



The Systems Monitoring and Management: Vendor Evaluation Checklist

Who is this guide for?

This Systems Monitoring and Management Evaluation Checklist is designed to help IT managers and administrators as they search for the right solution. We noticed that many of our customers had to create a similar checklist from scratch, when it came time for them to purchase Systems Management software. This is both time consuming and difficult. Rather than start from a blank sheet of paper, we decided to put together a broad checklist as a starting point for companies evaluating Systems Monitoring Software. It is intended to be a generic list that can be updated, expanded and customized depending on your exact requirements. You are welcome to edit and modify each of the items as you see fit. We hope you find it useful and if you have questions, you can contact us at info@uptimesoftware.com.

How to Use this Evaluation Checklist:

We have created this template in a way that is easy to change and customize in order to meet your evaluation needs. While we hope you include up.time in your evaluation list, this 'checklist' can be used to evaluate any systems management product, and compare it with others.

- ✓ Review this Checklist
- ✓ Add in your systems monitoring and management priorities/needs if not already included
- ✓ If you do wish to include up.time in your checklist, we can send you a pre-filled version. Just email us at info@uptimesoftware.com or call us at +1 416 868-0152

Item	Criteria	Details	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Notes
1.0	General				
1.1	Multiplatform support	Solaris, AIX, Linux, HP/UX, Windows, VMware vSphere/ESX			
1.2	Database Support	MySQL, SQL Server, Oracle, others			
1.3	Search	Does the tool have integrated search capabilities?			
1.4	Data Archiving	Integrated data archival and purge			
1.5	Scalability - # of Servers	Can it scale to 100's or 1,000's of servers			
1.6	Scalability - Multi-Data Center Support	Will it support monitoring across multiple data centers?			
1.7	Open Access	Support for ODBC, JDBC, Pluggable Components			
1.8	Depth of Statistics	At what level does the product gather statistics (i.e. does it monitor down to the system resource level)? Does the depth match requirements?			
1.9	Agents and Performance	How lightweight are the agents? Will they impact server performance?			
1.10	Cross Platform Monitoring	Do the agents normalize statistics across all hardware platforms?			
1.11	Agents	Can system perform automated healing actions?			
1.12	Client Access	Can the tool be accessed from a browser? Are there separate clients for reporting, normal UI access, and/or administration?			
1.13	Other				

2.0	Ease of Use	Details	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Notes
2.1	Install Time	How difficult is the product to get installed? Does it require training or other assistance?			
2.2	Configuration Time	How difficult is the product to configure. Are the agents difficult to configure?			
2.3	UI	How intuitive is the User Interface? Is key functionality easy to find and use?			
2.4	User Management	Can you have multiple users with arbitrary role definitions?			
2.5	Group Management	Group definition, groups of groups			
2.6	Role Management	Can assign roles to users?			
2.7	Access Control	Control access to functionality at the group and user level?			
2.8	Extensibility	Can custom components be created?			
2.9	Ease of Extension	How difficult is it to extend the functionality?			
2.10	Other				

3.0	Pricing and Licensing	Details	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Notes
3.1	Pricing for physical servers	What is the pricing per physical server for each platform			
3.2	Pricing for virtualized servers	How are virtualized servers priced (i.e. by VM or by physical machine) and what is the cost for each?			
3.3	Admin consoles	What is the cost for an admin console and how many are required?			
3.4	Add-On's	Is there an additional charge for monitoring WebSphere, Exchange, Oracle, etc. and what are the costs?			
3.5	Management Packs	What are the requirements for additional management packs and the cost for each			
3.6	Implementation Costs	Does the product require professional services to implement?			
3.7	Training Costs	What is the cost for the required training?			
3.8	Other				
4.0	Server Monitoring				
4.1	Resource trending and analysis	Can you see trends in utilization over time?			
4.2	Server Workload Analysis	Can you see the server workloads and the trends over time?			
4.3	Root Cause Analysis	What tools, statistics, etc. does the product provide to help you determine the root cause of a failure			
4.4	User-level access monitoring	Can you monitor activity at a user level?			
4.5	Other				

