



Getting Started With ServerAssist

Introduction

ServerAssist provides deep monitoring of all your Windows servers and workstations, monitoring key indicators, event logs, performance items and services. ServerAssist can also monitor most Linux and Unix machines, and any SNMP compliant device on your network, such as a UPS, router or printer, collecting performance and state data and displaying it graphically.

Assumptions

These instructions assume that you have installed ServerAssist either on a workstation or server, and that you have access to one or more other computers that can be used as test machines. Note that it is perfectly possible to evaluate ServerAssist only using computers running “workstation” operating systems, although in all cases, you will need to have administrative authority on all computers that you want to monitor.

What the guide covers

This getting started guide does not go into detail about all the features of ServerAssist, but instead is intended solely to allow you to get an introduction to the capabilities of the product. It contains some step by step instructions for common tasks that will help you quickly get ServerAssist up and running.

The areas covered are:

- Deploying agents to monitor servers independently (only available in Professional edition)
- Connecting agentlessly to Windows Servers, allowing monitoring from a central machine
- Setting thresholds for acceptable processor, memory and disk usage
- Adding filters to exclude common or irrelevant events
- Manually selecting performance data to be collected
- Selecting performance data to be collected using a pre-configured policy
- Setting performance item thresholds
- Getting notified when something of interest happens on a server

Note: For best results, you should either deploy agents to monitored servers **or** monitor them agentlessly. Monitoring a single machine in both ways simultaneously will not cause any problems as such, but can generate results which are difficult to interpret.

For a more detailed, personalised demonstration of all the capabilities that ServerAssist has to offer, please contact us.

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125 S. Wacker Drive Suite 300 Chicago IL 60606-4424 United States
(312) 893-5480 info@serverassist.com www.serverassist.com

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Deploying Agents

Scan the network and install agents to servers remotely.

Note: This feature is not available in the Workgroup edition of ServerAssist. See [Connecting Agentlessly to Windows Servers](#) for details of monitoring servers using Workgroup edition. If you are running the Professional edition of ServerAssist, it is quite possible to “mix and match” your monitoring, with some servers having agents installed, and some being monitored agentlessly, but to avoid confusing results and duplicated alerts, you should avoid having a single server monitored using both approaches at once.

Scan the Network

The Remote Deployment Wizard scans a Windows domain for servers, and allows you to remotely install the agent to multiple servers at once.

1. Expand the Managed Systems node, right-click on the Agent-based Windows Computers node, and select All Tasks → Deploy... from the context menu.
2. The Remote Deployment Wizard starts. Click Next.
3. In the Computer Selection dialog, select Browse the network for computers, and click Next
4. In the Impersonation dialog, if you are logged on with administrative authority on the servers to which you want to deploy agents (for example you are a domain administrator), accept the defaults and click Next. Otherwise, select Impersonate another user, and enter credentials that have administrative authority on the servers, and click Next.
5. In the Domain dialog, select the domain to be scanned, and click Next.
6. The wizard scans the network, looking for servers that can be monitored. The scan may take some time, depending on the size and latency of the network. Once the scan is complete, select the servers you want to monitor, and click Next.
7. In the Registration Details page, ensure that the details are filled in and click Next.
8. In the Deployment Options page, review the defaults and click Next.
9. In the Post-Deployment Options page, review the defaults and click Next.
10. Click Finish.
11. The wizard deploys the agent to each server in turn.
12. Review the deployment results for each server, and click Close.

The agents are now running on each of the selected servers, and are connected in the Management Console under Managed Systems → Agent-Based Computers.

Review a high-level summary

The computer summary report breaks down the key indicators for each connected computer, and displays a grid of status information, together with metrics underlying that information. The key indicators show a summary of alert counts,

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processor load, memory load, disk usage levels compared to set thresholds, and failed services.

1. Expand Status Summaries in Overviews, and select the Computer Summary Report node.

To see the underlying metrics for a key indicator, either hover your mouse over a coloured square, or click the » to the left of the computer. To drill down to a particular computer, click the computer name.

Connecting Agentlessly to Windows Servers

Enter domain administration credentials, scan the network, connect agentlessly to your Windows Servers, and review a high-level summary.

Note: If you are running the Professional edition of ServerAssist, it is quite possible to “mix and match” your monitoring, with some servers having agents installed, and some being monitored agentlessly, but to avoid confusing results and duplicated alerts, you should avoid having a single server monitored using both approaches at once.

Enter Domain Administration Credentials

To avoid having to enter administrative credentials for each individual server, you can enter the credentials once, and have ServerAssist use them for each server. It is still possible to specify individual credentials for particular servers.

1. Expand the computer node under the Management Servers node in Administration, expand the Settings node, right-click on the Credentials node, and select Properties from the context menu.
2. Ensure the option to run the Management Server service under the Local System account is selected.
3. Enter a username, password and domain that have administrative authority on the servers that you want to monitor.
4. Click OK.

