



What Network Monitoring Can Do for You

Sometimes what you don't know can hurt you.

What would happen if your company was affected by one of the following real-life scenarios?

- The SQL Server that houses critical databases for the company is running out of disk space and within hours will be brought to its knees.
- Some error messages keep repeating on the Exchange Server warning of possible corruption in the Information Stores that can bring the entire email system down in the next 30 minutes – but nobody has seen the messages.
- There's an unpatched security vulnerability on the Web Server that leaves the company's site open to the possibility of being hacked, but no one is aware of it.

These are just a couple of examples that illustrate the need for proactive monitoring of your network and the resources that reside on it.

Manual Systems Monitoring Often Isn't Feasible

These days Systems Administrators have a lot on their plates and often find it difficult – if not impossible – to stay on top of what's happening with their network and systems. After all, if you've got 15, 50, or 100+ servers, manually monitoring all of the systems and error logs can be more than a full-time job in itself.

Automate Your Network Monitoring

Network monitoring is a critical IT function that save your company serious money in network performance, employee productivity, and infrastructure cost overruns. There are a variety of network monitoring software packages available that will automate this important function for you.

A network monitor is like a 24/7 "watchman" that watches everything on your network, always ready to alert you to potential problems. A network monitor watches your servers, work stations, network devices (routers, switches, and firewalls), and applications (such as SQL, Exchange, backup, antivirus, etc.). As it watches your system it looks at your disc space, network utilization, routers, fire walls, log files, and more to see if any issues come up. If it sees a problem or potential issue it sends you a notification, letting you know that something on your network requires attention.

The Benefits of Network Monitoring

Network Monitoring can...

- **Proactively Warn You of Problems.** With proactive network monitoring your IT department can be alerted to issues before they turn into serious problems and down time. If monitoring was in place in the example above the System Administrator could have added disk space or removed older files prior to the SQL Server going down, resolved Exchange data corruption before the email server went down, and updated hotfixes on the web server to prevent hacking before it occurred.
- **Track Your Network's Growth.** Network monitoring can also assist you with gathering data to keep track of your network's growth. Chances are a lot has changed with your network over the past several years. New Servers have come online, perhaps you've added a new wireless network, more workstations and printers, and so forth. All of this can add to network traffic loads, leading to overtaxed network connections and possible growth issues. Network monitoring allows you to know what you have and how it's being used, so you can proactively look to resolve problems before they start.

- **Help with Capacity Planning.** Network monitoring allows you to track how much disc space and network bandwidth you're using, enabling you to do capacity planning based on your usage trends. The result: you can proactively plan and budget for your future systems needs.
- **Meet Service Level Agreements.** Is your department or company is required to meet a Service Level Agreement with a specific percentage of uptime on your network and network resources? If so, monitoring these things ensures that you are indeed meeting the requirements.

Some Popular Network Monitoring Options

There are many different choices for monitoring your network. Popular options include:

- Coyote Creek's Remote Management & Monitoring Service
- Microsoft Systems Center Operations Manager (also known as "SCOM")
- HP's Open View
- IBM's Tivoli
- Open source Zenoss