

# Different network management tools



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As IT admins, daunting tasks and constant checking are part of our everyday routines. Nobody could say our role within the company is not an important one, people ask about the things we do and sometimes it's quite impossible to answer shortly. To clear things up, we have to keep an eye on the network -here, there, and everywhere.

Keeping an eye on network performance, availability of IT functions, and bandwidth usage; are some of the essential parts of an IT administrator's job. On the other hand, you must also mitigate issues when they arise to prevent downtime before it affects your users and customers. Daily monitoring and troubleshooting you do could save any company hundreds in lost productivity.

Choosing the right tools could help you do a better job. You should never be expected to manage a network alone, having a network monitoring tool will let you watch things on your network as they happen, this will allow you to capture essential data such as latency, responsiveness, bandwidth, and overall performance. To choose the right tool, let me provide you with some features you should look for:

- Comfortable interface
- Ease of use
- Great support
- Great exception-based alerting
- Support of both IPv4 and IPv6
- SNMP-based monitoring and data capture monitoring
- Paid

## **Microsoft System Center**

Microsoft System Center provides an integrated client-to-cloud management tool for private and public servers hosted in the cloud. It is an excellent tool for the administration of computers and servers regardless of the platform as it also supports Linux, Solaris, Mac OS, etc. You can also unify it with your Active Directory and DHCP to locate any computers connected to your network. System Center allows you to deploy any updates, implement any applications or shortcuts, Operating Systems, and you can monitor it all.

Pros: Active directory integration, deploy applications and update quickly, a wide range of reports available, you can set up distribution points to save bandwidth on remote sites.

Cons: Licensing is expensive and complicated, setup requires many hours for it to work 100%, creating additional reports could be a hassle; you might need some programming knowledge.

Microsoft System Center 2012 4491

New Web Console for System Center Operations Manager 2012 Beta 2

ManageEngine Desktop Central

Desktop Central allows you to automate regular desktop management routines such as installing patches, distributing software, managing IT assets and licenses as well as monitoring software usage statistics. It also allows you to remote control your users' desktop. This tool will provide you with total control over your domain; it takes away the need to deploy software by

creating tedious scripts. Overall, this is an excellent and affordable choice to have your IT management needs covered.

Pros: Versatile, scalable and free for small companies, keep machines compliant. Reported to be simpler and quicker than its Microsoft counterpart.

Cons: Software portal for Mac is limited; license management could be a bit tricky, poor customer support.

### SolarWinds Network Performance Monitor

SolarWinds Network Performance Monitor is an easy to set up tool; it will discover your network devices and deploys itself within an hour. Something its users have pointed out about this software is its intuitive user interface, which makes it one of the most accessible tools to use. You can choose to install a lighter version of the product to try it out. There are remote agents available so that you can monitor external sites. Licensing is based on monitored nodes something to keep a close eye on since the nodes could add up quickly.

Pros: Ease of use, great community, custom monitors, and excellent performance.

Cons: Some monitors could be complicated to set up, hardware requirements could be a bit higher than the norm, licensing could be a bit expensive.

### **Zabbix**

Zabbix can monitor everything in your network, from network devices to CPUs, databases, and applications. Also, it will provide you with thorough

reporting and mapping so that you can see what is happening in your network. Zabbix will alert you of any incidents within your network. It will create maps that are updated live. Zabbix's simple scripts can resolve issues without human intervention as Zabbix can execute them for you as needed.

Pros: Scalable, robust, and easy to implement. Great community support, open-source allows full-scale customization.

Cons: Paid support, its UI may not be the best, and Linux knowledge might be needed.

### **Icinga**

Icinga is another open-source tool with many great features, installing it was easy, and essential monitoring can be achieved with either pre-configured templates or plugins. While it runs on most of the popular Linux distros no other platforms are available for installation as a server role. In addition, Icinga will support all configuration management tools such as Puppet, Chef, or Ansible. Overall, Icinga has a robust framework for performing authentication and authorization tasks.

Pros: Open-source, basic monitoring needs are satisfied, you can use Nagios plugins.

Cons: Initial setup could be tricky; installing agents on servers requires some trial and error. The learning curve is quite steep.

In conclusion, when looking for a network management tool, there are a few points you should consider leveraging the tool as part of their daily tasks. These tools will allow each piece of your network interconnect allowing them

to communicate with each other efficiently. As you will be able to monitor traffic within your network, you'll see where your users are going thus preventing unauthorized access to information or files. An inventory scan of your network will allow you to check for intruders on your network and keep your asset inventory updated. All of these are important aspects to keep in mind when acquiring a network management tool.