

What's New in Browsium Ion

Browsium Ion represents a reimagining of the concepts and practice from Browsium's first generation product, UniBrows. Ion contains many new features and capabilities not found in UniBrows, including completely redesigned administration tools that put even more power, granular control, and compatibility management directly in the hands of enterprise IT.

Ion was created using Browsium's proven, patent-pending technology that enables customers to run any browser engine, version-specific add-ons, and custom security settings inside any browser tab. As with UniBrows, Ion is focused on enabling enterprises to run IE6- and IE7-dependent web applications in IE8 or IE9. This unblocks upgrades to Windows 7 because Ion enables these business-critical web applications to run on Microsoft's latest operating system.

Ion delivers unmatched manageability, compatibility, and control, but with a twist. In a major departure from Browsium's first generation solution, Ion uses only the browser engines and modes built into IE8 and IE9 – it does not include the IE6 engine used in UniBrows. Browsium recognized the challenges customers faced compiling installers using the UniBrows Prep Tool and the limited upgrade path of the legacy IE6 engine. As the company planned its roadmap for its next-generation product, tackling those core issues was of paramount importance, along with increasing the software's capabilities to provide better compatibility for more complex enterprise web applications. The result of these efforts is a set of innovations that led to a much better solution – one that addresses those version 1 challenges while also removing all of the confusion around Microsoft licensing policies on the use of the IE6 engine on Windows 7.

The key innovations in Ion that deliver excellent IE6 compatibility without the IE6 engine include the Adaptive Quirks Profile which boosts compatibility by intelligently choosing between IE Quirks Mode and IE7 Standards rendering, and a new feature called String Replacement which overrides HTML, JavaScript or CSS from the client browser in real time – with no server-side code changes. These features, when combined with Profile settings such as disabling Data Execution Prevention and Java version redirection from our first generation solution, eliminate the need for the IE6 engine entirely.

This document is designed to help administrators who have been working with UniBrows to easily upgrade and familiarize themselves with Ion concepts and features. This guide is not designed to be a full list of all changes between UniBrows and Ion, but rather an introduction to the key concepts & changes in Ion to ease the transition to the new product.

For more details about changes to functionality, new features and behaviors please see the Ion Administrator's Guide, available at our web site, <http://docs.browsium.com>.

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High-level concepts – similarities between Ion and UniBrows

At a high level, Ion works much the same as UniBrows:

- Administrators use the Ion Configuration Manager to create and test the required Rules and Settings and Profiles within their environment, and can export those settings to fit the deployment technology of their choice
- Client PCs install the Ion Client Add-on and Ion Rules, Profiles and Settings are distributed through Group Policy or flat file configurations
- Users navigate to sites in IE8 or IE9 and the Ion Client Add-on will swap in the right engine and settings when they visit web sites for which the administrator has designated Rules

The particulars about *how* these things happen have changed, most visibly on the Configuration Manager side. The Ion Client Add-on was also heavily updated, although since there is limited UI shown by the client software, those changes are less noticeable to end users and administrators. For details on each, see below.

High-level client changes in Ion

The Ion Client Add-on components have been re-architected in v2 to improve the reliability and performance of the Add-on, Controller and the browser engines. In general, Ion clients will use less memory and system resources than UniBrows clients. In addition, the Ion client now features crash recovery for resilience and robustness.

Ion clients will act much like UniBrows clients, with the following notable changes:

- The client setup wizard installs the Ion client; however, we now use a universal installer (called “Ion-ClientSetup”) instead of separate MSI clients for different platforms. There is no longer a client-prep process (because we no longer need to download, extract or install the IE6 engine). This enables a faster and easier Ion upgrades and patching - or simply updating the license file
- Ion can now load configuration data dynamically, meaning you no longer need to restart Internet Explorer when updating UniBrows client Rules, Profiles and Settings. There is an exception for Test Mode, detailed below
- Clients with the Ion Configuration Manager installed will now see an additional add-on (the “Browsium Ion Admin Toolbar”) installed, which provides a simple, inline interface for users to adjust Test Mode and other Ion settings
- There is no longer a “UB:” identifier in the address bar when a user visits a site for which Ion engages a Profile – the URL shown by Internet Explorer will be the same whether or not an Ion rule is triggered for a given site
- Profiles created with the Ion Configuration Manager can be marked as available only to Test Mode, only to Clients, both, or fully disabled. This allows administrators to try out Profiles without affecting regular clients

create them). Click on any item in the object list to view details of that object in the center pane. The right-most pane (labeled 'Actions') will dynamically update with available actions based on the Object selected. Most Objects in the left-hand pane have context menus that can be accessed by right-clicking on the item to bring up associated actions.

