



VSAE Compared to Silect MP Authoring Products

We often get asked about how MP Author Professional or MP Studio compare to Microsoft Visual Studio Authoring Extensions. Although both products can be used to create Management Packs (MPs) for SCOM, they take very different approaches in delivering the MP authoring experience.

The chart below highlights some of the differences between the products and approaches to MP authoring. There are some things in common between the two solutions however this analysis will concentrate on the differences.

Category	Silect MP Author Professional Silect MP Studio	Visual Studio Authoring Extensions (VSAE)
Required Skill Set	Silect's MP authoring products can be effectively used by a wide range of technologists from experienced developers to someone who is new to SCOM. The wizard driven authoring approach guides the user through the creation of all the necessary components to ensure a functional MP. The MP author does not require an intimate knowledge of the SCOM platform or the XML schema used by MPs. Users can include IT Pros, developers, application owners and many others within an IT organization.	Effective use of VSAE requires an understand of Visual Studio as well as familiarity with SCOM and knowledge of the underlying XML schema used by MPs.
End User Authoring Experience	Silect's MP authoring products are wizard-driven to ensure the user sees available MP options as well as creates the required MP components. In most cases a contextual browse feature is available to allow the user to browse objects on their network to more easily define what it is they want to manage. Also, although not necessary, editing a MP component in XML is also supported so virtually any authoring experience is supported.	VSAE primarily makes use of property pages to set characteristics of elements and requires a level of XML editing.
Testing	MP Studio includes an integrated MP testing module to see how an MP performs before deployment. This provides immediate feedback to MP developers on the behavior of their MP including discoveries, alerts, rules, monitors, etc. This can dramatically reduce the time to develop and deploy a new MP. This also reduces or in some cases eliminates the need for a test lab used to test and tune MPs.	MPs developed using VSAE need to be deployed to SCOM (either to a test lab or production) to get feedback on their behavior.

Category	Silect MP Author Professional Silect MP Studio	Visual Studio Authoring Extensions (VSAE)
Version Control	MP Studio users have an integrated version control capability which is used to automatically create an audit history of all changes made to an MP. When MPs are saved, they are automatically saved into Silect Store, along with the audit records showing who, when and what was changed. The Silect Store also maintains multiple versions of an MP including all reference MPs facilitating an easy roll back experience as well as a great source of MP backups.	VSAE users require an add-on to enable version control e.g. Team Foundation Server (TFS).
Integrated Experience Throughout the MP Lifecycle	MP Studio users develop, deploy and manage MPs using the same tool through each of these stages. MP Studio supports working with installed MPs and creating overrides so no need to switch consoles or alter workflows. In addition, MP Studio provides the ability to customize installed MPs in bulk dramatically increasing efficiency and productivity. And for misplaced overrides, MP Studio users use the copy / paste feature to consolidate overrides.	VSAE provides little value once MPs are installed and operational within a SCOM environment.
Reporting and Analysis	Silect's MP authoring products support rich analysis and reporting capabilities. Interactive reporting grids support a rich analysis of MP contents. Reports can be customized, viewed and scheduled and shared with other stakeholders. Reports include MP Contents, MP Audit History, reports comparing MPs in Management Groups and more.	VSAE is a development tool and does not provide any of these detailed MP reports.
Cost	Permanent License: \$2,500 for MP Studio \$995 for MP Author Professional Both products carry an additional 20% annual maintenance and support cost	Standard Annual Subscriptions: \$5,999 / year for Enterprise \$1,199 / year for Professional