



A WAC Presentation

June 26, 2026



Agenda

- What is it?
- What can it do?
- What can't it do?
- Where's it best used?
- What's coming next?
- Live demos!

Quick Disclaimer



Not that I'm going to disparage any multi-billion-dollar companies...

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Come to think of it, the speaker would also prefer not to be sued.

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What is it?

- A(nother) new(er) Microsoft management plane
- A brief 41-year history of Microsoft settings management
 - MMC (Microsoft Management Console)
 - MMC 1.0 released w/ NT4.0 Option Pack in 1997.
 - MMC 2.0 released with Windows XP/2003 (scripting, visual styles)
 - MMC 3.0 released with Vista/2003 SP2/XP SP3 (actions pane)
 - Still used widescale
 - 'Always works' locally
 - Sometimes works remotely depending on what you want to load

What is it?

- **Control Panel**
 - Released with Windows 1.0 in 1985
 - From Windows 95 forward, it's a 'special folder' with shortcuts to applets
 - Still used widescale
 - 'Always works' locally
 - Some things sometimes work remotely
- **Modern Control Panel**
 - Released with Windows ME in 2000
 - Weirdly categorized things in a useless way
 - The first thing everyone does is go to classic view

What is it?

- Modern Settings Screen
 - Introduced in Windows 8/2012 in 2012
 - Looks nicer
 - Sucks
 - Never has the settings you want
 - If it does you have to trick it into showing what you want
 - Often STILL LINKS BACK TO CONTROL PANEL IN THE END
 - Maybe in another 14 years they'll finish it

What is it?

- Server Manager
 - Released with Windows 2000
 - Had useful links to managing your server
 - Mostly were control-panel shortcuts for a server
 - Last release was 2008
- Server Manager (didn't even rename it)
 - Released with Windows 2012
 - New UI
 - Remote management of servers
 - Never really got ALL the features in it
 - Had limitations

Neat, but WHAT IS WAC?!

- Windows Admin Center
 - Project Honolulu released in 2017
 - WAC proper released in 2018
 - Not directly tied to OS releases
- HTML 5 based
- Remote management tool
- “...evolution of "in-box" management tools, like Server Manager and MMC. It complements System Center - it's not a replacement.”
- Works on Server 2016 and later, as well as Windows 10/11
- Runs on .NET 8 including support for HTTP/2

I'm intrigued, what else do you have?

- Uses Remote PowerShell and WMI over WinRM for management
- Intuitive UI
- Agentless management
- Gives a lot of the most common functions you need on servers
- Has some functionality that's only PowerShell otherwise (SET)
- Works with Azure
- Has remote gateways for 'proxying' data
- 100% free. No licensing at all.

What's the catch? What can't it do?

- Stateless – it gathers information when you use it
 - No background gathering
 - Therefore, no alerting
 - No database storing information*****
- Still doesn't have **EVERYTHING** you want, some modules more complete than others
- Still isn't a replacement for System Center, no wide-spread scale out management pane
- Some extensions/panes are preview still
 - Preview often are missing quite a bit

Where's it best used?

- One-off management tasks
- Isn't a tool made for automation
- Isn't a tool made for wide-scale monitoring
 - Great for point-in-time monitoring
- Add users/computers/groups one by one in AD
- Update servers
- Modify server parameters
- Manage Hyper-V

What's coming next?

- Windows Admin Center Virtualization mode
 - vCenter for Hyper-V!
 - Looks awesome
 - Will destroy your existing cluster if you point it at it
 - ONLY USE THIS IN A LAB
 - REPEAT: ONLY USE THIS IN A LAB
 - Yes, I know you think you're good enough to not blow up production: you aren't
 - ONLY USE IT IN A LAB



Thanks! Q&A

Presenter contact info here