5.0	Application Monitoring	Details	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Notes
5.1	Application Event Correlation	Can you correlate individual data points back to application status?			
5.2	Application Impact Visibility	Can you distinguish between performance-impacting or availability-impacting events as they relate to users?			
5.3	Application Dashboard	When users call you with problems, can you instantly see on a dashboard what is affecting user applications in less than 2 clicks?			
5.4	Automation and Alerting	Can you trigger automation or alerts based on the state of the application as an aggregate as opposed to the state of individual statistics?			
6.0	SLA's	Details	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Notes
6.1	Service Level Objectives	Can define service level objectives to track desired vs. actual performance			
6.2	SLA Configuration	How difficult is it to configure and set up SLA's?			
6.2	SLA Visibility Dashboard	Visibility of real-time SLA performance over a given compliance period			
6.3	Automation and Alerting	Trigger automation or alerts based on current SLA compliance or when the SLA is at risk of being violated (warning)			
6.4	Other				

7.0	Reporting	Details	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Notes
7.1	Ad-Hoc Reports	How easily can custom reports be generated?			
7.2	Scheduled Reports	Can reports be saved and scheduled for delivery?			
7.3	Easy Reports Publishing	Does the solution have a publishing mechanism? How difficult is it to publish reports?			
7.4	Output Formats	What report output formats are supported (i.e. XML, HTML, PDF, Email, etc.)			
7.5	Customizable Reports	Does the toolset provide for easy customization of reports with parameters for date, infrastructure and any other relevant field in the report?			
7.6	Other				
8.0	Customization	Details	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Notes
8.1	Easy to adopt	Is the customization framework easy to understand and implement?			
8.2	Data consistency	Does the system allow you to use custom data with all standard functions?			
8.3	Reusable customizations	Can customizations be re-used without having to re-customize for each new instance			
8.4	Flexibility and choice	Does your tool allow for execution of any kind of script or executable or does it require proprietary script languages?			
8.5	Other				

9.0	Proactive Server Management	Details	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Notes
9.1	Fine grained visibility	Does the system distinguish between availability outages and performance impacting events?			
9.2	Alerts/Notification	Does the tool support alerts or notification of failures and/or problem conditions?			
9.3	Automatically adding and removing resources	Can the tool support automatically adding or removing resources to avoid issues?			
9.4	Dynamic reconfiguring or restarting resources	Can the tool interact with system level utilities to dynamically reconfigure or restart resources to avoid failure?			
9.5	Problem Infrastructure Identification	Does the tool provide ways to identify problem infrastructure and/or applications?			
9.6	Trending over time	Does the tool give administrators a clear view of how resources are being utilized over time to identify potential upcoming problems?			
9.7	Other				

10.0	Virtualized Server Monitoring	Details	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Notes
10.1	Deep Virtualization Metrics	Does the solution allow you to gain deep insight into hypervisor health, storage I/O bottlenecks, and instance contention?			
10.2	Sprawl Prevention	Does the solution have the metrics to determine when zombie VM's are present?			
10.3	Mis-configuration Detection	Does the tool provide metrics that let you determine when an instance is incorrectly provisioned (resource starvation)?			
10.4	Instance Motion Visibility	Does the tool aggregate metrics while keeping an eye to the fact that virtual instances can move from physical frame to physical frame?			
10.5	Appropriate Data Collection	Does the tool collect statistics via API's to the virtual infrastructure or does it scrape consoles or rely on agent level metrics collected from inside of the virtual instances?			
10.6	Virtual Platform Event Detection	Can the tool detect when changes to the virtualization platform and instance configuration change?			
10.7	Other				
11.0	Mixed Physical/Virtual Server Monitoring				
11.1	Single Console	Does the solution allow you to view services that span the physical and virtual domain?			
11.2	Automation	Can you trigger actions in the context of the physical and virtual resources that allow you to dynamically re-configure the data center?			
11.3	Other				

12.0	Vendor Support	Details	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Notes
12.1	Company stability	How long has the vendor been in business? Are they profitable? How reliant are they on external funding?			
12.2	Install base	How many companies have deployed the software? Does the company have references for environments similar to yours?			
12.3	Updates	Does the company release regular updates? Does the product have an upgrade path?			
12.4	Support	What does the support contract cover (i.e. does it include customizations or upgrades)?			
12.5	Other				