Adding Copilot+ PCs with Snapdragon to your Lenovo fleet's endpoint management routine is no problem

We measured the time and effort required to complete common management tasks on Copilot+ PCs powered by Snapdragon or Intel Core Ultra processors in two Windows environments

Organizations are increasingly adopting AI to help improve their processes and give their staff more time for high-value work.[1] But if you're investing in AI PCs with new processors, creating a mixed-CPU fleet, your team may worry about disrupting existing IT management processes. The goal of AI is to save time—you don't want it to make your work more difficult.

Fortunately, you don't need to worry. We assessed the management experience on two Copilot+ PCs, one powered by a Snapdragon X Elite processor and one powered by an Intel® Core™ Ultra 7 processor. We found that across 10 common management tasks in two popular Windows environments (Windows Autopilot with Microsoft Intune and Microsoft Configuration Manager), the time and effort required to manage these PCs was the same. If your company decides that new Lenovo® ThinkPad® AI PCs featuring Snapdragon X Series processors are the right choice moving forward, IT teams won't experience an additional management burden.

How we tested

We report the average time and steps for mission-critical endpoint management tasks on two similarly configured 14-inch Windows 11 Pro PCs. Both Copilot+ PCs contained 64 GB of DDR5 memory and 1 TB of NVMe® SSD storage:

Snapdragon	Intel
Lenovo ThinkPad T14s Gen 6 AI PC • Next-gen AI PC with a 12-core Snapdragon X Elite X1E-78-100 processor. • The integrated Qualcomm® Hexagon™ NPU delivers 45 trillions of operations per second (TOPS).[2]	**Lenovo ThinkPad T14s Gen 6 AI PC** • Next-gen AI PC with an 8-core Intel Core Ultra 7 268V processor. • The integrated Intel AI Boost NPU delivers 48 TOPS.[3]

The endpoint management tasks covered the following ten mission-critical areas:

- **Asset management and accountability:** Getting real-time visibility into which company-issued devices are connected, vulnerable to attack, or failing.
- **Backups:** Setting up regular file backups to prevent data loss.
- **Customized startup programs:** Preventing employees from installing and running unauthorized software.
- **Disk cleanup:** Removing unnecessary files and applications to free up disk space and improve performance.
- **Driver updates:** Ensuring all hardware components have the correct drivers installed for optimal performance.
- **Network configuration:** Setting up and managing Wi-Fi connections and other network settings.
- **Software installation:** Installing and configuring new software as needed by end users.
- **Software updates:** Keeping the operating system and applications up to date with the latest patches and updates.
- **System optimization:** Checking system performance, managing startup programs, and optimizing settings for better performance.
- **User account management:** Creating, modifying, and deleting user accounts and managing permissions

We report the average time and steps necessary to execute these tasks using two different sets of management tools where appropriate:

- Windows Autopilot with Microsoft Intune
- Microsoft Configuration Manager (formerly Microsoft Endpoint Configuration Manager (MECM) and System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM))

Note that the times we report in this study do not include the initial setup of the Autopilot with Intune and Configuration Manager environments. We cover that process, which we completed on the same Copilot+ PCs, in this corresponding deployment study.

