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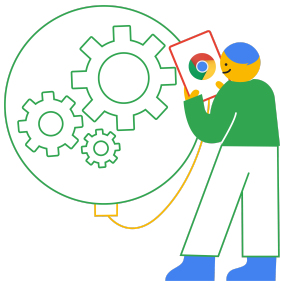
Moving from Shadow IT to Managed Chrome Browser



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Purpose of this document

This guide will show the different methods for managing Chrome Browser. It is meant to be a guideline, not an end to end guide. It includes many links to other guides. This will provide a framework to move Chrome to your management level of choice.

Why manage Chrome?

Many of your users already have Chrome Browser installed. You as an administrator have the task to manage these installations. Managed browsers can provide enhanced security and productivity for your users. Why is this important?
Through applying policy you can prevent:

- Users visiting unsafe sites
- Installing unsafe or unproductive extensions
- Users changing the already secure defaults of the browser
- Browser usage that does not comply with your organisation's policies

Creating a management solution for Chrome can seem daunting. However, the linked tools and this guide should make it easier. This guide will provide you with several approaches to managing Chrome Browser. Some enterprises will have a light management style where others require more. Either way, pick the path that is right for you and your users.

Deploying Chrome Browser

It is recommended to deploy Chrome Browser via a central location. Your user's installs of Chrome install at the user level. Also when Chrome is installed at the user level the user has to be logged in in order for Chrome to auto-update. This can prevent Chrome from updating properly and having the latest security patches applied. The MSI package installs at the system level. This makes Chrome apply to all existing and future users on the machine.

- The MSI package should not remove existing user data.
    - This only happens if you specify to uninstall the older version. Regardless it is recommended to test this before deploying into production.

The enterprise bundle that contains the MSI and the ADMX bundles as well as the tools for setting up Legacy Browser Support is located here.

- Also a verbose Windows based deployment guide can be found here.

Choosing a management method

Google provides two different methods for managing Windows machines: group policy templates and Chrome Enterprise Core. Here are instructions on managing Mac or Linux machines. [Mac] [Linux]. For managing multiple OS's, first consider Chrome Enterprise Core.

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This feature provides a one location to manage Windows, Mac and Linux at no additional cost. You also get a view of installed extensions, plugins and versions of Chrome.

- Here is a link to more information about that feature.
  - Steps to setting up Chrome Enterprise Core are found here.
    - A deep verbose guide is located here
  - Steps to setting up Windows management via Group Policy are located here.
- The table below covers some of the tradeoffs with each solution; but note that both can work side by side (as covered in the following section).

	Pro's	Con's

Chrome Enterprise Core	• No additional cost
	• Additional reporting on endpoints
	  ○ Extensions
	  ○ Versions
	  ○ Applied Policies
	  ○ And more
	• Windows, Mac, and Linux management in a central location
	• No need to update ADMX templates, new features arrive automatically
	• Ease of use
		• No on prem option and must connect to the internet to fetch policy
		• Not all policies in GPO are currently present in the console
		  ○ Note: Adding all existing policies to the admin console is a continued effort and is currently underway.

Group Policy Objects	• Additional functionality in some policies • On prem solution and does not require internet connection to apply policy • Already in use for many enterprises	• Some policies are difficult to use (require JSON) • Need to manually update templates when new policies are released • No reporting/ visibility on chrome versions or installed extensions • Platform Specific

If you are just starting it's recommended you pick a single method of management.
If you already have management via GPO and want to evaluate CBCM you can run both tools side by side and should there be a policy conflict your GPO policies will take precedence. You can also swap this policy precedence should you wish.

