827351(VS.85).aspx).
- ▶ See <http://blogs.technet.com/b/askperf/archive/2008/07/11/wmi-troubleshooting-the-repository-on-vista-server-2008.aspx> and <http://blogs.technet.com/b/configmgrteam/archive/2009/05/08/wmi-troubleshooting-tips.aspx> for information on WMI troubleshooting.

- ▶ John Kelbey of Microsoft has a TechNet Magazine article on gathering WMI data using WMIC at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/magazine/2006.09.wmidata.aspx>.
- ▶ CIM is the Component Information Model that WMI is based on. To learn more about CIM, there is a tutorial at <http://www.wbemsolutions.com/tutorials/CIM/index.html>. The full CIM specification can be found at <http://dmtf.org/standards/cim>.
- ▶ For information regarding WMI Query Language (WQL), see <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa394606.aspx>.
- ▶ Steve Rachui discusses state messaging in depth at <http://blogs.msdn.com/b/steverac/archive/2011/01/07/sccm-state-messaging-in-depth.aspx>.
- ▶ Information regarding Windows Network Load Balancing (NLB) is available in the Network Load Balancing Deployment guide at [http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc754833\(WS.10\).aspx](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc754833(WS.10).aspx).
- ▶ [http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc732906\(WS.10\).aspx](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc732906(WS.10).aspx) provides information on requesting an Internet Server certificate.
- ▶ The best way to add a certificate to a certificate store en masse is to use group policy; [http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc770315\(WS.10\).aspx](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc770315(WS.10).aspx) provides a step-by-step example.
- ▶ PKI certificate requirements for ConfigMgr are also discussed at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/gg699362.aspx>.
- ▶ [http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc732597\(WS.10\).aspx](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc732597(WS.10).aspx) provides information about acquiring a code signing certificate.
- ▶ Package Conversion Manager (PCM) allows you to convert ConfigMgr 2007 packages into ConfigMgr 2012 applications. See <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/hh531583.aspx> for information.
- ▶ Prerequisites for System Center Endpoint Protection are documented at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/hh508780.aspx>.
- ▶ The ConfigMgr 2012 SDK, in prerelease when this appendix was written, is discussed at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/hh948960.aspx> and can be downloaded from <http://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?id=29559>.
- ▶ For a complete discussion of what's new and different in USMT 4, check out [http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd560752\(v=WS.10\).aspx](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd560752(v=WS.10).aspx).
- ▶ Microsoft provides solution accelerators, which are guidelines and tools to leverage the full functionality of Microsoft usage within your organization. These are available for download at no cost at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/solutionaccelerators/dd229342>.
- ▶ <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms345322.aspx> is a tutorial on creating model-based reports in Report Designer.

Other Configuration Manager Resources

Microsoft of course is not the only organization to discuss Configuration Manager. A number of websites provide excellent resources for ConfigMgr. Here are several you may want to investigate:

- ▶ Looking for training?
 - ▶ Microsoft provides course 10747A, “Administering System Center 2012 Configuration Manager.” Information on this five-day class is available at <http://www.microsoft.com/learning/en/us/course.aspx?ID=10747A>.
 - ▶ A great ConfigMgr trainer who teaches the ConfigMgr MOC is Michael Head. His current course schedule is located at <http://www.HeadSmartGroup.com/>.
 - ▶ Infront Consulting Group offers System Center training; curriculum and syllabi are available at <http://www.infrontconsulting.com/training.php>. <http://www.infrontconsulting.com/docs/InfrontSCCMBootcamp.pdf> describes their four-day Configuration Manager 2012 Administration boot camp.
 - ▶ Microsoft Virtual Academy provides an overview course at <http://www.microsoftvirtualacademy.com/tracks/overview-and-infrastructure-changes-in-sccm-2012>.
- ▶ <http://www.windows-noob.com/forums/index.php?/forum/92-configuration-manager-2012/> is a forum on System Center 2012 Configuration Manager.
- ▶ Curious about the new content library store? See Kent Agerlund’s blog post at <http://blog.coretech.dk/kea/understanding-the-new-content-library-store-in-5-minutes/>.
- ▶ TechNet Magazine provides a look at Configuration Manager 2012’s user-centric approach at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/magazine/gg675930.aspx>.
- ▶ Niall Brady, a ConfigMgr MVP and contributor to this book, publishes guides for ConfigMgr 2012 at <http://www.windows-noob.com/forums/index.php?/topic/4045-system-center-2012-configuration-manager-guides/>.
- ▶ Michael Niehaus writes about ConfigMgr driver management at <http://blogs.technet.com/b/mniehaus/archive/2010/04/29/configmgr-2007-driver-management-the-novel-part-1.aspx>.
- ▶ For information on converting WQL to SQL, Brian Leary has a nice article at <http://www.myitforum.com/articles/8/view.asp?id=9908>. Written for web reporting with ConfigMgr 2007, the information is still applicable.
- ▶ Marcus Oh writes about retrieving objects into a collection that do not exist in another collection at <http://marcusoh.blogspot.com/2007/08/sms-selecting-objects-not-in-collection.html>.
- ▶ Beginning with Configuration Manager 2007 R2, ConfigMgr has the ability to define a task sequence variable on a collection of individual resource about a value. Read about it at <http://blog.configmgrftw.com/?p=44>.

- ▶ Ronni Pederson writes about using task sequence variables to customize deployments at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/rpedersen/archive/2008/07/01/using-task-sequence-variables-to-customize-deployments.aspx>.
- ▶ When a user with write permissions browses to a distribution point share on a Windows 7 system, he can accidentally modify the source for any package by simply viewing the contents. Win7 creates a thumbs.db that contains thumbnails of images in the folder. For additional information, see Greg Ramsey's post at <http://gregramsey.wordpress.com/2012/02/13/interesting-issue-with-thumbs-db/>.
- ▶ For general guidance on software deployment, see <http://www.itninja.com/software>.
- ▶ Flexera's AdminStudio (<http://www.flexerasoftware.com/products/adminstudio-suite.htm>) is a popular software packaging suite.
- ▶ Adapiva Software (<http://www.adaptiva.com>) extends Microsoft's technologies to enhance PC power management. 1E (<http://www.1e.com>) also has a number of products to assist with sustainability and energy efficiency.
- ▶ Adapiva's OneSite product is a ConfigMgr 2012 add-on that enables you to manage a large distributed network as if it were a single network. http://adaptiva.com/products_onesite.html provides details.
- ▶ Athena MDM from Odyssey Software (now part of Symantec) is a mobile device management product, <http://www.odysseysoftware.com/products/athena-for-configuration-manager.aspx#sccm> provides details.
- ▶ Quest Software is offering its QMX (Quest Management Xtensions) for System Center Configuration Manager. For information, see <http://www.quest.com/management-xtensions-device-management-cm/>.

Blogs

Here are some blogs the authors have used. Some are more active than others, and new blogs seem to spring up overnight!

- ▶ <http://bink.nu> is managed by Steven Bink, former MVP for Windows Server Technologies. According to the blog, it "watches Microsoft like a hawk."
- ▶ Garth Jones, a ConfigMgr MVP, posts articles at <http://www.myitforum.com/contrib/default.asp?cid=116>. He also is affiliated with the SMS User Group in Canada; those blogs are at <http://smsug.ca/blogs/>.
- ▶ ConfigMgr MVP Kaido Jarvernet blogs at <http://depsharee.blogspot.com/>. Check his blog (along with coauthor Greg Ramsey's) for PowerShell automation tips.
- ▶ <http://sms-hints-tricks.blogspot.com/> is by Matthew Hudson, ConfigMgr MVP.
- ▶ Don Hite blogs at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/dhite/>.