The Copilot+ PC with Snapdragon advantage

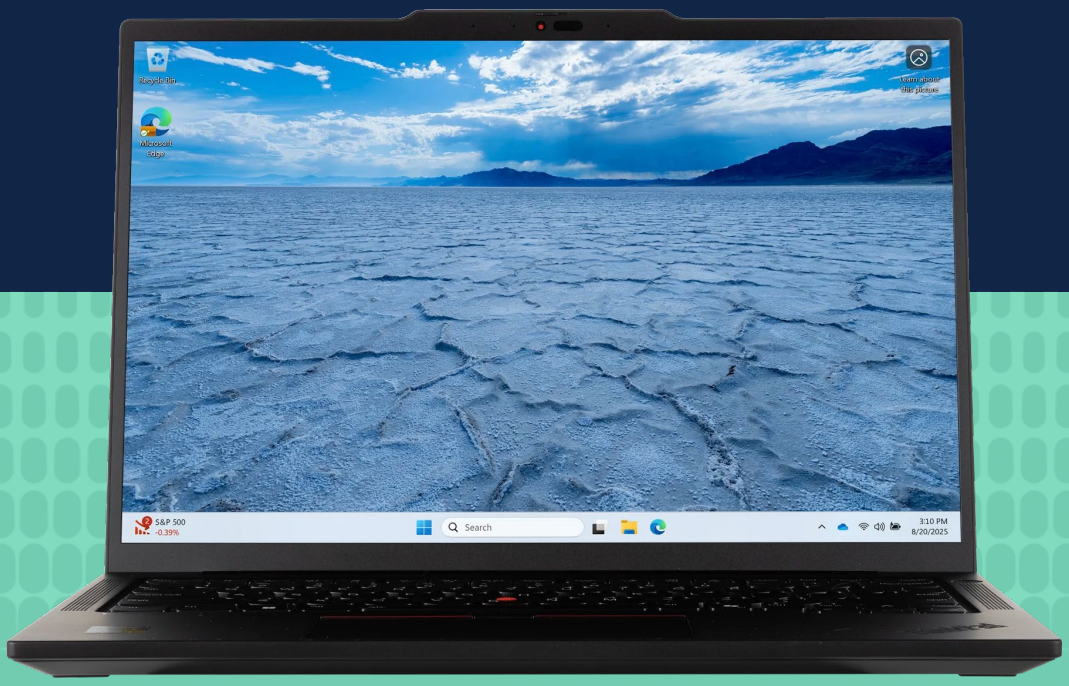
According to Qualcomm Technologies, Snapdragon X Series processors offer "cutting edge responsiveness" to help users "navigate demanding multi-tasking workloads across productivity, creativity, immersive entertainment, and more."[4] They also offer several features designed to support the administrator experience:

Microsoft secured-core PCs
Integrated hardware, firmware, and software protections to protect devices, identities, and data.[5]

Advanced security
Additional silicon-based TPM (Trusted Platform Module), Zero Trust sensors, and resiliency features for OS, firmware, and BIOS protection.[6]

App Assure
This Microsoft FastTrack benefit is a quick way to ensure compatibility of business-critical apps following deployment in mixed-CPU environments.[7]

▶ Learn more about Snapdragon X Elite processors



What we learned

For a detailed breakdown of the steps we completed for each task, see the science behind the report.

Asset management and accountability

Keeping a centralized record of company-issued devices, their pertinent details, and their software statuses provides your IT team with the tools they need to identify vulnerabilities, streamline security and compliance audits, and make sure all devices are accounted for. We found that getting real-time visibility into new devices was straightforward, no matter which CPU powered the Lenovo ThinkPad laptops we tested or which Microsoft endpoint management tools we used.

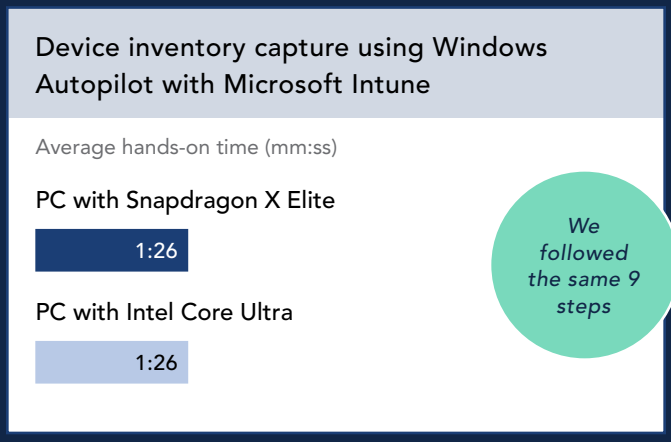


Figure 1: Average total time and steps to capture device inventory. Source: PT.

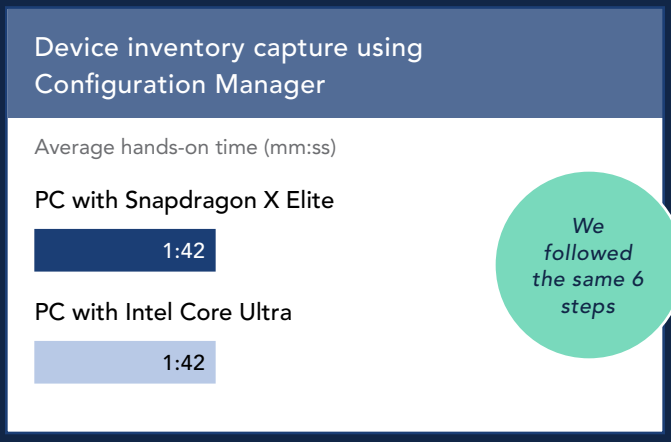


Figure 2: Average total time and steps to capture device inventory. Source: PT.

