

# Managing Custom Update Catalogs: A Guide to Update Deployments

## What are Custom Update Catalogs?

Custom Update Catalogs are administrator-created lists of software updates for BIOS, firmware, drivers, and Dell Technologies applications. They can be customized in terms of the specific types of updates they contain and the specific groups of devices they target.

Custom Update Catalogs provide an alternative to having your software updates managed by the SupportAssist system, which can automatically find and install software updates as default catalogs. While choosing the right tools for unified endpoint management can be a [complicated decision](#), in many business settings, using Custom Update Catalogs is a highly effective choice, for the reasons outlined below.

## What are the Benefits of Custom Update Catalogs?

- **Greater Control:** Using Custom Update Catalogs to manage your software updates puts you in full control of which updates get deployed to which devices at which times. IT administrators prefer not to be surprised by new updates.
- **Test Updates before Production:** With Custom Update Catalogs, you can test the deployment of updates locally and on small batches of devices before they are deployed enterprise-wide in the production environment. This is occasionally important when, for example, updates are released by businesses without adequate testing and crash millions of devices worldwide, costing billions of dollars and disrupting global air travel and banking industries.
- **Deploy Updates Locally:** Custom Update Catalogs allow you to download batches of updates to a local repository and deploy them locally from that repository, rather than having each device download updates from the cloud. This optimizes network traffic and avoids slowing down endpoint devices with large, frequent internet downloads.

## Exploring Custom Update Catalogs in Dell TechDirect

Custom Update Catalogs are created, managed, and deployed through [TechDirect](#), an application for managing IT infrastructure. Below we explore some of the options for working with Custom Update Catalogs in TechDirect.

### Catalog Management Basics

Some of the basic functionalities for catalogs include creating custom catalogs, deleting catalogs, modifying catalog status and properties, and deploying catalogs.

### Creating Catalogs

Navigate to the `Update catalogs` page within TechDirect and select `Create catalog`. You can set the catalog name, description, and type, which specifies which devices are included in that

update catalog. Then, you can set the update and criticality types, which specify which kinds of software updates are included and what level of criticality they must be at to be included (options include `Critical`, `Recommended`, and `Optional`).

## Deleting Catalogs

Navigate to `Catalog list` within `Update catalogs` and select `Delete` to delete an entire catalog definition.

## Modifying Catalog Status and Properties

Catalogs can have one of three statuses: `Draft`, `Test`, and `Production`. By default, a new catalog has the `Draft` status. When you are ready to test a catalog on selected devices, expand the catalog definition and select `Change to Test`. This changes the catalog to a state where you can select `Create Download` and `Download` to download the catalog to a local environment for testing. If testing is successful, select `Change to Production` to ready the catalog for local or remote deployment.

Catalog properties can be modified by expanding the catalog definition and selecting `Edit x`, where `x` is the status of the catalog you want to modify. Properties that can be modified include the name, description, type, and update and criticality types.

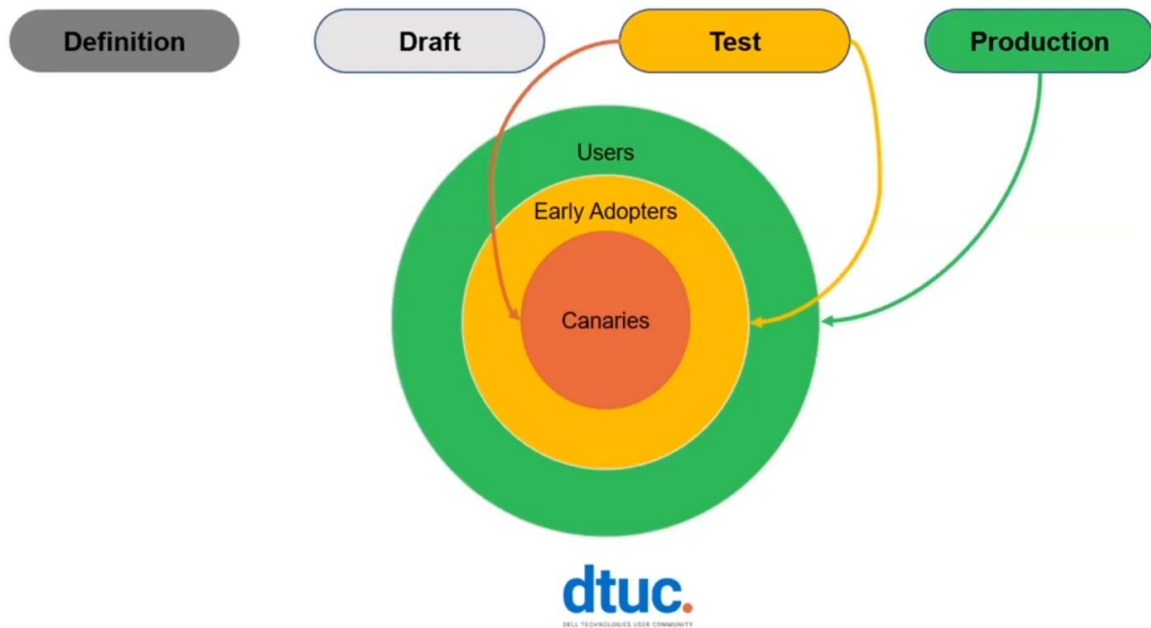
## Deploying Catalogs

Catalog updates can be deployed either from a local repository or remotely from the internet.

- **To deploy a catalog locally:** Expand the catalog definition and select `Download`. This will download a ZIP file containing an XML file that defines the catalog and an executable file. Open the command prompt as an administrator and run the following command: `UpdateCatalogs.Maker.exe -c <definition_file.xml> -t <specified network location>`. This readies the updates at the `specified network location`. Then, set this network location as your PC update source using the following navigation flow: `Connect and manage` > `Manage PC fleet` > `Connect and manage PCs` > `Manage` > `Settings` > `Set PC update source`. Finally, follow the steps for remote deployment below.
- **To deploy a catalog remotely:** Navigate to the `Update catalogs` page and select `Deploy catalog`. Within this window, select the catalogs to deploy and the sites and groups to deploy them to.

## Deployment Rings Support

Deployment Rings are used in a deployment strategy that progressively tests updates among first smaller, and then larger groups of users before full deployment. Custom Update Catalogs fully support Ring Deployment by allowing you to define catalogs that target specific groups of users. These catalogs can be successively deployed to test updates in a Ring Deployment strategy.



*Image: Ring Deployment strategy using Custom Update Catalogs*

## Catalog Management Strategies

To get the most out of Custom Update Catalogs, consider implementing the following strategies.

- **Structure your catalogs by device types and ages:** In some cases, you may want to implement different software update regimes on different devices depending on their type and age. For example, some updates might be suitable for desktops but not laptops, or some updates may be incompatible or perform poorly on older devices. Create multiple catalogs that are optimized for different groups of devices.
- **Create catalogs for progressive deployment:** While testing updates locally is a vital testing practice, you should also consider creating intermediate catalogs that roll out updates progressively before full production. This Ring Deployment strategy minimizes the chance of damaging oversights due to differences in testing and production environments.

## See the Full Tutorial on Dell Custom Update Catalogs

For the full details on working with Dell Custom Update Catalogs, access the following webinar with Mesut Kaptanoglu, a Product Manager at Dell Technologies who works on Dell update catalog products.

[Command, Configure, Deploy: Custom Update Catalogs](#)