- ▶ Ronni Pederson's blog is at <http://ronnipedersen.com/>. Older articles are at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/rpedersen/>.
- ▶ Ron Crumbaker, ConfigMgr MVP, blogs at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/rcrumbaker/>.
- ▶ Kim Oppalfens blogs at http://blogcastrepository.com/blogs/kim_oppalfens_systems_management_ideas/default.aspx.
- ▶ Sherry Kissinger, ConfigMgr MVP, blogs at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/skissinger/>.
- ▶ Roger Zander blogs at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/rzander/default.aspx>.
- ▶ Rod Trent's blog is at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/rtrent/default.aspx>.
- ▶ <http://systemscentre.blogspot.com/> is maintained by Steve Beaumont.
- ▶ Anthony Clendenen has a myITforum blog at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/social/default.aspx>.
- ▶ By Carlos Santiago, a Premier Field Engineer at Microsoft: <http://blogs.technet.com/carlossantiago>.
- ▶ The OSD Support Team blog is at http://blogs.technet.com/b/system_center_configuration_manager_operating_system_deployment_support_blog/.
- ▶ The Microsoft "Deployment Guys" have a blog at <http://blogs.technet.com/deploymentguys/default.aspx>.
- ▶ Check out the blog at <http://blog.configmgrftw.com/>.
- ▶ <http://blogs.msdn.com/shitanshu/>—blog by Shitasnhu Verma of Microsoft.
- ▶ Paul Thomsen blogs at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/pthomsen/>.
- ▶ Scott Moss's blog is at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/smoss/>.
- ▶ Andrius Kozeniauskas maintains a blog at <http://andrius.kozeniauskas.com/blog/category/microsoft/sccmsms2003/>.
- ▶ <http://blogs.technet.com/b/configmgrteam/> is the official blog of the Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager product group.
- ▶ Kevin Sullivan's Management blog is at https://blogs.technet.com/kevinsul_blog/. (Kevin is a Technology Specialist at Microsoft focusing on management products.)
- ▶ www.systemcenterguide.com is a System Center blog by Duncan McAlynn.
- ▶ See <http://blogs.msdn.com/b/shitanshu/> for information about Configuration Manager in Microsoft IT.

Here are our own blogs:

- ▶ Kerrie Meyler, MVP and lead author for *System Center 2012 Configuration Manager Unleashed*, maintains a blog at www.networkworld.com/community/meyler.
- ▶ A blog by ConfigMgr MVP and coauthor Jason Sandys is at <http://blog.configmgrftw.com/>.
- ▶ Greg Ramsey, ConfigMgr MVP and a coauthor for this book, blogs at <http://gregramsey.wordpress.com/>.
- ▶ <http://marcusoh.blogspot.com/> is a blog by Marcus Oh, MVP and a coauthor for this book.
- ▶ Steve Rachui is a CSS guru on ConfigMgr and our technical reviewer. Check out his blog at <http://blogs.msdn.com/steverac/>.
- ▶ Kenneth van Surksun, MVP and contributor to this book, blogs at <http://www.techlog.org>.
- ▶ <http://www.msfaq.se/> is Stefan Schörling's blog on Microsoft System Management. Stefan is a ConfigMgr MVP and contributor to this book.
- ▶ Niall Brady, ConfigMgr MVP and contributor to this book, blogs at <http://www.niallbrady.com/>. Former postings are at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/nbrady/>.
- ▶ Sam Erskine, contributor to this book, blogs at <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/serskine/>.
- ▶ Torsten Meringer, ConfigMgr MVP and contributor to this book, manages the German ConfigMgr blog at <http://www.mssccmfaq.de>.
- ▶ <http://myitforum.com/cs2/blogs/sthompson> is the blog for Steve Thompson, ConfigMgr MVP and a contributor to this book.

Microsoft System Center

With the release of System Center 2012, Microsoft is bundling the different components as a single product. <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/server-cloud/system-center/datacenter-management-capabilities.aspx> provides an overview of the capacities and components.

Public Forums

If you need an answer to a question, first check the Microsoft public forums. A list of available TechNet forums is maintained at <http://social.technet.microsoft.com/forums/en-US/categories/>. It is best to see if the question has already been posted before you ask it!

