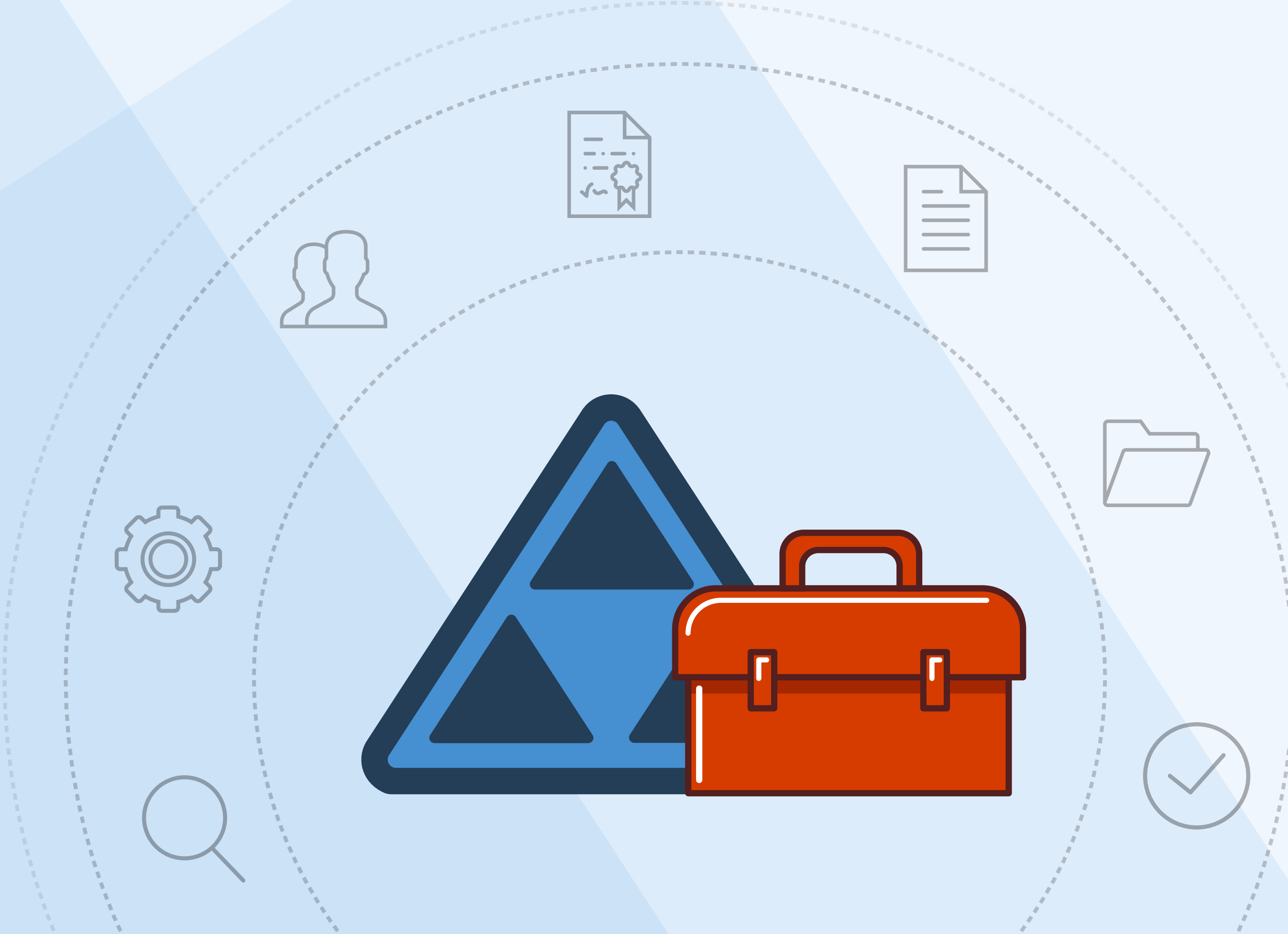
ManageEngine
ADManager Plus

The essential toolkit for effective AD management:

GPO management with ADManager Plus



www.admanagerplus.com

The essential toolkit for effective AD management: GPO management with ADManager Plus

Challenge

Organizations generally have various complex requirements, and it's up to IT administrators to create the numerous policies that put these requirements into effect. That means administrators have a challenging task at hand: administering Active Directory (AD) Group Policy Objects (GPOs). This is a challenge because creating a bunch of policies and configuring settings for different users and computers all at once can be very time-consuming.

