

Today's network and systems professionals are faced with the challenge of maintaining high-availability for a multitude of applications and Internet/intranet-based systems that operate across an infrastructure of various platforms and a wide array of technologies. Given the urgency for businesses to perform, it is becoming increasingly important for IT professionals to look for systems management solutions that provide "peace of mind" by automatically monitoring networks, applications, and Internet/intranet-based systems that are involved in revenue generation.

Automated monitoring is essential for maintaining high-availability of mission-critical systems and applications. Monitoring also ensures crucial applications are running efficiently, and producing high-quality output.

The free AlertCentre® add-on to MKS Toolkit is a complete solution for monitoring, alerting and corrective action automation scheduling. AlertCentre can monitor your mission-critical systems and applications 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide you with the peace of mind of knowing that your network, applications, and Internet/Intranet-based information systems are running normally.

Powerful, Flexible and Extensible

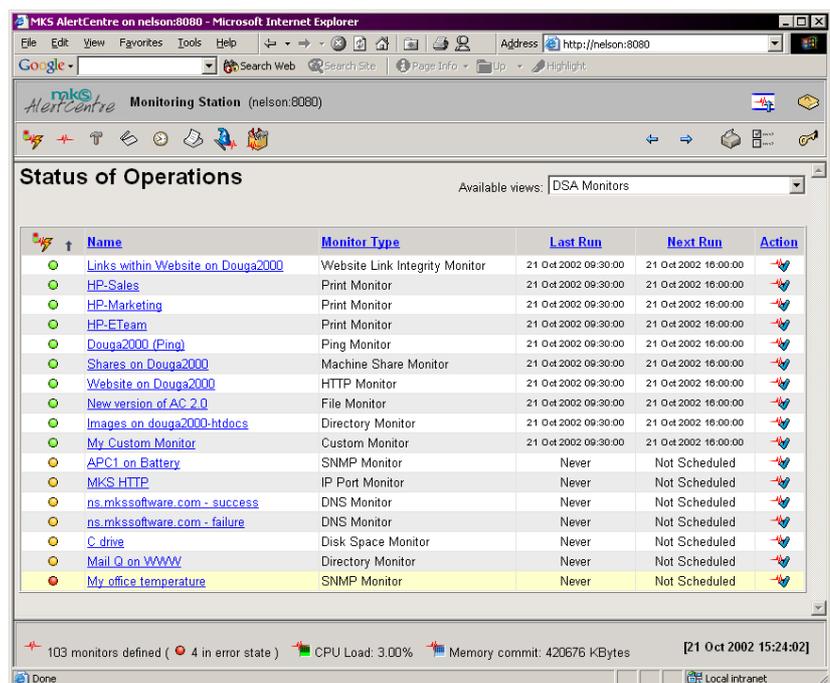
AlertCentre is built on an integrated platform that includes a powerful scheduling engine, an action engine to drive notification and automated recovery actions. What makes AlertCentre unique is

the integration with MKS Toolkit, which allows the use of the robust scripting engines. As well it includes many of the tools and utilities for comprehensive system and network administration. This gives organizations the power and flexibility to customize their systems and applications, as well as, the ability to integrate in the future. AlertCentre lets you define monitors that can observe, report on, and control the activities of other programs or devices on your network so that you can be sure that mission-critical applications are up and running at all times. AlertCentre gives you and your colleagues the ability to be notified in a timely fashion if anything on your network is malfunctioning.

- **Automation of Monitoring, Alerting, Escalation, and Corrective Action.** AlertCentre automatically triggers actions to be taken

upon failures or system events. Using these actions, you can alert people of failures and critical system status through e-mail, cell phone, pager, SNMP trap, or your own custom actions. AlertCentre also let's you implement an escalation process to notify the right people and take appropriate action based on the severity of a problem. And AlertCentre can trigger monitors, scripts, and programs as actions, letting you take automated corrective action.