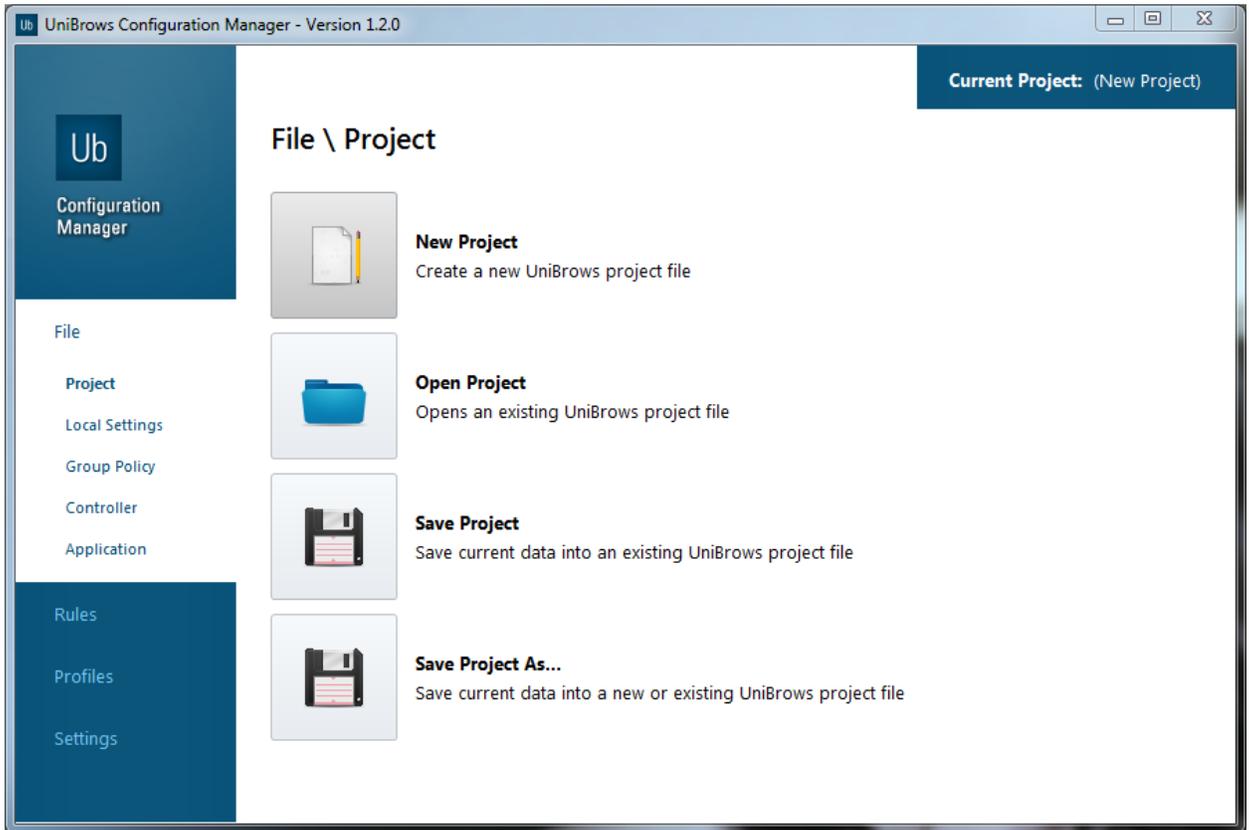
Test Mode changes

Test Mode has been heavily revised from UniBrows to be more useful to administrators in working with Profiles and Settings to make their legacy web-based applications work in Ion:

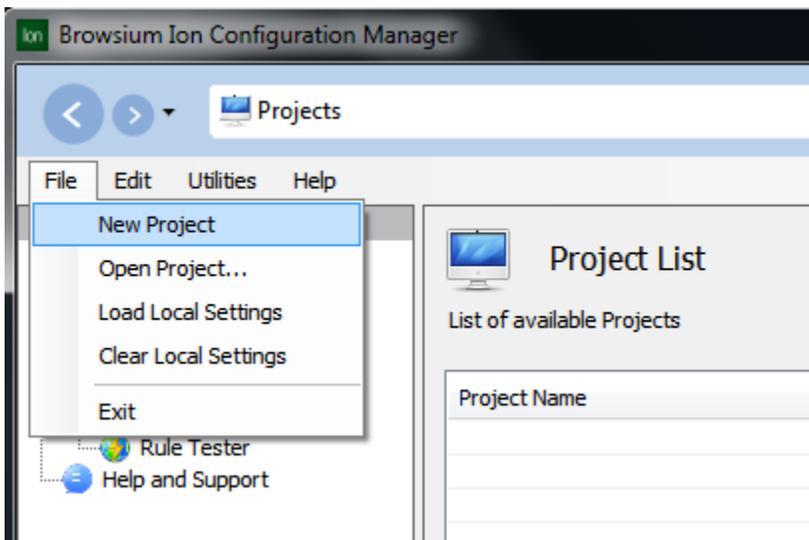
- Profiles can now be swapped 'on the fly' by using the new Browsium Admin Toolbar that is installed along with the Ion Configuration Manager, and changing engines no longer requires admins to close and restart the browser
 - o One exception: when adding new Profiles to the list available to test mode, IE must be restarted in order to allow the Admin Toolbar to access the new Profiles
- Administrators can designate certain Profiles as available only to test mode, only to regular Ion clients, available to both or completely disabled

Where'd it go? Comparing the UniBrows Configuration Manager UI to Ion

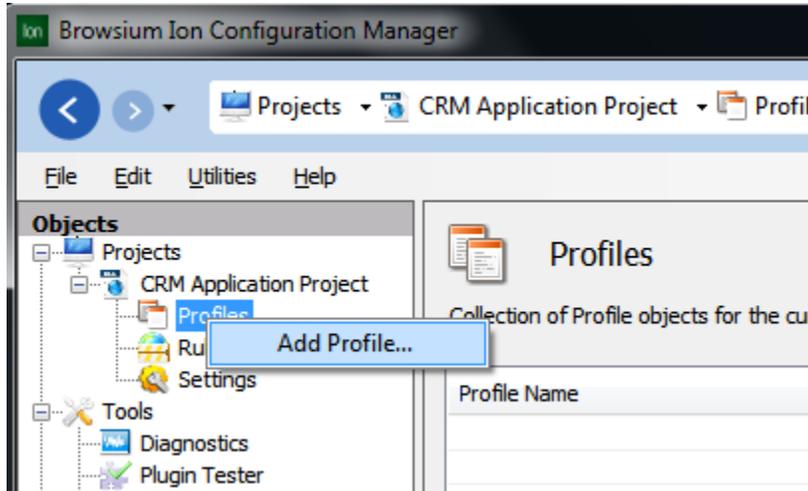
Here's a screenshot of the UniBrows 1.x Configuration Manager:



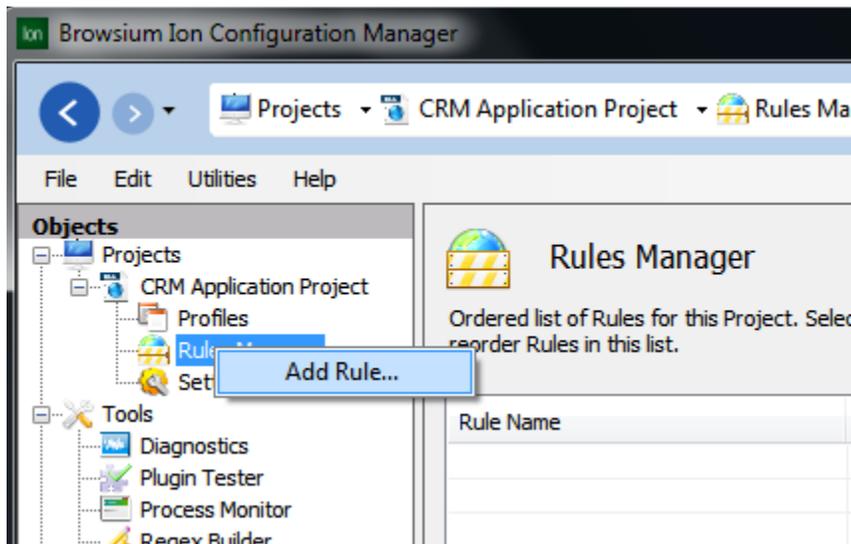
The UniBrows 1.x Configuration Manager loaded a blank project by default. When launched, the Ion Configuration Manager does not load anything. To get started creating Rules and Profiles with Ion, click on the Projects node in the Object pane on the left, and select New Project from the Actions list on the right (or right click the Projects node, as shown in this screenshot):