Since an organization's policies can change often, it's difficult to individually reconfigure GPOs every time there's a change in policy. If admins were to do this using the Group Policy Management Console (GPMC), imagine the difficulty in individually linking GPOs to different organization units (OUs), deleting GPOs one by one, and so on.

To facilitate audits and ensure compliance, admins should keep track of the GPO changes in their AD and prepare periodic reports. Making these reports manually could take a lot of time and introduce many chances for errors to creep in, or for some details to inadvertently go missing. Though such errors appear harmless on the surface, they could pose some serious consequences later.

Solution

With the right AD management tool, admins can simplify GPO management by configuring GPOs in bulk. That way, they won't have to individually configure GPOs for each OU, domain, or site. A detailed reporting feature can also help admins monitor compliance by auditing all GPO changes and generating reports according to established requirements.

ADManager Plus, an easy-to-use AD management and reporting solution, helps users with both bulk GPO management and compliance monitoring. Additionally, ADManager Plus' GPO management feature helps users with many GPO-related tasks, including:

- Creating GPOs and linking them to multiple OUs or sites all at once.
- Editing GPOs.
- Enabling, disabling, and deleting GPOs.
- Enabling, disabling, and removing GPO links.
- Enforcing or removing enforcement of GPO links.
- Blocking or unblocking GPO link inheritance.

How ADManager Plus works

ADManager Plus supports a number of aspects of AD management, including:

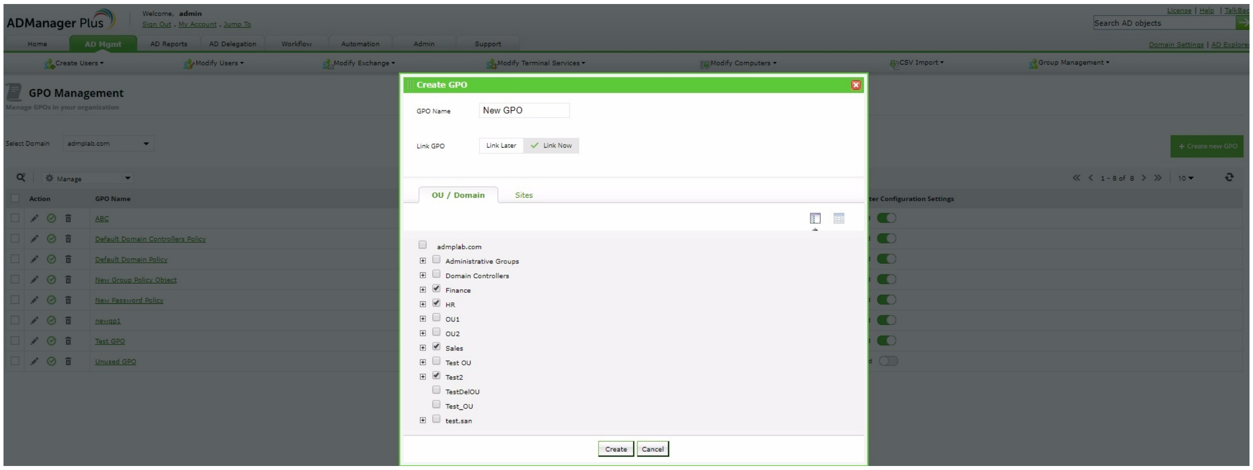
- GPO management
- GPO link management
- GPO reporting
- ■ GPO change auditing
- ■ GPO compliance monitoring

GPO management

Using ADManager Plus' GPO management feature, admins can quickly create and manage GPOs in their organization.