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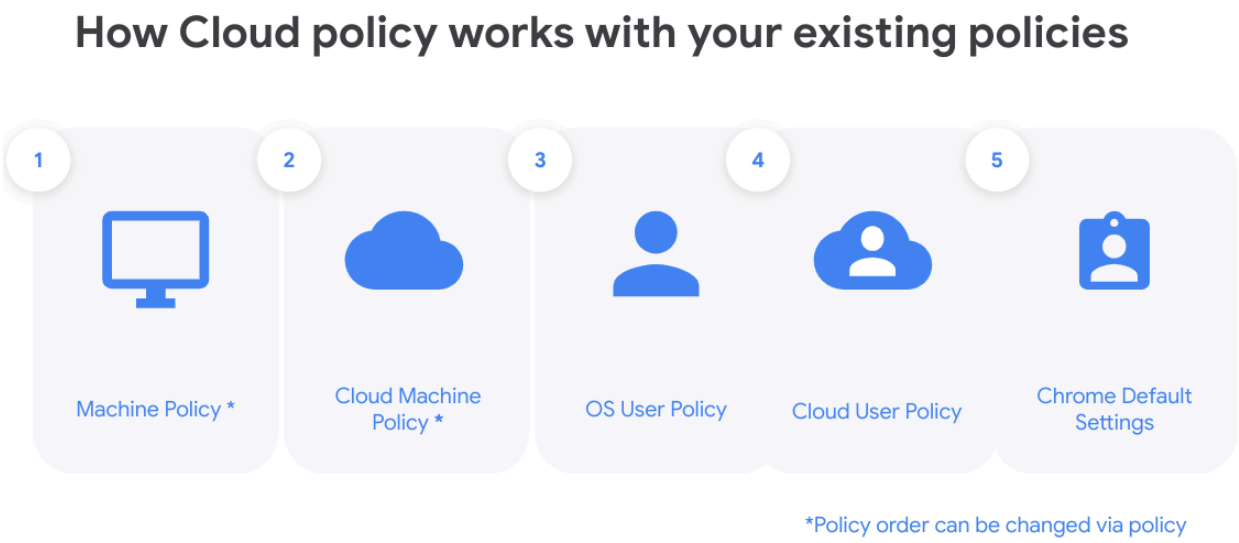
Below is a visual on how policy is applied with both methods.



Preparing your environment for managed Chrome

Before applying policies, it's a good idea to see how your users use Chrome today. Once you have this information, plan to roll out policies slowly. This helps increase productivity and security, with minimal end user disruption. Here are some steps to provide more visibility into user activity:

Using Chrome Enterprise Core's Reporting

The best way to start managing extensions is to first get some data. Data on extensions, policies, plugins and versions of Chrome that your users are utilizing. The easiest way to do this is through:

- Enrolling your browsers into Chrome Enterprise Core
- Enabling cloud reporting in Chrome Enterprise Core

Here are some features that can help you get insight into how Chrome is used in your enterprise:

Extensions report

- This will provide you with insight into what extensions are installed and what rights they require to run.

    - For additional information about extensions, you can use the console's new Takeout API to pull all of this information out of the console into a CSV file.
        - For more information on the Takeout API, please visit this link.

Viewing Policy and applied Plugins

- The console's device view is under Devices>Chrome Browser>Managed browsers> click on an enrolled browser. This section provides details about:
    - Versions of Chrome, profiles, extensions, applied policies and plugins
        - Try selecting a device in each geolocation, department, ect and look at what policies and extensions are present.
        - This will provide a good idea on what users commonly use. So you can set up policies per organization unit within the console.
        - For more information about setting up Organizational Units in the Google Admin Console, refer to this link.

Testing and gathering feedback from users

For best practices of creating a phased rollout of Chrome Browser, please refer to the Chrome Browser Deployment Guide's section on deployment.

Testing with the different Chrome Release Channels

It is recommended that you test with the Beta version of Chrome Browser on certain users or test machines.

- The beta version has minual risk of issues and major updates come every 6 weeks.
- Stable channel Chrome also gets major updates every 6 weeks, so testing in the beta will provide you an extra 6 weeks of testing.
    - This way you can test any new features or possible compatibility issues prior to it updating on your users machines.
    - You can download the beta version of Chrome here | view the release notes | subscribe for them to be delivered directly via email

Getting started with Browser Policies

Regardless of the amount of management you want to apply, there are three common policy categories that most enterprises implement.

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Security

Chrome by default is one of the most secure browsers on the market. The best way to protect your users is to leave the default settings of Chrome on.
Need further information about the security settings?

- Review the Google Security Configuration Guide for best practices.
    - A 3rd party guide written by Center for Internet Security is also available.