- **Built-in Monitoring Redundancy.** AlertCentre provides the ability to monitor the monitors, to help ensure that your critical resources stay available and that your business continues to run non-stop. AlertCentre provides the ability, with appropriate MKS Toolkit



The screenshot shows the MKS AlertCentre Monitoring Station interface in a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The main content area displays a table titled "Status of Operations" with columns for Name, Monitor Type, Last Run, Next Run, and Action. The table lists various monitors such as "Links within Website on Douga2000", "HP-Sales", "HP-Marketing", "HP-ETeam", "Douga2000 (Ping)", "Shares on Douga2000", "Website on Douga2000", "New version of AC 2.0", "Images on douga2000-htdocs", "My Custom Monitor", "APC1 on Battery", "MKS HTTP", "ns.mksoftware.com - success", "ns.mksoftware.com - failure", "C drive", "Mail Q on WWW", and "My office temperature". The status of each monitor is indicated by a colored circle (green for running, red for error, yellow for warning). The interface also shows system information at the bottom, including "103 monitors defined (4 in error state)", "CPU Load: 3.00%", and "Memory commit: 420676 KBytes".

Name	Monitor Type	Last Run	Next Run	Action
Links within Website on Douga2000	Website Link Integrity Monitor	21 Oct 2002 09:30:00	21 Oct 2002 16:00:00	
HP-Sales	Print Monitor	21 Oct 2002 09:30:00	21 Oct 2002 16:00:00	
HP-Marketing	Print Monitor	21 Oct 2002 09:30:00	21 Oct 2002 16:00:00	
HP-ETeam	Print Monitor	21 Oct 2002 09:30:00	21 Oct 2002 16:00:00	
Douga2000 (Ping)	Ping Monitor	21 Oct 2002 09:30:00	21 Oct 2002 16:00:00	
Shares on Douga2000	Machine Share Monitor	21 Oct 2002 09:30:00	21 Oct 2002 16:00:00	
Website on Douga2000	HTTP Monitor	21 Oct 2002 09:30:00	21 Oct 2002 16:00:00	
New version of AC 2.0	File Monitor	21 Oct 2002 09:30:00	21 Oct 2002 16:00:00	
Images on douga2000-htdocs	Directory Monitor	21 Oct 2002 09:30:00	21 Oct 2002 16:00:00	
My Custom Monitor	Custom Monitor	21 Oct 2002 09:30:00	21 Oct 2002 16:00:00	
APC1 on Battery	SNMP Monitor	Never	Not Scheduled	
MKS HTTP	IP Port Monitor	Never	Not Scheduled	
ns.mksoftware.com - success	DNS Monitor	Never	Not Scheduled	
ns.mksoftware.com - failure	DNS Monitor	Never	Not Scheduled	
C drive	Disk Space Monitor	Never	Not Scheduled	
Mail Q on WWW	Directory Monitor	Never	Not Scheduled	
My office temperature	SNMP Monitor	Never	Not Scheduled	

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licenses*, to define a backup monitoring station to effectively monitor itself. The backup monitoring station is regularly synchronized with the primary to ensure they both have identical monitoring configurations so if the primary station fails for any reason, the secondary station automatically picks up where the primary left off to ensure your networks, systems and applications are running smoothly.

