



Ultimate Network Management Dashboard

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How to create the Ultimate Network Management Dashboard

Dashboards are the visual interfaces that present to us the status overview of all the critical elements that are monitored by the network management system (NMS). Without an effective and user-friendly dashboard to display monitoring results, an NMS will not fully deliver on its promise.

Here are some top reasons on why effective dashboards are vital in an NMS:

- A network admin needs to address issues immediately and a dashboard must be able to display actual data in real-time in easily conceivable formats.
- Dashboards must be easily customizable to allow the network administrator to create tailor-made views to present data.
- The extent of presenting data may vary between various user groups in an organization. Having a flexible filtering mechanism to choose display data for senior executives, business units or compliance will make reports more meaningful.
- Allowing the network administrator to create different login accounts and issue tractable access rights will simplify management efforts.
- To be able to provide adept alerting and detailed reporting capabilities, the dashboard must support a deep-dive approach to reach the very root of the network problem and show the cause of failure of an event.
- Navigation will be a key aspect of having a dashboard put to detailed use. Navigation between screens, nodes, maps, views, etc. should be easy to execute.
- Integration with other products, if there may arise a need to combine the monitoring view with compatible software or appliances, can be a sought out feature for network and system administrators.
- Enabling the possibility to interact with a networking community to quickly access discussions, ideas, suggestions and subject matter expertise will always be a valuable add-on.

Dashboards are the foundation on which the integral network monitoring features of alerts and reporting are built. To provide the ultimate network management dashboard is to complement the alerting and reporting features with high proficiency.

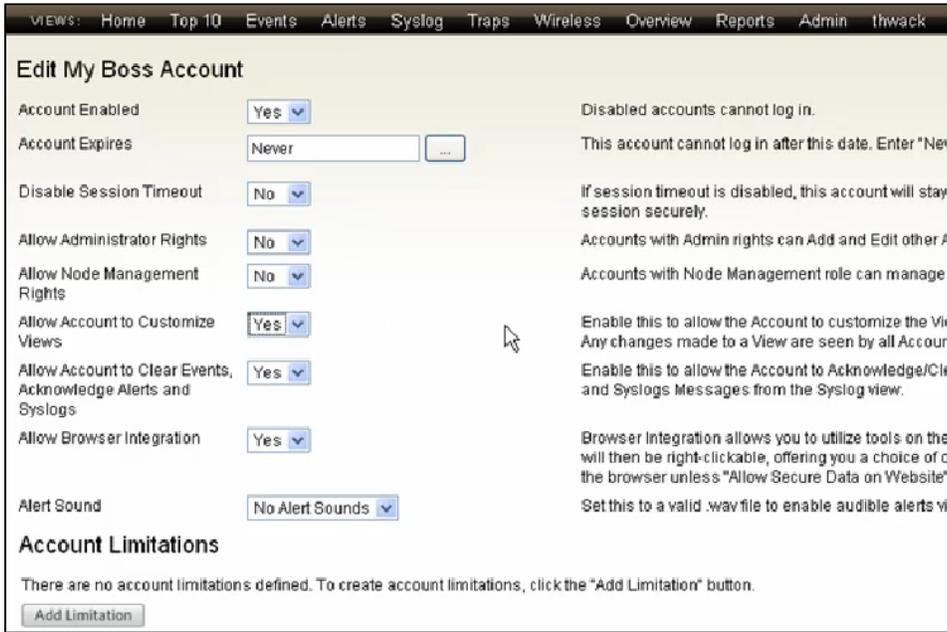
Let's have a look at how to make a powerful network management dashboard using SolarWinds Network Performance Monitor (NPM).



SolarWinds Network Performance Monitor

1 Step 1

Identify the users of the dashboard, document their information, and group them based on their role and function such as: network team; systems team; apps team, and storage team.



Assigning Access Limitations based on User Login

2 Step 2

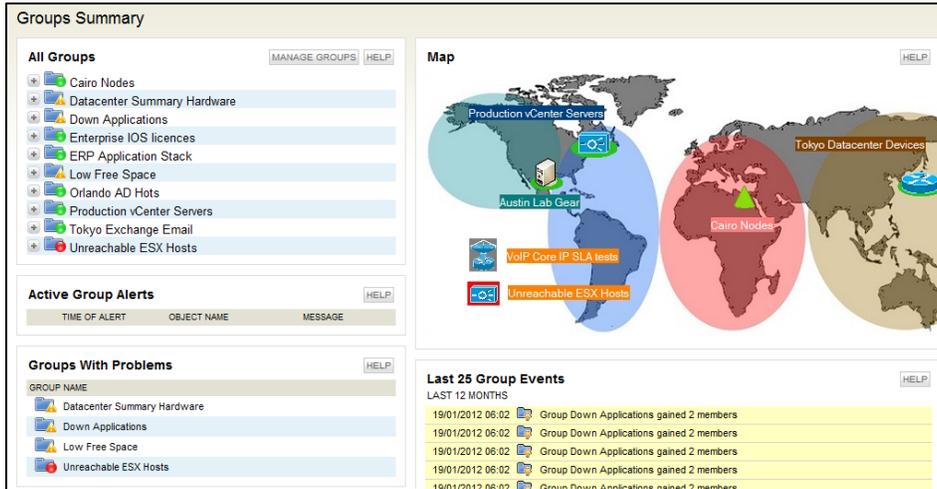
Create user-specific account access and custom views for each group. An example may be high-level information access for the senior management consisting only of those parameters that they would want to look at

3 Step 3

Name network devices logically; and then group and sort by custom properties such as location, business units, device manufacturer, etc.

