

N-able – Microsoft Interoperability

Questions and Answers

N-able Technologies® and Microsoft Corporation have announced plans for interoperability between their respective monitoring and management technologies. The details of the arrangement are outlined in the questions and answers below.

What specifically have N-able and Microsoft announced?

We're announcing a strategic technology and marketing agreement focused on Microsoft's System Center Essentials (SCE) 2007 product line. N-able Technologies and Microsoft will work jointly to facilitate the integration of N-central® and System Center Essentials 2007, as well as to provide the N-able partner community with technical and sales education resources to build awareness of the offerings and aid in their promotion to customers.

What is N-central?

N-central is the #1-rated remote monitoring and management solution for IT automation and managed services. It is used by more than 1,400 IT companies worldwide to deliver cost-effective and highly profitable services to small- and medium-sized businesses. N-central gives IT companies remote capabilities to monitor and manage customer networks, automate routine services, and troubleshoot and fix PCs and servers. N-central allows them to reduce service delivery costs, increase technician productivity and maximize revenue potential. Key features include fast, easy deployment, remote management (attended and unattended sessions), remote monitoring, patch management, script activities, software distribution and superior reporting.

What is System Center Essentials 2007?

Essentials 2007 is a new management solution in the System Center family of IT systems management products specifically designed for mid-sized businesses (up to 500 PCs and 30 Servers). Essentials 2007 provides a unified management solution that enables IT professionals in mid-sized organizations to proactively manage their IT environment with increased efficiency. Key features include comprehensive monitoring, automated update management, central distribution of updates and software, unified reporting about the status of an IT environment, unified console, asset visibility and inventory, and simple installation and setup. [See full details.](#)

Why has N-able chosen to integrate N-central with the System Center Essentials technology?

Our partners have become more sophisticated in terms of the management services that they offer to their end customers. They need to provide best-of-breed technology regardless of whether the customer is a small business or a mid-sized enterprise. N-central and SCE integration gives them a broad and deep solution that addresses this requirement and leverages each solution's core strengths.

How do N-able's partners benefit from this integration at a business level?

This allows N-able partners to leverage the strengths of both technologies and bring a more complete and cost-effective solution to market. They will be able to scale their remote management capabilities across a wide variety of technologies and devices, which will give them a core differentiator over their competitors. And the combined solution increases the value of the services our partners provide to their SMB customers.

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How do N-able partners benefit at an operational level?

Operationally, N-able partners can still use a centralized console and workflow for the majority of their day-to-day management activities. This would include accessing centralized asset information, monitoring, alerts and reporting. For specific management needs, they may choose to use a specialized solution, such as System Center Essentials. In addition, this makes it easier for our partners to integrate other applications with N-central.

How do N-able partners' customer benefit from this integration?

Ultimately, the end customer receives a better level of service that is tuned to their needs and is delivered in an efficient, consistent and cost-effective manner.

What kind of management services does N-central support?

N-central offers a broad range of remote management capabilities for Windows, Linux, Mac OS X and Novell operating systems. It enables IT service provider to discover, monitor and manage desktops, servers, routers, switches, firewalls, and other devices. For Windows-based networks, N-central monitors key Microsoft applications such as Exchange and SQL Server. Also for Windows-based platforms, the service provider can manage patches (through integration with Microsoft WSUS), push/install software packages, run remediation scripts and take remote control of customer PCs and servers. The Remote Support Manager module within N-central provides advanced remote management capabilities such as accessing the file system, modifying user properties and editing registry settings. The list of Remote Support Manager's capabilities is comprehensive.

How does this integration agreement fit into N-able's ecosystem development efforts?

System Center Essentials integration is another important step in our efforts to create a strong N-central ecosystem. By building this ecosystem, we're extending the value and functionality of N-central by delivering interoperability with other vendors' platforms. This makes it easier and faster for our partners to integrate other applications with N-central, thereby giving them access to new market opportunities and potential new revenue streams.

How will the integration take place and are there different milestones for the integration?

Plans call for an initial phase of integration to be completed and ready for beta in the second half of 2008.

The integration will come in a series of release updates to N-central. N-able plans to integrate in phases, providing incrementally more integration with each release. This approach allows us to get the functionality into our partners' hands sooner rather than later and obtain feedback that we can then incorporate into subsequent phases.

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In what functional areas will N-central and System Center Essentials be integrated?

N-able is working very closely with Microsoft to integrate N-central and System Center Essentials in four priority areas:

1. **Synchronize device asset information.** N-central currently has the capability to auto-discover network assets as well as provide hardware and software level inventory enumeration for Windows-based systems (servers and desktops). Through integration between N-central and System Center Essentials, a service provider can obtain a more comprehensive inventory from SCE-managed devices which can be rolled up into the centralized reporting infrastructure provided by N-central. In addition, this stage of integration acts as a pre-requisite for subsequent integration.
2. **Centralize alert management for incidents reported by System Center Essentials installations at customer locations.** N-central will interface to System Center Essentials and report alerts (exceptions) to the N-central console. Alerts from multiple SCE installations can be processed within N-central and the service provider can use existing escalation rules and workflow to action and acknowledge the alerts. Optionally, alerts can be acknowledged either through the N-central console or through the SCE console as preferred. In addition, reporting on alerts generated by System Center Essentials can be combined with alerts generated against devices not under SCE management.
3. **Extend remote management and remediation capabilities.** N-central has the capability to execute remote scripts and software installation tasks. With additional integration, remediation capabilities within System Center Essentials can be initiated from the N-central console as required, as either standalone activities or scripted alongside pre-existing remediation capabilities within N-central.
4. **Provide remote System Center Essentials console access.** By leveraging N-central's remote control infrastructure, a service provider would be able to launch a System Center Essentials console session from the N-central console as required to connect to any SCE server at an end customer location.



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