Unified end user Experience

Want to provide the best experience for your users? Consider applying some productivity policies. You can find all of the policies that you can apply in Chrome at the policy page. Here are some great resources to support your end users in Chrome:
Legacy Browser Support

- Support legacy applications that require IE in order to run to unify your users browser experience. Also here is a link to a short video on how to set this up

Managed bookmarks and homepages

- Silently add the bookmarks and homepages that your users need to be productive

Update Management

- Google recommends that you leave auto-update on. This way your users will get the latest security patches and features. These controls allow you to control how these updates roll-out.
- For more information on the different management options available please review the Chrome update management strategies technical documentation.

Review and prepare for upcoming major changes in Chrome

- These are some upcoming changes that are coming in Chrome Browser. Please subscribe to the release notes to be aware of future changes and updates.
  Samesite Cookies | Flash Deprecation | TLS Depreciation

Extension Management

Extensions are popular with end users. Managing them can be a challenge. For a complete guide on managing extensions, check out Managing Extensions in your Enterprise. Below are some options for starting extension management:

Decide on a Method of Extension Management

There are a few different options of managing extensions, so pick a path that is right for you.

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Managing Extensions via Chrome Enterprise Core

- Force installing extensions
- Allow or block extensions
- Managing Extensions via their permissions
- Preventing Extensions from Altering Websites

Also check out this overview video that discusses managing extensions via Chrome Enterprise Core.

Managing Extensions in Group Policy

- Setting Chrome Extension Policies
- Extension policy list

Hosting your own on-premise Chrome Web store

This method is not recommended as a best practice. Why?

- Because, once you host an extension, it is up to you to update it.
- Outdated versions of extensions quickly become vulnerable and insecure.

However, some enterprises have the need to pin to certain extension versions for change control and decide to host their own extensions.

- For more information on how to set up an on-premise Chrome web store, please refer to this section in the Managing Extensions in your Enterprise guide.

Publishing your own extensions

Sometimes you might not be able to find an extension that fits your needs. This might require you to create and publish your own extensions on the Chrome Web Store. Here are some resources on how:

Create and publish custom extensions to the Chrome Web store

- This covers basics on creating the extension, how to test, creating app collections and the different ways to publish the extension (Public, Private and unlisted).
- Also here is a blog article that covers this from an enterprise perspective.

FAQ on the Chrome Web Store Review process

- This provides more detail on how the process works and sets expectations on how long the review process normally takes.

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Getting Support

Chrome Browser Enterprise Support

Google offers a paid support offering called Chrome Browser Enterprise Support. It provides 24/7 phone, email and portal support for troubleshooting issues as well as assistance on management configuration questions. For more information, please visit this site

Google Help Center

The Help Center is the main source for all of the supporting documentation.

Chromium.org

The Chromium Projects is where you can submit possible bugs or feature requests to be included or fixed with upcoming versions of Chrome Browser.

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References

Downloads

- Chrome Browser Enterprise Bundle Download
- Beta Channel of Chrome Browser Download

How to guides

- Chrome Browser Deployment Guide
- How to set up Chrome Enterprise Core quick guide [Verbose end to end guide]
- Best Practices for using Chrome Enterprise Core
- Chrome Browser Security Configuration Guide [Center for Internet Security Assessment]
- Setting up Organizational Units in the admin console
- How to conduct a rollout out of Chrome Browser
- How to manage via Policy (GPO, Plist ect) [Windows] [Mac] [Linux]
- Chrome update management strategies
- Managing Extensions in your Enterprise

Tools and features

- Cloud Management Extension Takeout API [Guide] [Script] [Blog] [Video]
- Chrome Browser Policy Page
- Legacy Browser Support
- Managed Bookmarks [Homepages]
- Update Management
- The Chromium Projects

Blogs and release notes

- Chrome Browser Enterprise Release Notes [Subscribe to release notes]

Upcoming changes

- Samesite Cookies | Flash Deprecation | TLS Depreciation

Extensions

Chrome Enterprise Core

- Force installing extensions
- Allow or block extensions
- Managing Extensions via their permissions
- Preventing Extensions from Altering Websites

GPO

- Setting Chrome Extension Policies
- Extension policy list

Publishing Extensions

- Create and publish custom extensions to the Chrome Web store
- FAQ on the Chrome Web Store Review process
- Publishing custom extensions for the enterprise