Recast

Windows sandbox: PowerShell and Application Workspace

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This article exemplifies how to deploy and configure applications from Application Workspace Setup Store using Application Workspace and a PowerShell script within a Windows Sandbox environment.

What the script does

These are the sequential steps executed by the script given as an example in this article.

1. Prepare Deployment Files
   The script copies `Agent.json` and `Agentregistration.cer` into a mapped folder ($mappedfolder) used by the sandbox and then downloads the Application Workspace Agent Bootstrapper.
   These files are essential for enabling the Application Workspace to install the Agent and initiate deployments from the main device.

2. Customize Deployment Configuration
   The script updates `Agent.json` to reference either the default sandbox deployment or a custom one specified via the $deployment variable.

3. Configure Persistent Sandbox Identity
   The script creates `RecastComputerName.ps1` that runs at sandbox startup and after every reboot, and it removes existing hostname registry entries, sets the computer name and hostname to "RecastComputerName", updates domain name values in the Winlogon registry.

4. Automate Agent Installation
   The script creates `Recast.ps1`, a script that installs the Application Workspace Agent inside the sandbox, uses the previously prepared files (Agent.json, certificate, and bootstrapper) and triggers the deployment process once the agent is activated.

5. Launch and Monitor Sandbox
   The script generates a `.wsb` configuration file to define sandbox behavior (e.g., mapped folders, networking) and launches the sandbox, which:
   Automatically runs `Recast.ps1`, installs a default set of applications (e.g., Notepad++, Visual Studio Code) and logs progress to `Processing.txt` and `Done.txt`.

> WdagUtilityAccount
> Windows Sandbox uses the default WdagUtilityAccount, which normally limits app linking. With Application Workspace , you can log in using an Entra ID account, making it easy to test apps for specific users or groups.

Two scenarios where Application Workspace can add value when used with Windows Sandbox

In the first scenario, we use Application Workspace to install several applications from the Application Workspace Setup Store when the Sandbox starts, so it is always up to date. We then configure settings for the applications mentioned.

Video

In the second scenario, we use the DTAP cycle of the Application Workspace. We deploy the application in the Test stage on a Sandbox VM to test new versions and settings in an isolated environment. Meanwhile, we deploy the Production

phase of the application on the main device.

Video

The script

▶ Expand to show script

Further reading

Source article written by Donny van der Linde
Overview of Sandbox and how it works