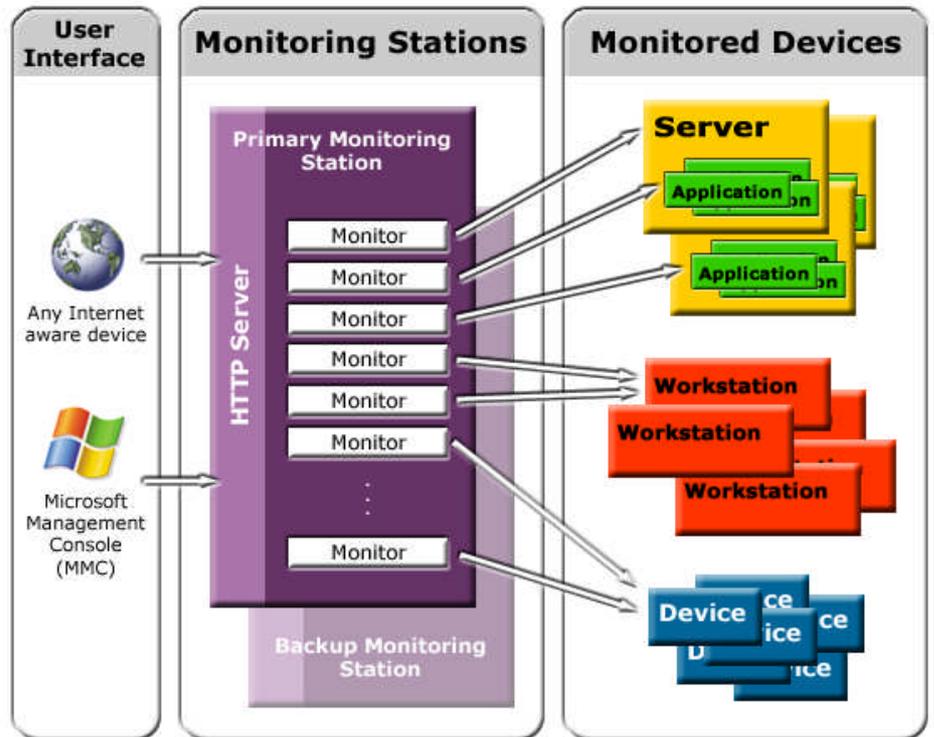
- **Easy Customization.** While designed to work out of the box with a wide array of predefined monitors, AlertCentre is also easy to customize. You can configure monitor behavior via the graphical user interface, organize your monitors into easy-to-manage groups, and create custom monitors. Using custom monitors, you can plug-in existing custom scripts to create your own monitor types and still benefit from AlertCentre's built-in action and alerting capabilities. For example, you may want to define a custom monitor to check inventory levels on your web store and define a batch job to automatically re-order a given product when the inventory falls below the re-order point.

Affordable and Easy-to-Use

MKS AlertCentre is very affordable from all perspectives including licensing costs, deployment costs, and maintenance costs. It is also easy-to-use.

- **Easy Installation and Configuration.** AlertCentre installs and is ready to use in

* A minimum of two licenses of a valid MKS Toolkit product are required to make use of the Redundancy feature of AlertCentre.



less than 30 minutes. Configuration is simple and is done via a graphical user interface.

- **Dual User Interfaces.** AlertCentre offers both web browser and Microsoft Management Console (MMC) interfaces. Further, these interfaces navigate and operate identically so there is no need to learn 2 separate ways to use the product.
- **Remote Configuration.** AlertCentre's web-based interface runs in any browser window, so you can manage your site over your LAN, WAN, or from any Web-aware workstation or device and from any operating system.
- **Remote Monitoring Without Agents.** AlertCentre is built around the ability to monitor any machine or device without requiring agents on the remote machines. Its no agent

architecture reduces your deployment and maintenance costs and eliminates potential security problems associated with agents.

Monitor Groups

AlertCentre monitors can be organized into groups for ease of administration. Groups are invaluable when monitoring complex applications such as Web sites that require constant vigilance at the network, system, application and content levels. AlertCentre monitor groups can contain a number of monitors of any of the various monitor types including Custom Monitors. Aside from being able to monitor other Monitoring Stations, the predefined monitor types in AlertCentre are:

- **Network Connectivity:** enabling you to ensure your network is connected and available to authorized users and devices from all

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appropriate access points. Includes HTTP, FTP, Email (SMTP, POP3, and IMAP), TCP Port, NetBIOS Share, DNS, Remote Access, and Ping monitor types.

- **Resource Availability:** enabling you to ensure your systems infrastructure is available with adequate capacity and performance. Includes Disk Space, CPU Utilization, Memory Utilization, File and Directory, Newsgroup, Printer, SNMP, SSL Certificate, and Performance Counter monitor types.
- **Application Availability:** enabling you to ensure your mission-critical applications are available to authorized users and that the content has not been tampered with. Includes Windows Service, Web Page, ODBC Database, Windows Event Log, Web site link integrity, ADO Query, and Application Log monitor types.