Backups

Backups are a safety net against accidents, equipment failure, and cyberattacks. Setting up regular file backups to prevent data loss is essential for business continuity and quick data recovery. In our Autopilot with Intune tests, we found that creating and implementing a redirection-to-OneDrive policy for all of our endpoints was simple. This task required only that we select "Windows 10 and later" to set the ball rolling.

In a Configuration Manager environment, this backup task would require a third-party application or redirection through user profiles in Microsoft Active Directory. This would be the case for all of the systems we tested, so we did not complete this task with Configuration Manager for this study.

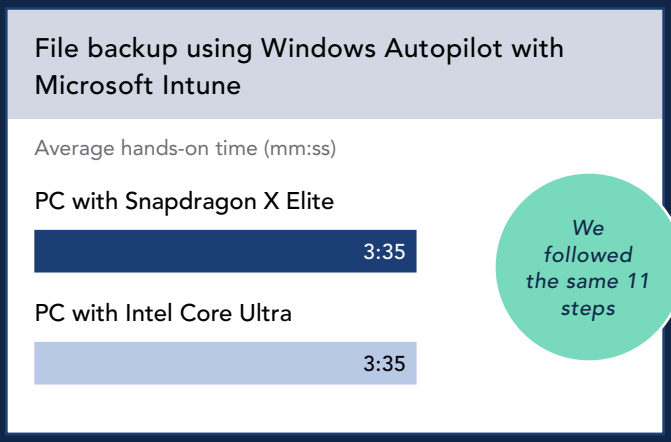


Figure 3: Average total time and steps to perform a file backup. Source: PT.

Customizing startup programs

By customizing which applications launch on startup, you can speed boot time and ensure that your employees have the tools they need to get the job done. Plus, preventing employees from installing and running unauthorized software helps your company enhance security and maintain control over the device environment. In both of our Microsoft environments, these processes were identical—regardless of processor.

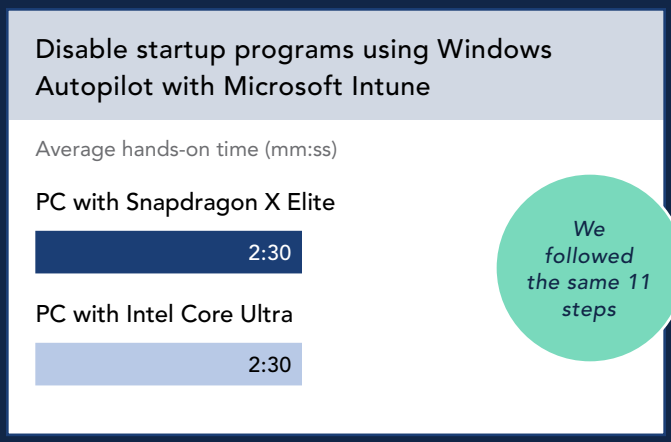


Figure 4: Average total time and steps to disable startup programs. Source: PT.

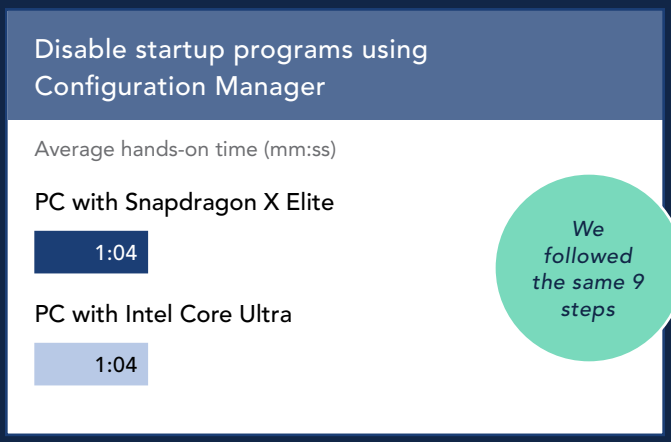


Figure 5: Average total time and steps to disable startup programs. Source: PT.

Disk cleanup

Removing unnecessary files and applications to free disk space and improve performance is another crucial step in optimizing end-user productivity. For both ARM- and x64-based Lenovo ThinkPad AI PCs, disk cleanup was the same within each Microsoft endpoint management solution. In the Autopilot with Intune environment, we created a Storage Sense policy. In the Configuration Manager environment, we used the Assets and compliance tab to create Storage Sense configuration items. The results were identical across both devices.