Create GPOs

Creating GPOs and linking them with AD objects is not a one-step task when using GPMC. With GPMC, admins would have to first create the GPO and then link it to the corresponding objects, which is time-consuming. Whereas with ADManager Plus, admins can use a single console to create the GPO and link it to multiple OUs or sites, all at once (Fig. 1).


GPO Name: New GPO

Link GPO: Link Later ✓ Link Now

ADManager Plus
Welcome, admin
Sign Out , My Account , Jump To
License | Help | TalkBac
Search AD objects
Home
AD Mgmt
AD Reports
AD Delegation
Workflow
Automation
Admin
Support
Domain Settings | AD Explore
Create Users
Modify Users
Modify Exchange
Modify Terminal Services
Modify Computers
CSV Import
Group Management
GPO Management
Manage GPOs in your organization
Select Domain
admplab.com
Manage
+ Create new GPO
1 - 8 of 8
10
Action
GPO Name
ABC
Default Domain Controllers Policy
Default Domain Policy
New Group Policy Object
New Password Policy
newgp1
Test GPO
Unused GPO
ter Configuration Settings
Create GPO
OU / Domain
Sites
☐ admplab.com
☐ Administrative Groups
☐ Domain Controllers
☑ Finance
☑ HR
☐ OU1
☐ OU2
☑ Sales
☐ Test OU
☑ Test2
☐ TestDelOU
☐ Test_OU
☐ test,san
Create
Cancel

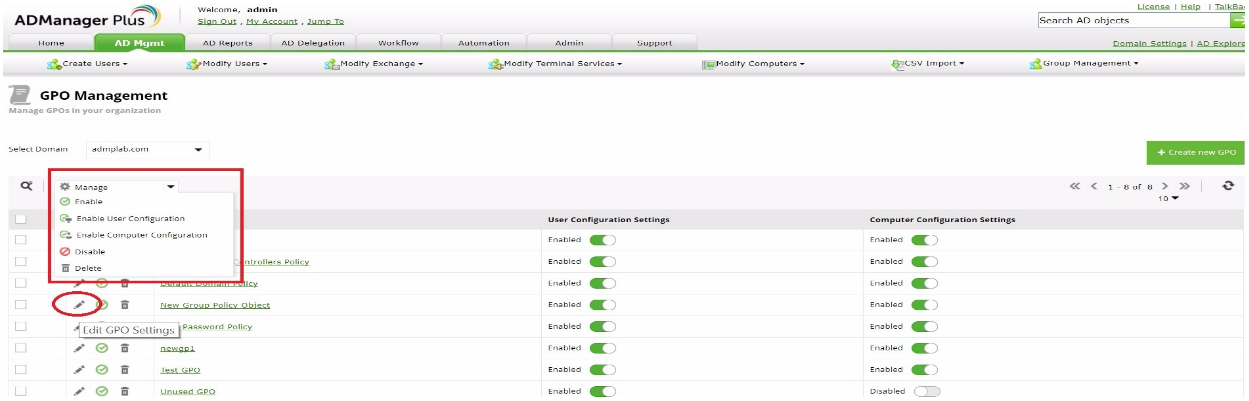
Figure 1. After entering a name for a new GPO, admins can link that GPO to a particular OU, domain, or site.

Manage GPOs

Using ADManager Plus, admins can easily:

- Edit GPOs.
- Enable or disable GPOs.
- Delete GPOs.

Admins constantly have to create new group policies to meet the changing needs of their organization. When new policies are applied, they can either delete the old policies permanently or disable them. Using ADManager Plus, these actions can be performed with ease. ADManager Plus' GPO management feature helps admins edit the administrative template settings for both user and computer configurations of GPOs. And unlike GPMC, admins can perform management actions on multiple GPOs at once using ADManager Plus, saving them time and effort (Fig. 2).