After creating the Project, you would need to create the Profiles you need and then assign Rules to load them. To create a new Profile, select the Profiles node under the new Project and select “Add Profile” from the list of Actions to the right, or right-click on the node and select “Add Profile” from there (as this screenshot demonstrates):



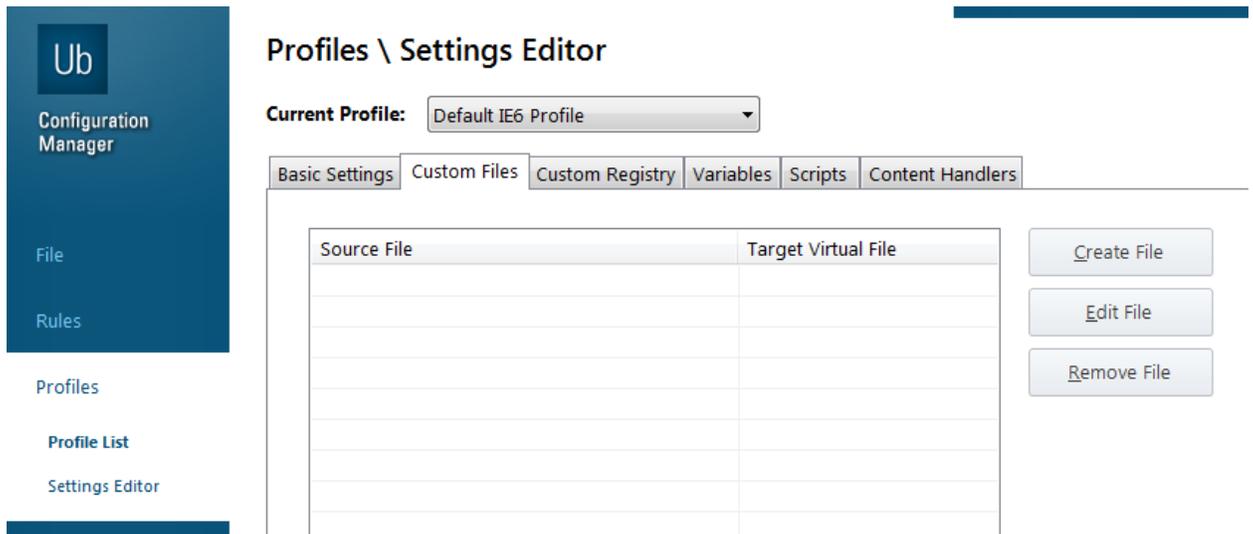
Once you’ve created a Profile you’re happy with, you can ensure it is loaded when accessing the specified site by creating a Rule. To create a Rule in Ion, select the Rules node from the Objects pane on the left side of the Configuration Manager, and select “Add Rule” from the list of actions in the Actions pane on the right. Or, right-click the Rules Manager node and select “Add Rule” from the context menu, as shown in this screenshot:



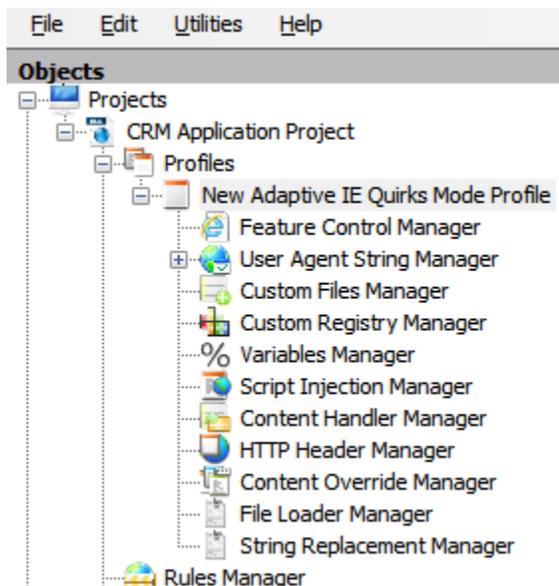
To apply these Settings on the local machine for testing, select “Save Local Settings” from the File Menu.