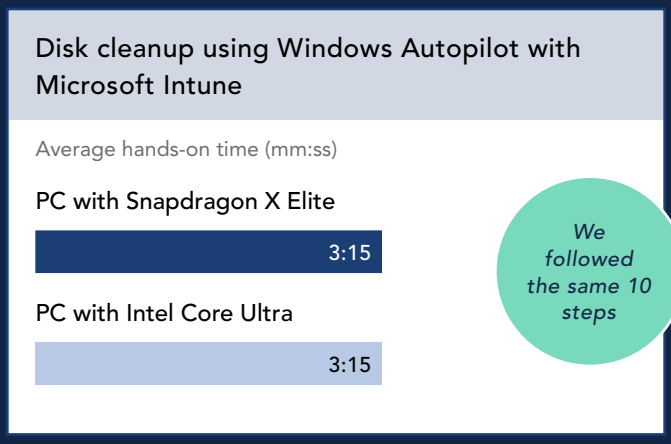


Figure 6: Average total time and steps to clean up a disk. Source: PT.

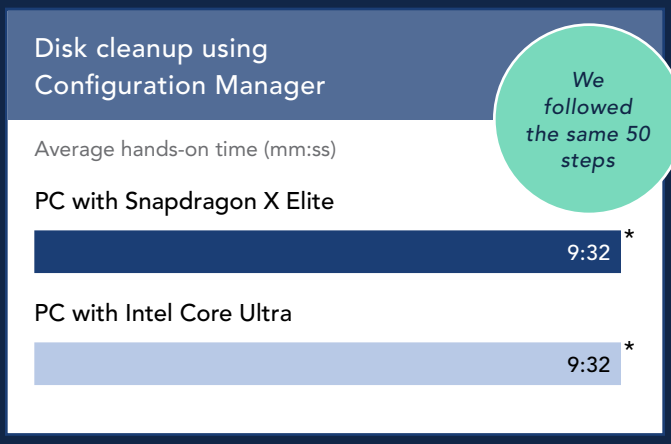


Figure 7: Average total time and steps to clean up a disk. Source: PT.

**In order to keep a consistent chart size, the scale of the bars in this figure differ from the rest.*

Driver updates

Whether your team is updating drivers to improve functionality, fix bugs, patch vulnerabilities, or resolve device issues, the smoother this process is, the more tasks they can tackle in a day. In our Autopilot with Intune tests, the individual Lenovo drivers broke out smoothly as executables and we could deploy the Lenovo ThinkPad AI PCs by simply repackaging the drivers. Updating device drivers on the Lenovo ThinkPad AI PCs required 16 steps and took between 2 minutes and 28 seconds and 2 minutes and 39 seconds.

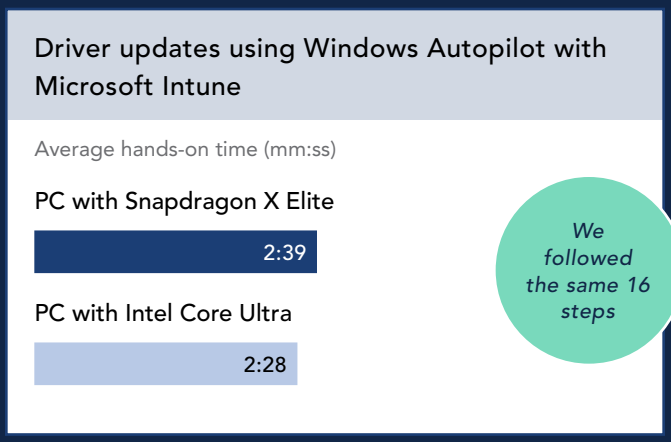


Figure 8: Average total time and steps to install drivers. Source: PT.

Note: In Configuration Manager environments, OEM drivers are integrated into freshly deployed images. Afterwards, vendor tools installed on the client systems can be used to maintain those updates. For this study, we did not attempt to perform OEM driver updates using MCM.

Network configuration

Whether it's to improve network performance or to enhance security, upgrading and replacing wireless access points can cause disruption and downtime, so you want to make any corresponding device adjustments smooth as possible. To see whether diversifying your corporate fleet might complicate this process, we examined the time and effort required to set up and manage Wi-Fi connections and other network settings in mixed-CPU environments. We found deploying a Wi-Fi profile using Autopilot with Intune to be identical in both instances.