GPO Name	User Configuration Settings	Computer Configuration Settings
	Enabled	Enabled
Controllers Policy	Enabled	Enabled
Default Domain Policy	Enabled	Enabled
New Group Policy Object	Enabled	Enabled
Password Policy	Enabled	Enabled
newgp1	Enabled	Enabled
Test GPO	Enabled	Enabled
Unused GPO	Enabled	Disabled

ADManager Plus
Welcome, admin
Sign Out , My Account , Jump To
License | Help | TalkBac
Search AD objects
Home
AD Mgmt
AD Reports
AD Delegation
Workflow
Automation
Admin
Support
Domain Settings | AD Explore
Create Users
Modify Users
Modify Exchange
Modify Terminal Services
Modify Computers
CSV Import
Group Management
GPO Management
Manage GPOs in your organization
Select Domain
admplab.com
+ Create new GPO
Manage
Enable
Enable User Configuration
Enable Computer Configuration
Disable
Delete
1 - 8 of 8
10
Edit GPO Settings

Figure 2. The list of GPO management actions within ADManager Plus.

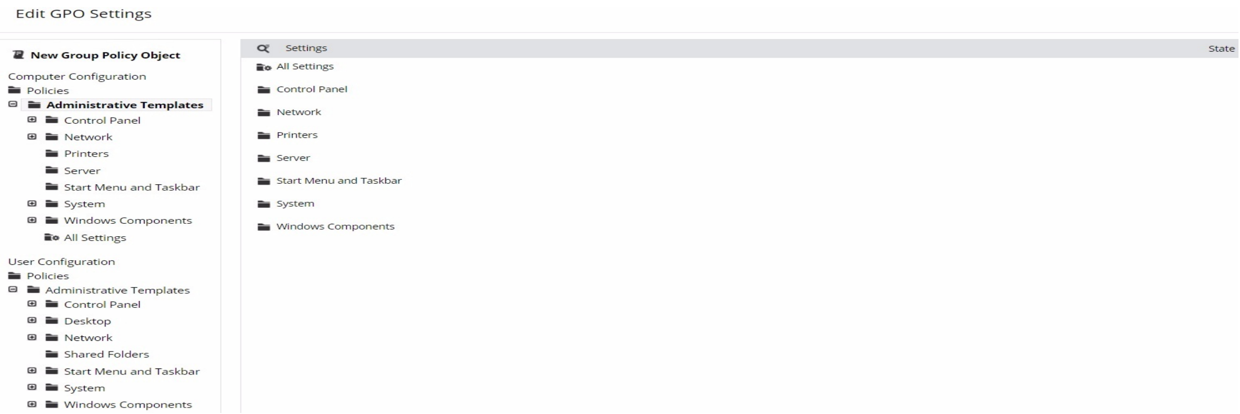
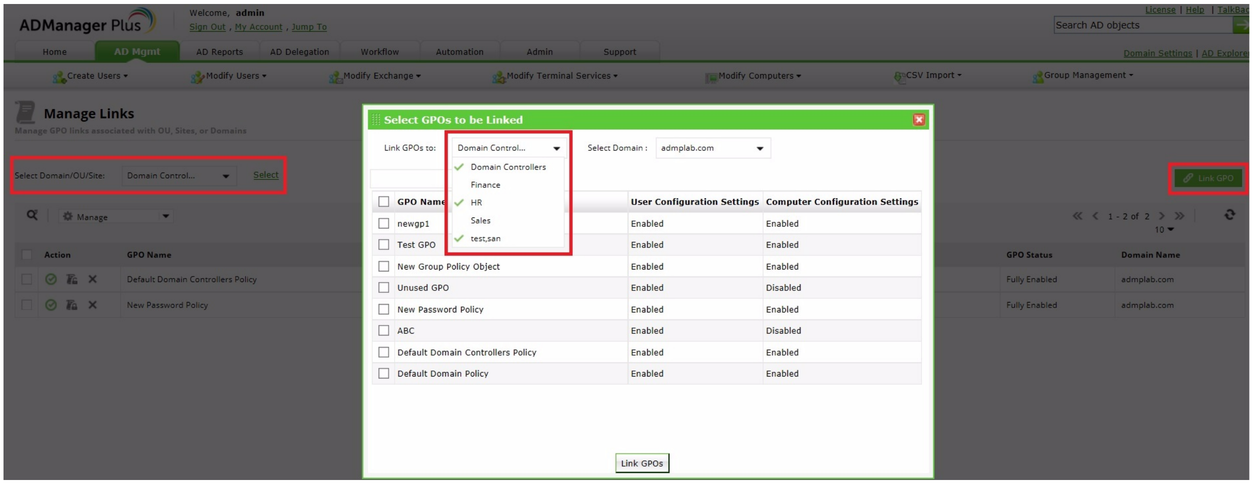