Profile Settings in Ion:

In the UniBrows Configuration Manager, advanced Settings for a Profile (such as Custom Files & Custom Registry) could be accessed via tabs when viewing a Profile, shown here:

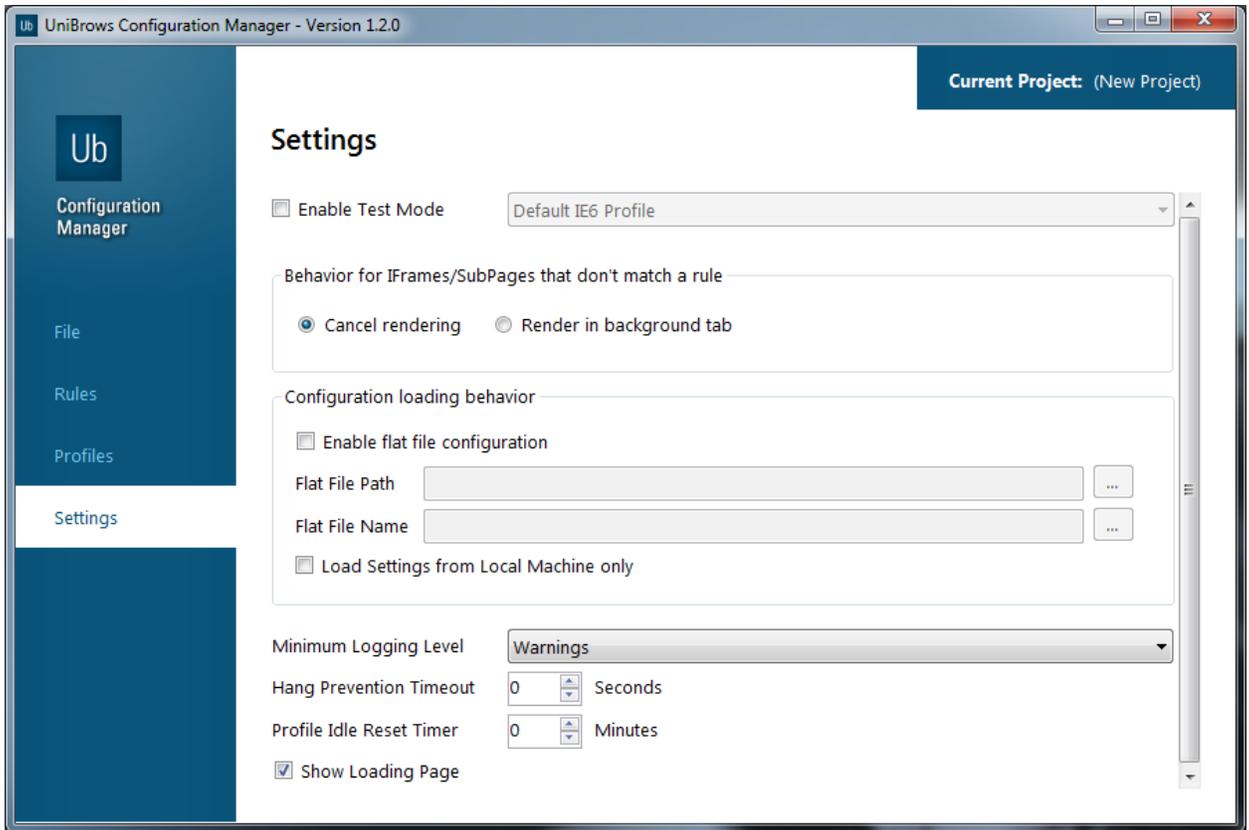


In Ion, those Settings are sub-nodes under the Project in the Objects pane, shown here:

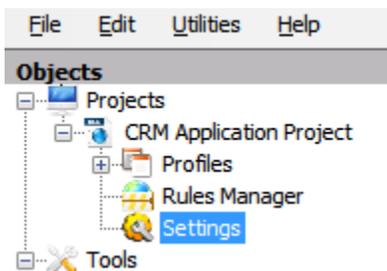


Global UniBrows Settings in Ion:

In UniBrows, global settings were accessed using the 'Settings' tab of the UI, as shown below:

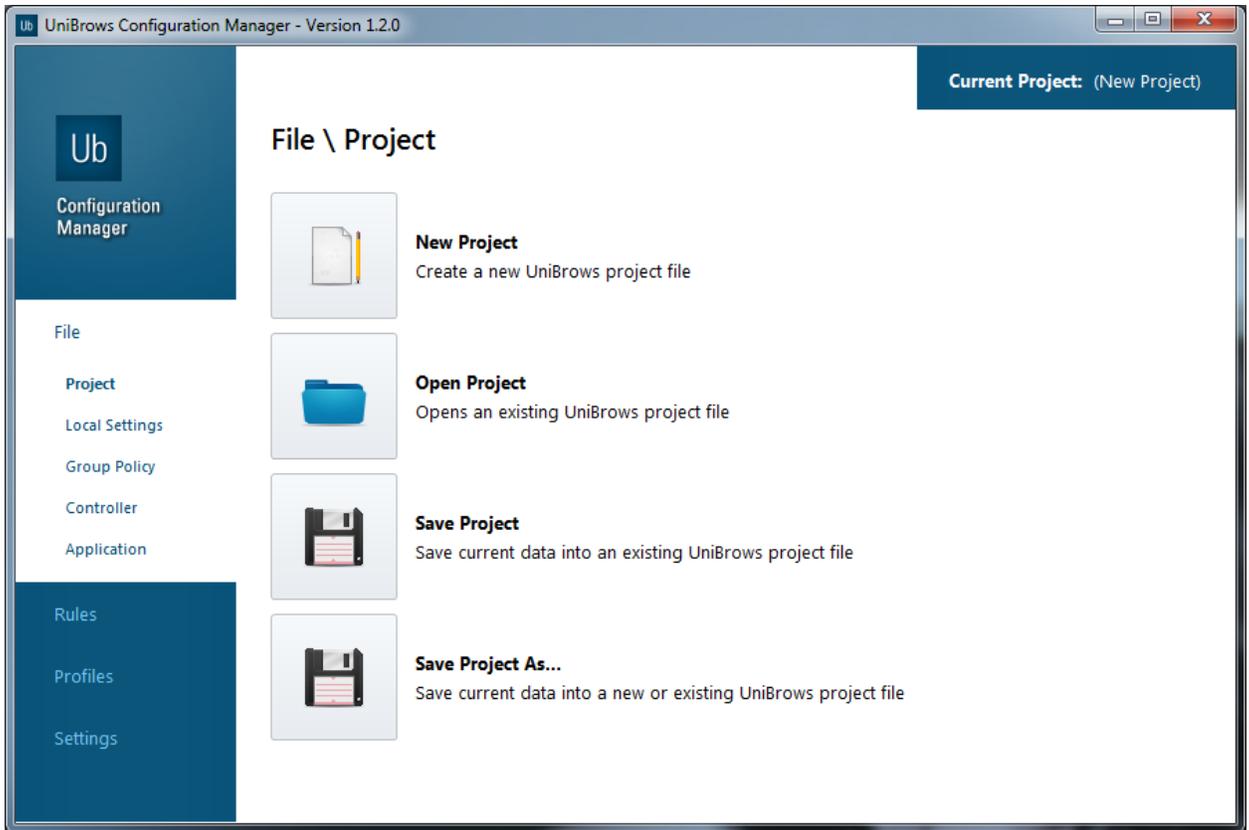


In Ion, those Settings exist under the 'Settings' node in the Objects pane, as shown below:

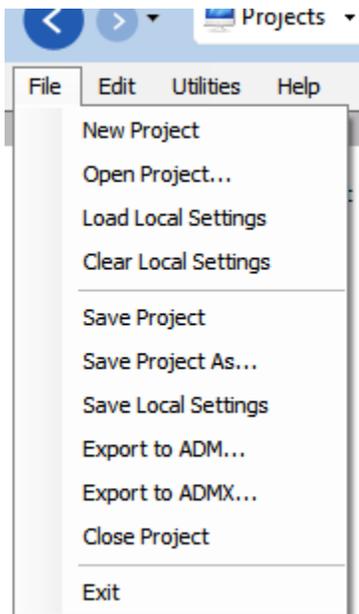


Opening and saving Projects, Settings, and exporting to Group Policies in Ion:

In UniBrows, to Open/Save Projects, Save Local Settings or Export to Group Policy/Active Directory templates were accessed through command buttons on the "File" window, as shown below:



In Ion, all of those commands are located under the “File” menu, at the top of the UI:



Create your first Rule & Profile with Ion

Administrators who have used UniBrows will already be familiar with the process of creating their first Rule & Profile. A KB article and a video detailing this process for UniBrows is available at our support site at <http://support.browsium.com/>. Similarly, a KB article and a video detailing this process for Ion are available at the same site.

Summary

Ion is a significant upgrade from UniBrows. Ion has been re-architected to improve stability, performance and usability. While the end-user experience remains mostly the same as in UniBrows, the Ion Configuration Manager has been updated to provide greater flexibility and better usability than UniBrows could provide. Please see additional documentation provided with Ion for more details about what else is new in the Ion Configuration Manager and Ion Client Add-on.

<http://www.browsium.com>