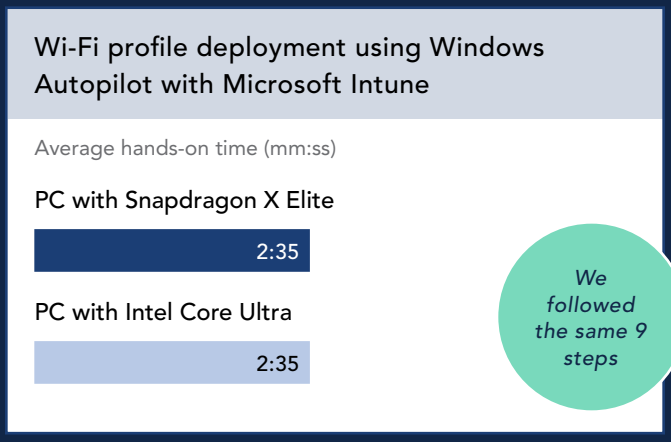


Figure 9: Average total time and steps to configure a network. Source: PT.

Note: We were unable to complete this task in Configuration Manager, because in April 2022, Microsoft removed the use of Wi-Fi profiles to deploy wireless network settings to users in Configuration Manager.[8]

Software installation

Having IT lead your software installation efforts instead of your end-users reduces the likelihood of introducing security risks, disclosing sensitive data to bad actors, and encountering compatibility issues. The downside to this approach is that it increases the IT workload. To determine whether performing this task on a fleet including devices powered by both Snapdragon and Intel processors added extra complexity, we installed and configured new software on both of the Lenovo ThinkPad AI PCs under test.

In the Autopilot with Intune scenario, we had to convert the software, create the app, and upload the package. This process involved 16 steps that took just over 2.5 minutes of administrator time.

To deploy software using Configuration Manager, we had to create a device collection that designated the ARM or x64 CPU, create the app, distribute the content, and assign the application to the appropriate device collection. This process involved 48 steps that took just over 5 minutes of administrator time.

With both of the tools and approaches we used, the experiences were the same regardless of the processor powering each device.

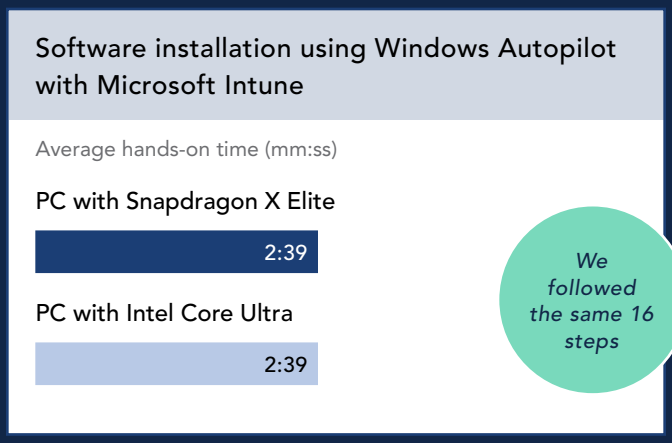


Figure 10: Average total time and steps to install software. Source: PT.

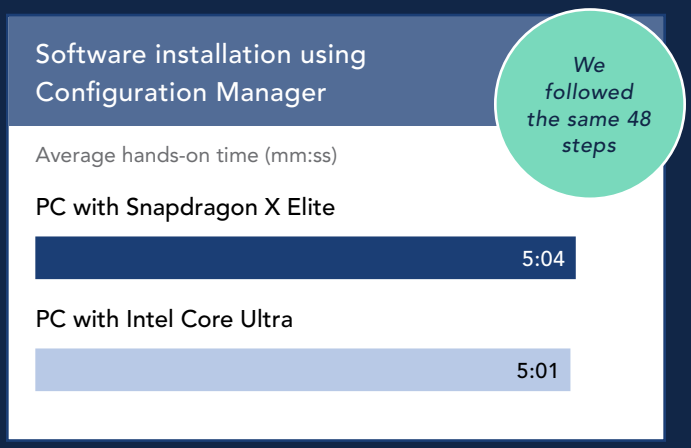


Figure 11: Average total time and steps to install software. Source: PT.

Software updates

Acquiring the appropriate Lenovo ThinkPad AI PCs for employee use is only the beginning. Over the years that your company owns these devices, IT staff can devote many hours to taking care of them—from periodic software updates to patching potential security issues. And rolling out software updates or security patches that eat into your end-users' time might frustrate them. No one wants their teams to resort to using unauthorized apps or cloud services to get their work done during prolonged outages. So, the more smoothly that mission-critical software updates happen, the less chance you'll be dealing with bigger problems in the future.