Edit GPO Settings
New Group Policy Object
Computer Configuration
Policies
Administrative Templates
Control Panel
Network
Printers
Server
Start Menu and Taskbar
System
Windows Components
All Settings
User Configuration
Policies
Administrative Templates
Control Panel
Desktop
Network
Shared Folders
Start Menu and Taskbar
System
Windows Components
Settings
State
All Settings
Control Panel
Network
Printers
Server
Start Menu and Taskbar
System
Windows Components

Figure 3. The Edit GPO Settings window in ADManager Plus.

GPO link management

Configuring a GPO in a larger organization where there are hundreds of GPOs and OUs is a daunting task. However, ADManager Plus makes this task easy by allowing administrators to link GPOs to multiple objects in just one click (Fig. 4).


ADManager Plus
Welcome, admin
Sign Out, My Account, Jump To
License | Help | TalkBac
Search AD objects
Home
AD Mgmt
AD Reports
AD Delegation
Workflow
Automation
Admin
Support
Domain Settings | AD Explore
Create Users
Modify Users
Modify Exchange
Modify Terminal Services
Modify Computers
CSV Import
Group Management
Manage Links
Manage GPO links associated with OU, Sites, or Domains
Select
Manage
Link GPO
1 - 2 of 2
10
Select GPOs to be Linked
Link GPOs to:
Domain Controllers
Finance
HR
Sales
test,san
Link GPOs

Select Domain/OU/Site: Domain Control...

☐	Action	GPO Name	GPO Status	Domain Name
☐		Default Domain Controllers Policy	Fully Enabled	admplab.com
☐		New Password Policy	Fully Enabled	admplab.com

Link GPOs to: Domain Control...

Select Domain : admplab.com

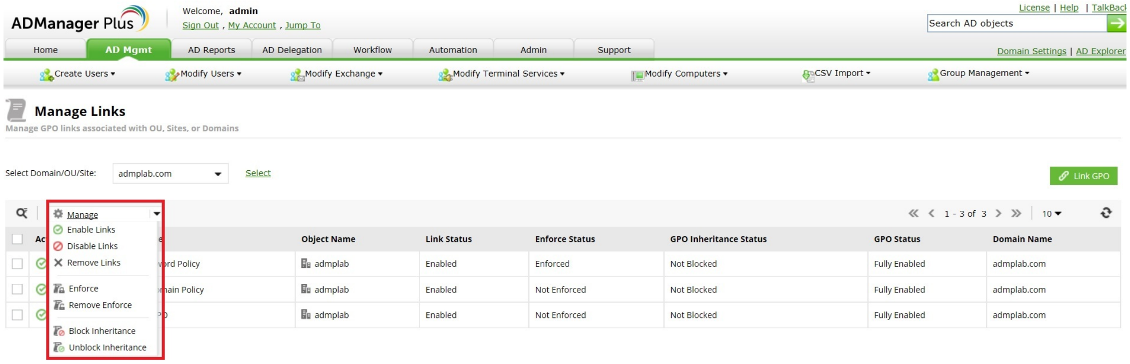
☐	GPO Name	User Configuration Settings	Computer Configuration Settings
☐	newgp1	Enabled	Enabled
☐	Test GPO	Enabled	Enabled
☐	New Group Policy Object	Enabled	Enabled
☐	Unused GPO	Enabled	Disabled
☐	New Password Policy	Enabled	Enabled
☐	ABC	Enabled	Disabled
☐	Default Domain Controllers Policy	Enabled	Enabled
☐	Default Domain Policy	Enabled	Enabled

