

Aware of the Needs Of Installation Users

Experience key to InstallAware update

By [David Rubinstein](#)

January 15, 2006 — Claiming its main competitors' focus has shifted away from installation technology to licensing, InstallAware Software last month released InstallAware 5 for Windows Installer, with support for SQL Server Express 2005 and new scripts for collaboration.

The acknowledged leader in installation software is digital rights management provider Macrovision, after its acquisitions of InstallShield and Zero G Software in the past two years gave it cross-platform capability and a lion's share of the market. But Sinan Karaca, InstallAware's chief architect, said Macrovision's focus "isn't on installers anymore." In a news release announcing InstallAware 5, Karaca said, "Installations themselves have had to take a back seat in their new display of copyright protection technologies, much to the dismay of the setup developer."

Macrovision last month released InstallShield 11.5, with an update that helps developers working apart from one another capture and share installation requirements as they write code.

Karaca said InstallAware 5, first released in April 2004 for creating installations on Windows, .NET, IIS and SQL Server platforms, improves the user experience with compression, a feature he claimed can reduce the size of an installation by three-quarters. "There's less time loading, and it's a better experience," he said.

The software also allows for what Karaca called partial Web deployment. "Traditionally when you Web-deploy, you put out everything," he said. "The user downloads an empty stub—setup.exe—which connects to the Internet and downloads the main application and all the additional runtimes.

"We believe a Web deployment should be self-contained," he continued. "When you build a setup with InstallAware, you choose what goes in. If you already have a particular runtime downloaded on your machine, why should it be downloaded again and again with each application?"

InstallAware uses genuine scripting for Windows, which Karaca claimed helps Windows Installer work more intelligently. "Say you want a setup to fork while installing—'If it's a Windows 2000 system, take a certain path. If not, take a different path.' It's extremely hard to do [that] in Windows Installer." Genuine scripting lets developers write a script that allows the setup to perform such actions at runtime, with all actions going through Windows Installer.

Among the new features in version 5 is the ability to install SQL Server Express 2005 as part of a setup, while reducing the runtime to 60 percent of its original size, Karaca claimed. The addition of Include Scripts allows teams to share setup scripts or create a setup library. New Instance Transforms enable the installation of multiple versions of software on the same machine.

InstallAware 5 is available in four editions, starting at US\$199 for the Express edition, a single-user version with a visual set-up process. The Developer edition adds genuine scripting for Windows; a Studio edition adds debugging and 14 customizable setup themes with a dialog designer; and an edition called Studio Admin enables users to open existing setups and customize or reverse-engineer them, and to build setups on end-user machines without buying additional licenses.

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