In our hands-on tests using Autopilot with Intune, we found that it was simple to create update rings and that the default updates for all users included Windows drivers and Microsoft product update options. We implemented an OS update in 7 steps, which took under 2 minutes of hands-on IT admin time.

In the Configuration Manager scenario, we again followed the same steps across all systems, which took exactly the same amount of hands-on time.

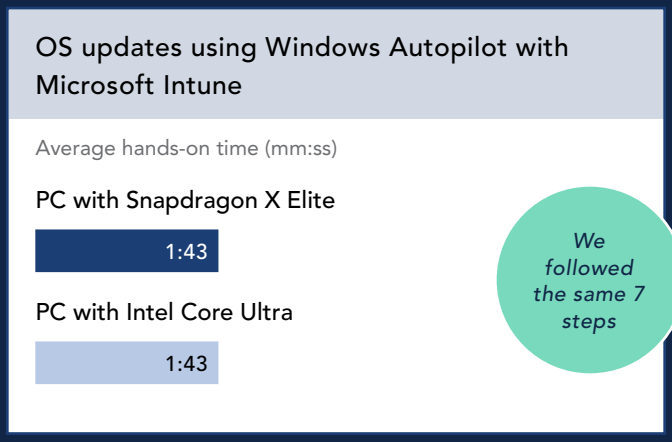


Figure 12: Average total time and steps to update software. Source: PT.

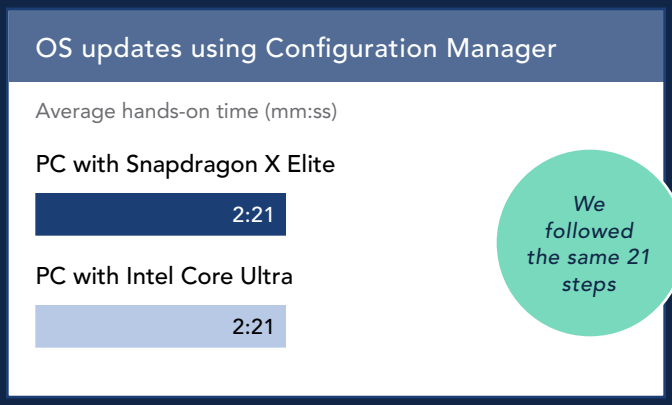


Figure 13: Average total hands-on time and steps to update software. Source: PT.

System optimization

With regular system optimizations, end-users may achieve better workload processing speeds and the ability to multitask without huge slowdowns. But manually optimizing individual PCs can seriously drain both IT time and resources. To see how diversifying your fleet to better meet end-user needs might affect this process, we compared the times and steps required to check system performance, manage startup programs, and optimize settings for better performance for Lenovo ThinkPad AI PCs with Snapdragon or Intel processors. We found creating and implementing an optimization profile for all users and all devices using the Intune console required the same 9 steps and took the same time: 1 minute and 49 seconds.

In the Configuration Manager environment, we created Group Policy Objects within the domain, where we defined and assigned Organizational Units within the Active Directory. For new systems, Configuration Manager is able to target specific Organizational Units upon deployment. For this system-optimization task, the systems under test automatically received the optimization policies we assigned to the respective Organizational Objects.

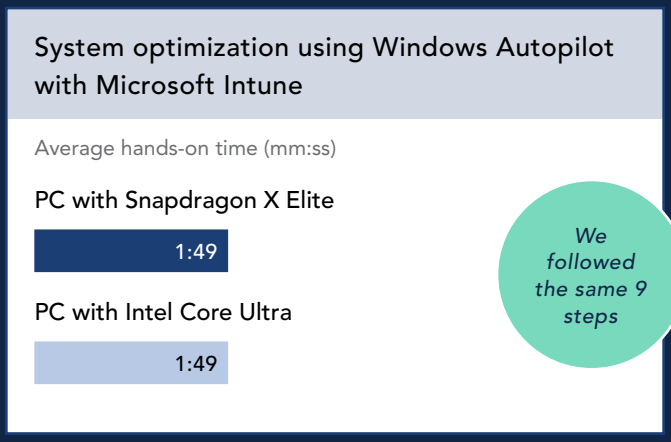


Figure 14: Average total time and steps to optimize a system. Source: PT.