Figure 4. Linking multiple AD objects to GPOs at once.

Manage GPO links

An organization's policies can change regularly and as these changes occur, admins are required to make corresponding changes in GPOs. For instance, a GPO that deals with firewall settings might apply to an entire OU, but a change in that organization's policy might demand that it be applied to only a few child OUs within that OU. To quickly and easily facilitate these types of changes, ADManager Plus offers the following features:

- Enable, disable, or remove GPO links.
- Enforce or remove enforcement options for GPO links.
- Block or unblock inheritance of GPO links.


ADManager Plus
Welcome, admin
Sign Out , My Account , Jump To
License | Help | TalkBack
Search AD objects
Home
AD Mgmt
AD Reports
AD Delegation
Workflow
Automation
Admin
Support
Domain Settings | AD Explorer
Create Users
Modify Users
Modify Exchange
Modify Terminal Services
Modify Computers
CSV Import
Group Management
Manage Links
Manage GPO links associated with OU, Sites, or Domains
Select
Link GPO
Manage
Enable Links
Disable Links
Remove Links
Enforce
Remove Enforce
Block Inheritance
Unblock Inheritance
1 - 3 of 3
10

Select Domain/OU/Site: admplab.com

☐	Ac	e	Object Name	Link Status	Enforce Status	GPO Inheritance Status	GPO Status	Domain Name
☐	✓	rd Policy	admplab	Enabled	Enforced	Not Blocked	Fully Enabled	admplab.com
☐	✓	ain Policy	admplab	Enabled	Not Enforced	Not Blocked	Fully Enabled	admplab.com
☐	✓	O	admplab	Enabled	Not Enforced	Not Blocked	Fully Enabled	admplab.com

Figure 5. Various GPO link management options in ADManager Plus.

GPO reporting

As shown in Figure 6, "GPO Reports" is found under the **AD Reports** tab of ADManager Plus.