Monitoring Solution Wizards

Wizards have been added to reduce the effort necessary to set-up availability and performance monitoring solutions for popular application products and their infrastructures:

AlertCentre fills a critical need in the market with a monitoring solution that is affordable and easy-to-use and yet powerful enough to handle the needs of today's businesses. The value that AlertCentre delivers at this price point is unparalleled in the market.

Tim Kraus,
President,
Kraus Architectures

- **Monitoring Wizards:** wizards for Microsoft Exchange Server, Microsoft

Internet Information Server (IIS), Microsoft SQL Server, APC UPC devices and Windows Servers make it a breeze to set up sophisticated, comprehensive monitoring for these ubiquitous products. These mission-critical applications depend on diverse IT resources from network connectivity to hardware plus a broad range of software services. Each wizard automatically discovers infrastructure and application elements for any server that supports one or more of these popular products and then it automatically generates the full range of system and application monitors necessary to comprehensively manage them for availability and performance.

AlertCentre Benefits

AlertCentre enables system administrators and other IT professionals to:

- Monitor the availability of:
 1. Individual IT resources such as URLs, CPUs, system services, mail ports, etc. through the use of a wide variety of monitor types.
 2. Complex applications such as mail servers and Web sites that require a host of underlying hardware or software resources to be functioning normally in order to minimize downtime for you and your customers.
- Monitor remote devices and IT resources from any workstation or Web-aware device with access to your network.
- Implement an escalation process to notify the right people and take appropriate

action based on the severity of a problem.

- Be notified through various media including e-mail, cell phone, pager, SNMP trap, or through the execution of an error recovery script that can leverage the full power of MKS Toolkit scripting to maximize your responsiveness to critical issues whether you are in or out of the office.
- Extend the power of AlertCentre through the powerful MKS Toolkit scripting languages including Perl, KornShell, `awk`, CShell; as well as Windows Script Host to customize and evolve your Network, Systems, and Application Administration within your organization.
- Schedule Batch Jobs to automate the timely execution of processes.
- Measure performance through Windows Performance Counters including scriptable access to the counters via Perl and Windows Script Host (using either VBScript, PScript™ or JScript) for complete awareness of the health of your network.
- Limit access to only authorized AlertCentre users.

AlertCentre Availability

AlertCentre is a free add-on to any MKS Toolkit product and can be downloaded from the MKS website. AlertCentre is also included on the MKS Toolkit Resource Kit CD.

The AlertCentre add-on requires a valid MKS Toolkit license to function and therefore follows the licensing model of that product. There is no licensing limit on the number of devices that can be monitored from each monitoring station. There is a practical limit



however, which will vary based on the monitoring interval, the number of monitors per device, the types of monitors, and the speed of the hardware in the monitoring station. A single monitoring station can typically monitor 20-50 servers and the applications running on them, depending on the values of the variables listed above.

Each monitor can check the health of a network connection, a system resource, or an application running on any network-connected device (e.g., server, workstation, printer, router, laptop, UPS, firewall, telephone switch, mass storage device, etc.). There is no licensing

limit on the number of monitors that can be created on a given monitoring station or for a given device that is being monitored.

In a Nutshell

Less than 40% of survey respondents say they perform scheduled checks of critical systems. 25% monitor systems only when an issue is brought to their attention, and only 24% use automated utilities to convey the status on different systems. Moreover, those who monitor critical systems use two or three applications to do so. Bottom line: IT operations likely function in crisis mode where it puts out fires first and relegates systems monitoring to second.

TechRepublic

What IT Professionals need in Automated Monitoring Solutions

The AlertCentre add-on can monitor mission-critical systems 24x7, set up automated notification to identify problems and run automated corrective action procedures either in the office or from a remote location. What company wouldn't want that kind of peace of mind – knowing that your network, applications and Internet/Intranet-based information systems are running normally?

Download a copy of the AlertCentre add-on and learn more about the rest of the MKS products and services by pointing your browser to www.mkssoftware.com.

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