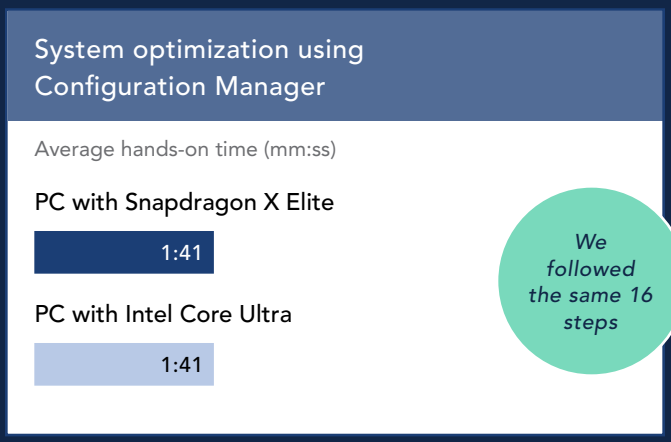


Figure 15: Average total time and steps to optimize a system. Source: PT.

User account management

Personalizing users' experiences not only increases employee satisfaction, but it also lets your company control access to proprietary resources and sensitive data. For this test, we created, modified, and deleted user accounts, as well as managing permissions. We found that it was a simple matter to complete three essential user account management tasks in the Autopilot with Intune environment.

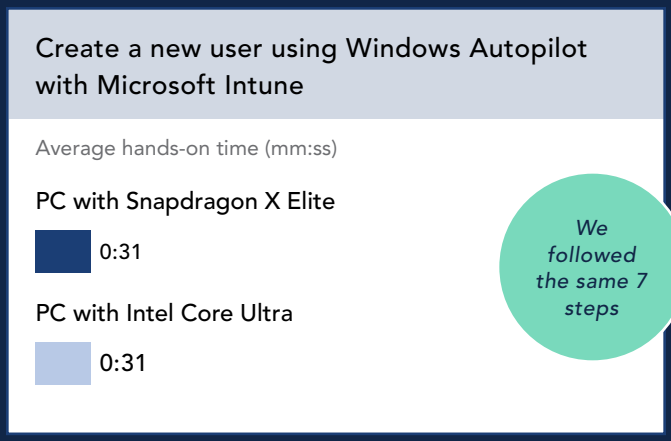


Figure 16: Average total time and steps to create a new user. Source: PT.

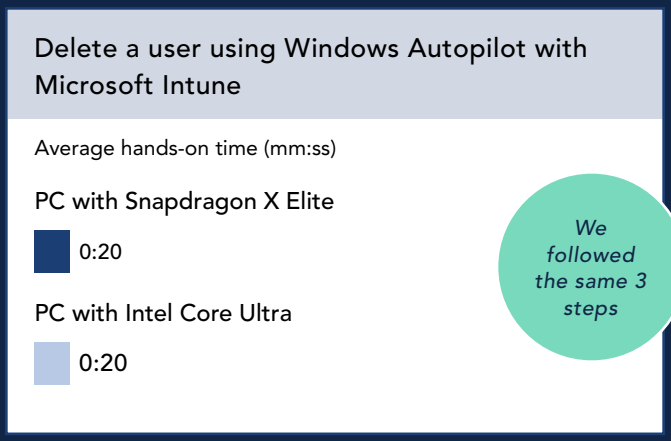


Figure 17: Average total time and steps to delete a user. Source: PT.

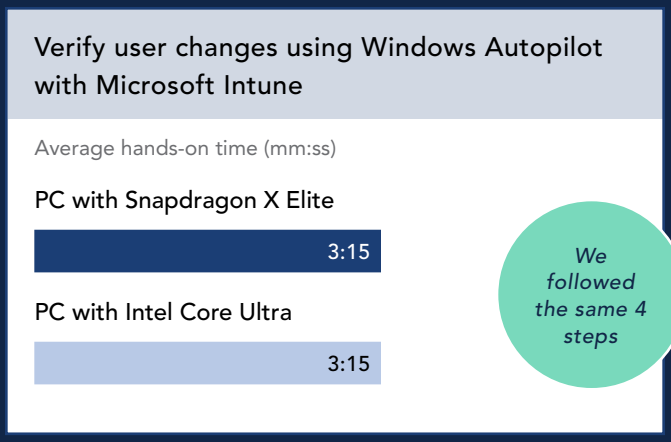


Figure 18: Average total time and steps to verify user changes. Source: PT.

In the Configuration Manager environment, we created users in an Active Directory. Then, we imported that user account data from Active Directory into Configuration Manager, where we added users to User Collections and used those as targets.