The link to all the System Center 2012 Configuration Manager forums is <http://social.technet.microsoft.com/Forums/en-US/category/systemcenter2012configurationmanager>. Here are the specific forums (English):

- ▶ Configuration Manager 2012: General (<http://social.technet.microsoft.com/forums/en-US/configmgrgeneral/threads>)
- ▶ Configuration Manager 2012: Site and client and site deployment (<http://social.technet.microsoft.com/Forums/en-US/configmanagerdeployment/threads>)
- ▶ Configuration Manager 2012: Application management (<http://social.technet.microsoft.com/Forums/en-US/configmanagerapps/threads>)
- ▶ Configuration Manager 2012: Security and compliance (<http://social.technet.microsoft.com/Forums/en-US/configmanagersecurity/threads>)
- ▶ Configuration Manager: Operating System Deployment (<http://social.technet.microsoft.com/forums/en-US/configmgrosd/threads>)
- ▶ Configuration Manager: SDK (<http://social.technet.microsoft.com/forums/en-US/configmgrsdk/threads>)
- ▶ Configuration Manager 2012: Migration (<http://social.technet.microsoft.com/Forums/en-US/configmanagermigration/threads>)
- ▶ myITforum also has a discussion list for Configuration Manager along with a number of other discussion lists; see <http://myitforum.com/myitforumwp/support/email-lists/>.

Utilities

Here are some utilities, both Microsoft and third party:

- ▶ The WMI Diagnosis Utility (WMIDiag) is available at the Microsoft download site, <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=d7ba3cd6-18d1-4d05-b11e-4c64192ae97d&displaylang=en>.
- ▶ The WMI Administrative Tools are downloadable at <http://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?id=24045>.
- ▶ The Windows PowerShell Scriptomatic tool, created by Ed Wilson, allows you to browse WMI namespaces and automatically generate PowerShell code to connect to WMI objects. You can download the tool from <http://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?displaylang=en&id=24121>.
- ▶ Use Process Monitor to capture detailed process activity on Windows systems. For information and a download link, see at <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb896645.aspx>.
- ▶ NetDiag is a diagnostic tool that helps isolate networking and connectivity problems. For information, see <http://technet.microsoft.com/library/Cc938980>.

- ▶ Netperf is a benchmark that can be used to measure performance of many types of networking. It provides tests for both unidirectional throughput and end-to-end latency. For more information and to download the tool, see <http://www.netperf.org/netperf/>.
- ▶ You can download and install add-ons and extensions for System Center 2012 Configuration Manager at <http://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?id=29265>. This includes the ConfigMgr toolkit and PCM.
- ▶ Troubleshoot port status issues using PortQry and PortQryUI, downloadable from <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=89811747-C74B-4638-A2D5-AC828BDC6983&displaylang=en> and <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=8355E537-1EA6-4569-AABB-F248F4BD91D0&displaylang=en>, respectively.
- ▶ System Center Update Publisher (SCUP) enables third-party vendors and IT administrators to import, manage, and develop software update definitions that can be deployed with ConfigMgr. You can download SCUP from <http://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?id=11940>.
- ▶ At times creating WMI queries can be quite cumbersome. There are a number of tools available for free to help ease the process. Here are some popular ones:
 - ▶ **WMI Code Creator:** <https://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?displaylang=en&id=8572>
 - ▶ **WMI Code Generator:** <http://www.robvanderwoude.com/wmigen.php>
 - ▶ **Scriptomatic:** <http://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?displaylang=en&id=3284>
- ▶ RSS Scripter, developed by SQL Server MVP Jasper Smith, simplifies creation of VB scripts for RS.EXE. Information is available at <http://www.sqldbatips.com/showarticle.asp?ID=62>.
- ▶ You can download Microsoft Report Builder from a SSRS 2008 R2 installed reporting site or at <http://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?displaylang=en&id=6116>. <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/ff657833.aspx> provides information on Report Builder 3.0.