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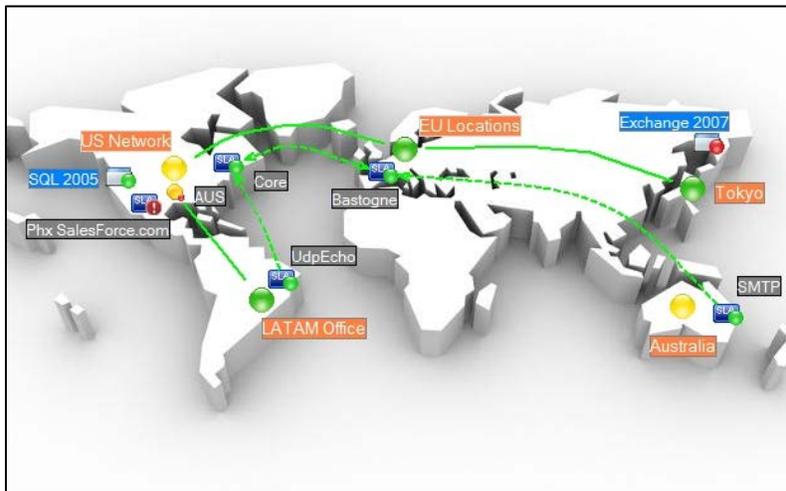


SolarWinds NPM showing Grouped and Sorted Nodes for easy management

[View the Head Geek's Network Management Dashboard Tips. Visit the Geek Guide to Network Management Dashboards.](#)

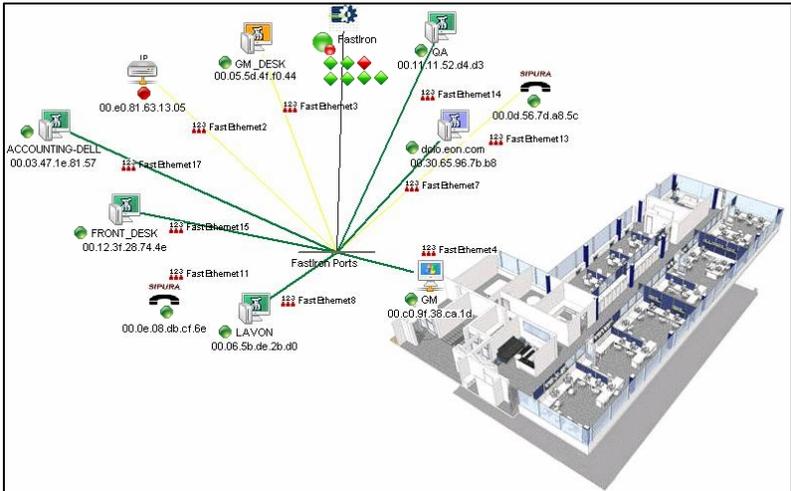
4 Step 4

Create topology maps layered out with nodes of devices or groups of devices to suit viewing convenience. These maps will present the high-level status of the node and provide the ability to drill-down for additional details.



Global Network Map from SolarWinds NPM





Location-specific Network Map after drilling down from the Global Map

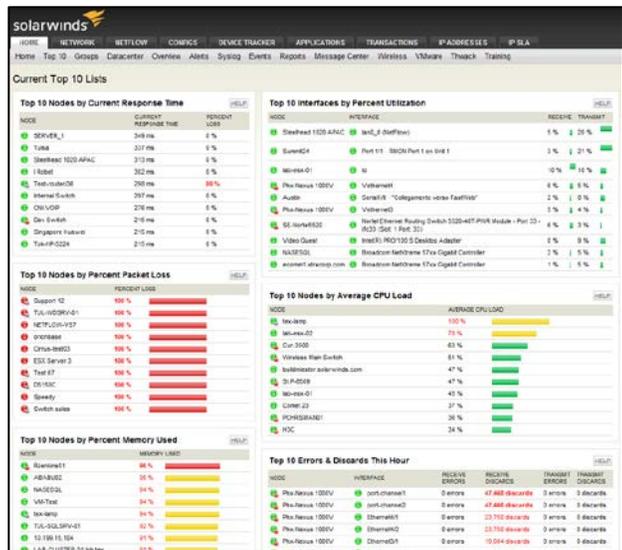
With SolarWinds, you don't have to spend an enormous amount of money on the software. Even with shrinking IT budgets, a company can get an enterprise level Network Management System without breaking the budget. "

Chester Camlin of Atlantic Digital—
Chester Camlin,
Atlantic Digital

NPM also allows the import of maps, inclusion of advanced map data (such as weather data), relevant issue resolution data, and data that updates automatically as situations change.

5 Step 5

Customize Top 10 Lists. This is one of the most sought after requirements in an NMS – consolidating all of the important monitoring parameters to be available in a single view. With NPM, network administrators can customize, prioritize and organize all of their views based on their unique monitoring requirements.



Top 10 Views from SolarWinds NPM

Having done all of these, you now have an ultimate NMS dashboard.

Now, let's have a look at some best practices to help make the dashboard more effective.

- Too much data is as bad as too little.
- Create different dashboards for each major service that the network delivers (VoIP, CRM, etc.)
- Create dashboards for key stakeholders and be sure that they understand them
- Be creative. Think about the data that you'd ask for when troubleshooting that service and including it on the dashboard
- Dashboard is only part of the strategy – integrate intelligent alerting and automated reporting capabilities

SolarWinds Network Performance Monitor provides all of the capabilities outlined above.

With some customization and proper planning, you could be using the ultimate Network Management Dashboard to put your monitoring worries behind and relax in your NOC while watching over your entire network infrastructure on a single pane of glass.

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