Scan the Network

The Discover and Connect Wizard scans a Windows domain for servers, and allows you to add connections to multiple servers at once.

1. Expand the Managed Systems node, right-click on the Agentless Windows Computers node, and select All Tasks → Discover and connect... from the context menu.
2. The Discover and Connect Wizard starts, Click Next.
3. In the Management Server dialog, select the management server that will actually monitor the servers, and click Next. Typically only a single server will be available for selection.
4. In the Domain dialog, select the domain to be scanned, and click Next.

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5. In the Computer Selection dialog, if you have a large or distributed network, consider limiting the scan to a range of IP addresses. Click Next.
6. In the Windows Credentials dialog, if you entered credentials in the previous section, simply click Next, otherwise enter credentials now, and click Next.
7. The wizard scans the network, looking for servers that can be monitored. The scan may take some time, depending on the size and latency of the network. Once the scan is complete, select the servers you want to monitor, and click Next.
8. In the Data Storage page, review the suggested storage name for each computer, and click Next.
9. In the Options page, accept the defaults and click Next.
10. Click Finish to add the selected servers.

Review a high-level summary

The computer summary report breaks down the key indicators for each connected computer, and displays a grid of status information, together with metrics underlying that information.

1. Expand Status Summaries in Overviews, and select the Computer Summary Report node.

To see the underlying metrics for a key indicator, either hover your mouse over a coloured square, or click the » to the left of the computer. To drill down to a particular computer, click the computer name.

Setting Key Indicator Thresholds

The processor, memory and disk space indicators have three states: normal, warning and error, easily identified by green, yellow and red coloured squares. User definable thresholds for each server determine the warning and critical levels. While the ServerAssist defaults will cover the majority of situations, these thresholds can be modified for individual servers as required.

1. Select a managed server, by expanding Managed Systems, then expanding Agent-based Windows Computers or Agentless Windows Computers, and then selecting the required server.
2. Expand Configuration, right-click on the Thresholds, Filters & Archiving node, and select Properties from the context menu.
3. On the Thresholds, Filters & Archiving dialog, navigate to the Key Indicator Thresholds tab, and adjust the values for the warning and critical thresholds as required. Note that each logical disk can have its own thresholds.

Adding Event Log Filters

ServerAssist can notify you when an unfiltered event is logged to one of the server's operating system event logs. By default, all events, excluding Information and

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Success Audit types, will generate a response. For some server configurations, this will result in a number of responses to events that are not considered to be significant, and can safely be ignored when monitoring the event logs. This is the purpose of event log filters – they define events that are excluded from monitoring, ensuring the relevance of the responses that are generated. Each filter matches events from a certain source / category / event ID.

Adding filters manually

A filter can be added manually.

1. Select a managed server, by expanding Managed Systems, then expanding Agent-based Windows Computers or Agentless Windows Computers, and then selecting the required server.
2. Expand Configuration, right-click on the Thresholds, Filters & Archiving node, and select Properties from the context menu.
3. On the Thresholds, Filters & Archiving dialog, navigate to the Event Log Filters tab. The current filters are listed.
4. Click New... to add a new filter.
5. In the Event Log Filter dialog, type a description, change the filter type to Monitoring only, and enter details of matching events. Any text field left blank will match all corresponding entries. For example, putting 37 in the Event ID field would create a filter that matched all events (regardless of source) with an event ID of 37. To restrict the filter to events from a particular source, enter the source in the Source field as well. Typically, every event filter has at least the Source field populated.
6. Click OK.
7. The filter is added to the list.
8. Click OK.

Adding filters from an existing alert

Once an alert (seen in the alert list for a computer) has been generated by ServerAssist, in response to an event being logged to one of the operating systems event logs, an event log filter can be added based on the event that caused the alert to be generated. This allows events that are unimportant, but generating an excessive number of alerts, to be quickly filtered.

1. Select a managed server, by expanding Managed Systems, then expanding Agent-based Windows Computers or Agentless Windows Computers, and then selecting the required server.
2. Select the Alerts node, and review the alert list for an alert of type Event Log Entry that is for an unimportant event.
3. Double-click the alert, to bring up the Event Log Entry dialog.
4. Review the alert, to be sure that you do not want further alerts generated for similar events.
5. Click the Filter... button. The Create Event Filter Wizard starts. Click Next.

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6. In the Match Options dialog, select the granularity of filtering that is appropriate for this event, and click Next.
7. In the Description dialog, either accept the default description, or overtype it, and click Next.
8. Click Finish.

Note that you can also start the Create Event Filter Wizard by right-clicking on an alert and selecting Add an event filter... from the context menu.

Selecting Performance Items Manually

ServerAssist can collect the values from any Windows performance counter, and display the values graphically, allowing highs, lows and long term trends to be seen.