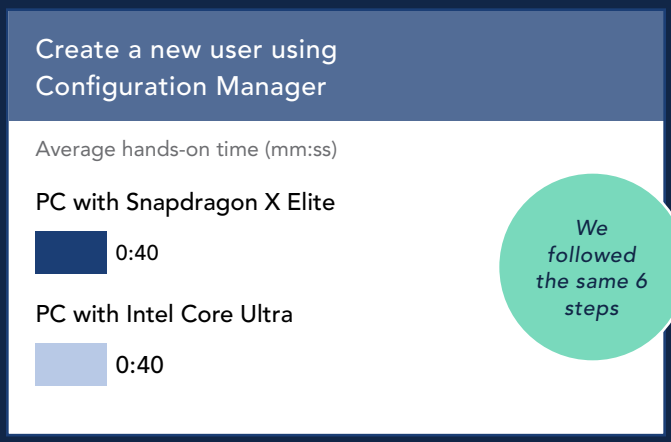


Figure 19: Average total time and steps to create a new user. Source: PT.

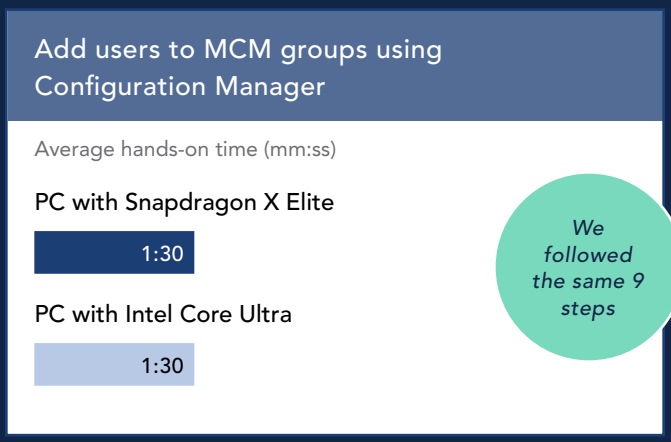


Figure 21: Average total time and steps to add users to MCM groups. Source: PT.

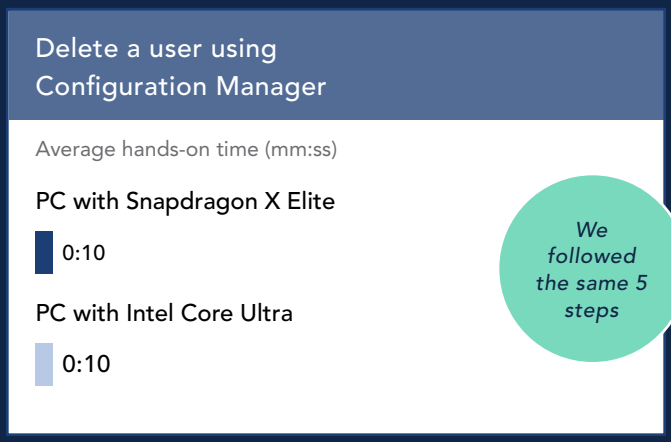


Figure 20: Average total time and steps to delete a user. Source: PT.

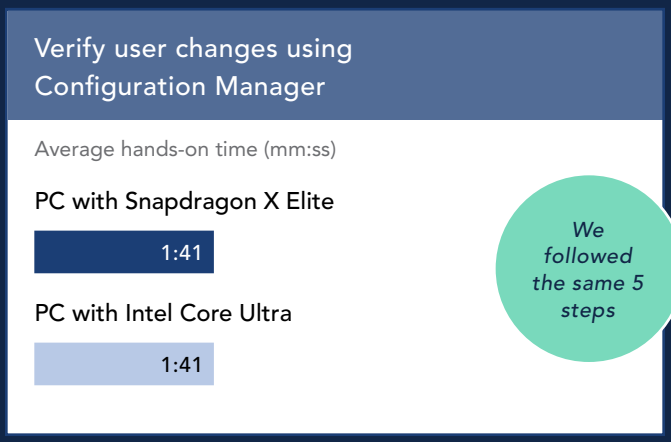


Figure 22: Average total time and steps to verify user changes. Source: PT.

Conclusion

In our hands-on testing, we found that whether you're managing Lenovo ThinkPad AI PCs with Snapdragon X Series or with Intel Core Ultra processors, the processes are just as straightforward. By expanding your fleet of Lenovo PCs to encompass Copilot+ PCs with Snapdragon processors, you're not adding any extra work for IT teams. They can use the same endpoint management tools and follow the same steps with confidence—regardless of processor. This means a smooth, consistent endpoint management experience across your entire fleet.

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