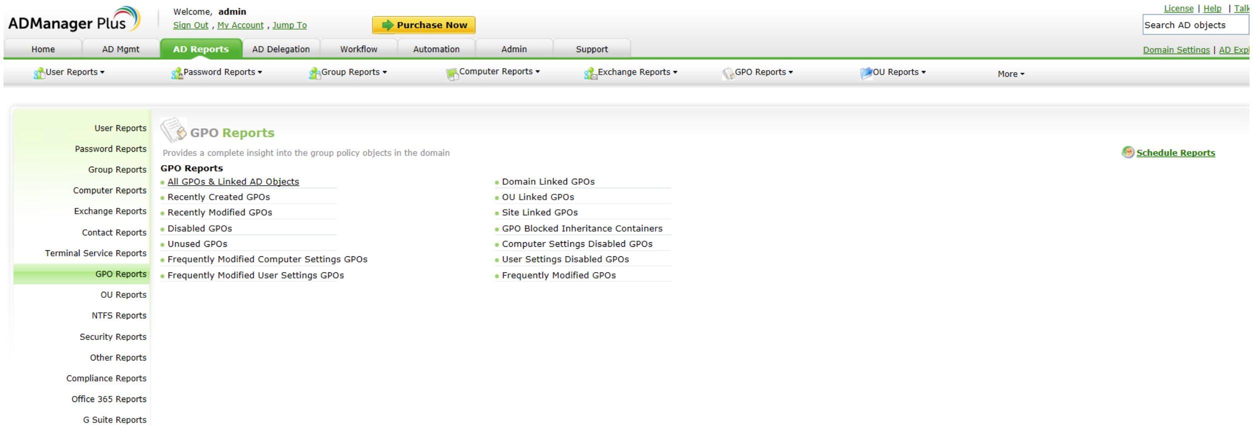

ADManager Plus
Welcome, admin
Sign Out , My Account , Jump To
Purchase Now
License | Help | Talk
Search AD objects
Home
AD Mgmt
AD Reports
AD Delegation
Workflow
Automation
Admin
Support
Domain Settings | AD Expl
User Reports
Password Reports
Group Reports
Computer Reports
Exchange Reports
GPO Reports
OU Reports
More
User Reports
Password Reports
Group Reports
Computer Reports
Exchange Reports
Contact Reports
Terminal Service Reports
GPO Reports
OU Reports
NTFS Reports
Security Reports
Other Reports
Compliance Reports
Office 365 Reports
G Suite Reports
GPO Reports
Provides a complete insight into the group policy objects in the domain
Schedule Reports
GPO Reports
All GPOs & Linked AD Objects
Recently Created GPOs
Recently Modified GPOs
Disabled GPOs
Unused GPOs
Frequently Modified Computer Settings GPOs
Frequently Modified User Settings GPOs
Domain Linked GPOs
OU Linked GPOs
Site Linked GPOs
GPO Blocked Inheritance Containers
Computer Settings Disabled GPOs
User Settings Disabled GPOs
Frequently Modified GPOs

Figure 6. A complete list of GPO reports in ADManager Plus.

ADManager Plus currently offers more than ten pre-canned reports that provide information about every GPO and the AD objects linked with them, recently created or modified GPOs, disabled GPOs, unused GPOs, and so on. These reports offer admins multiple benefits such as streamlining GPOs, identifying and reducing unused GPOs, determining errors in GPO application, identifying impacted AD objects, and more.

Report generation can also be completely automated, enabling admins to adopt a "set it and forget it" mentality. For example, once the admin schedules their required type of report, the report will be sent to the configured email addresses in the admin's choice of CSV, PDF, HTML, or XLSX formats. In addition to the above mentioned benefits, ADManager Plus' GPO reports offer these two options for reporting:

GPO change auditing

The **Recently Modified GPOs** report can be used to find out what GPOs were recently modified and which AD objects are linked to them. This helps admins to keep track of the GPOs that have changed and ensure that no GPOs were changed by mistake or with malicious intent.

GPO compliance monitoring

Once they've applied GPOs, admins can use the **All GPOs & Linked AD Objects** report to check whether those GPOs have been applied to the targeted OU, domain, or site. They can also use the **OU Linked GPOs, Domain Linked GPOs,** and **Site Linked GPOs** reports to check whether a particular OU, domain, or site complies with the necessary policies. In this way, ADManager Plus' GPO reports help admins effectively monitor GPO compliance in AD.

Summary

In short, ADManager Plus offers the following benefits to users:

- Allows users to configure GPOs for multiple objects at once.
- Makes GPO auditing easy with the help of GPO reports.
- Eases the compliance monitoring process.
- Enhances security by eliminating the need to provide direct AD access for GPO configuration.
- Eliminates the need to install GPMC.

Thus, with its wide gamut of features and easy-to-use UI, ADManager Plus makes GPO management and reporting absolutely easy.

About ADManager Plus

ADManager Plus is a web-based Windows Active Directory management and reporting solution that helps Active Directory administrators and help desk technicians accomplish their day-to-day activities. With an intuitive, easy-to-use interface, ADManager Plus handles a variety of complex tasks and generates an exhaustive list of Active Directory reports, some of which are essential requirements to satisfy compliance audits. It also helps administrators manage and report on their Exchange Server, Office 365, and Google Apps environments, in addition to Active Directory, from a single console. For more information on ManageEngine ADManager Plus, visit https://www.manageengine.com/ad-manager/.