1. Select a managed server, by expanding Managed Systems, then expanding Agent-based Windows Computers or Agentless Windows Computers, and then selecting the required server.
2. Expand Configuration, right-click on the Performance Items node, and select Properties from the context menu.
3. Click the Add... button.
4. In the Performance Items dialog, expand an object, and select a counter within the object. If the object supports instances, select an instance.
5. To get an explanation of the selected counter, click the Explain button.
6. Click Add to add the counter.
7. Continue adding counters as required, and click Close.
8. ServerAssist will collect the values for the selected counters, and display the values graphically.
9. Expand Reporting for the computer, and select the Performance Chart node.
10. A performance chart of the collected data is displayed. Note that it may take several minutes to build up sufficient data for the chart to be meaningful.

Applying a Policy

Policies allow sets of configuration data to be applied to one or more computers, providing a consistent method of configuring computers that are in similar roles. ServerAssist is shipped with a set of pre-configured policies, but user-specific policies can be added as required to meet specific requirements.

1. Expand the Policies node, and review the policies for one that is suitable for one or more servers in your environment. The Basic performance policy is ideal for gaining an introduction to policies and their use.
2. Select the policy node, and review the performance items and services that are defined within it.
3. Click the Apply link in the right-hand pane. The Apply Policy Wizard starts. Click Next.
4. Ensure that you are applying the correct policy, and click Next.
5. Select the computers to which the policy will be applied.

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6. Select the performance items checkbox, and click Next.
7. Click Finish. The Wizard will apply the policy to all selected computers.
8. Select a managed server, by expanding Managed Systems, then expanding Agent-based Windows Computers or Agentless Windows Computers, and then selecting one of the servers to which a policy was applied.
9. Expand Configuration, right-click on the Performance Items node, and select Properties from the context menu.
10. Review the configured performance items, and note that the performance items in the policy are now being collected for that server.

Setting Performance Item Thresholds

ServerAssist can not only collect values for performance items and plot them on a performance chart, but can also monitor the values, and respond when a value crosses a threshold. It is recommended that you collect performance data for a short period before setting thresholds. It can be challenging to set thresholds for performance items without an understanding of their typical values, and the typical fluctuations in those values.

1. Select a managed server, by expanding Managed Systems, Agent-based Windows Computers or Agentless Windows Computers, and then selecting the required server.
2. Expand Configuration, right-click on the System Monitoring node, and select Properties from the context menu.
3. Navigate to the Performance Items tab, and check Monitor the selected performance item data.
4. Select a performance item from the list of collected performance items, and enter a threshold value in the Threshold field.
5. Repeat as necessary for other performance items.
6. Click OK.

Setting Up Responses

ServerAssist can respond in a number of different ways when a monitored incident occurs on a server. Responses can record the details of the incident, send a variety of notifications to one or more people, and take actions on the server itself.

Possible response actions are:

- Log to the internal alert list
- Log to the Windows Application event log
- Send an HTML-formatted e-mail to one or more e-mail addresses
- Send a text-only e-mail to one or more e-mail addresses
- Send a network message to one or more computers
- Run a program or script
- Start, stop or restart a service
- Restart or shut down the computer
- Send an SNMP trap

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- Log to a Syslog server

Multiple response actions can be selected for a particular incident. The text used as part of notification messages can be customised, and each response action can be incident-specific, can be active permanently, or only for set times on set days.

Adding responses

By default, the only configured response is Log to the alert list.

1. Select a managed server, by expanding Managed Systems, then expanding Agent-based Windows Computers or Agentless Windows Computers, and then selecting the required server.
2. Expand Configuration, right-click on the System Monitoring node, and select Properties from the context menu.
3. Navigate to the tab for the monitoring for which you want to change the responses, and click the Response... button.
4. Click the New... button.
5. In the Action dialog, select the type of response. Some responses will require additional information. For example, a response of type Send an HTML-formatted e-mail will require an e-mail address to be entered.
6. Click OK, and continue to add more responses as necessary.
7. Click OK to close the Responses dialog.

Configuring the SMTP server

If one or more of the responses includes sending e-mail, and the mail server configuration has not yet been completed, you will be prompted to complete this. ServerAssist does not have a built-in mail server, but forwards e-mails to a separate mail server for delivery. Typically this is an internal mail server on the network.

For agent-based servers, the mail server configuration is stored on a per-server basis.

1. Select a managed server, by expanding Managed Systems, then expanding Agent-based Windows Computers, and then selecting the required server.
2. Expand Configuration, right-click on the External Servers node, and select Properties from the context menu.
3. Navigate to the SMTP Server tab, and enter, at a minimum, a server address and a from address.
4. Click the Test... button and enter your own email address, to ensure the configuration is correct.
5. Click OK.

For agentless servers, the mail server configuration is stored on the management server.

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1. Select a management server, by expanding Administration, Management Servers, and then selecting the required server.
2. Expand Settings, right-click on the External Servers node, and select Properties from the context menu.
3. Navigate to the SMTP Server tab, and enter, at a minimum, a server address and a from address.
4. Click the Test... button and enter your own email address, to ensure the configuration is correct.
5. Click OK.

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