

PageAlert

Delivering the Best Software Value in

- Exception Monitoring
- Alerting
- Escalation

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Executive Summary

IT organizations are overwhelmed with the constant challenge of an ever-changing business environment. The pace and nature of business change necessitate that IT perform an integral role in the delivery of always available business processes and information.

With today's complex computer networks, quick and effective event notification is an increasingly critical component for overall IT management. At the same time, IT must invest wisely in products that not only meet true functional requirements but also deliver a favorable and timely return on investment.

To achieve better responsiveness IT must:

- Simplify and automate core IT infrastructure
- Invest in what is needed
- Demonstrate favorable returns

Reliable event monitoring, alerting, and notification software is critical for overall IT management. Nobix PageAlert helps meet these goals by providing advanced messaging and escalation management of IT resource alerts. PageAlert includes core functionality that keeps IT personnel informed of technical problems found in existing hardware, software, utility, and application systems. As critical as monitoring, alerting and notification software is to maintain the health of the business and IT environment, these products need not be over-engineered to provide required core functionality. PageAlert is simple, yet powerful, and is up to 60% lower in cost than competing software.

In a perfect environment, exceptions would never occur, and the need for alerting would not exist. Few of us live in those environments.

Simplify and automate core IT management functionality

Event notification is a critical component for overall IT management. As business processes and associated IT infrastructures become increasingly complex to manage, the ability to quickly learn about and resolve IT issues becomes more and more critical. Quick and effective problem resolution provides the resource availability that today's dynamic businesses require.

Let's identify core functionality:

Network Communication

The ability to share alert and exception information with multiple systems on a company network.

- Exception Monitoring**

Directly monitoring (or piggy-backing off of existing monitors) hardware and software components for a variety of conditions and exceptions.

- Alert Transmission**

Initiating and transmitting alert action information to responsible personnel through a variety of devices and protocols.

- Escalation Paths**

Providing alternate paths of alert transmission should the primary paths fail or be ignored.

Invest in what you need

Competition from emerging markets and increasingly cost conscious buyers are creating unprecedented pricing pressures for everyone. Reduced prices are squeezing margins in almost every facet of businesses both large and small. Each and every functional group within a business is being called upon to scrutinize costs and increase productivity. IT is no exception, and is many times called upon to help in other functional areas.

To this end, IT must continue to invest in not only what is needed, but also in areas that provide a road map to future productivity. Selecting products that meet both today's requirements, and yet provide a path to future technology is fundamental for a sustainable ROI.

PageAlert includes the core feature set required for today and the future. Other essential features include

- Multi-platform Support
- Multi-protocol Notification
- Flexible Escalation

In many cases, IT managers find that simple yet powerful products like PageAlert will meet true functional requirements and also demonstrate ROI better than more complex costly products.

Demonstrate quick returns

While simplification and automation of these IT management functions is critical for streamlined and timely business process operations, the selected products must still work in complex environments.

Although very sophisticated ROI evaluations can be done, business and higher level IT managers tend to focus their evaluation of IT investments on the speed at which those investments demonstrate positive impact in the organization, as well as their initial cost.

Speed is measured by the time it takes IT to procure, install and begin actively using an IT investment such. Initial cost outlay tends to be measured by the initial license, training, and implementation costs.

Quicker returns are achieved with these tangibles:

- Streamlined installation
- Low License Cost
- Minimal Training Requirement
- Reduced Direct Operations Monitoring

And with these intangibles:

- Eliminating Undiscovered Exceptions
- Eliminating/Minimizing Resource Downtime

PageAlert server installation takes only a few minutes and the software can be up-and-running. Depending on the monitoring environment, PageAlert can be configured in minutes.

PageAlert license costs are up to 60% lower than competitor's product licenses. They are easily justified even on tight budgets.

Initial training is normally performed over the phone with a Nobix technician. Initial training, which allows the user to make immediate use of the software is generally completed in less than an hour.

Operations personnel can reduce or eliminate the time used to directly monitor or check on problem areas, knowing that those areas are monitored through automation.

Exceptions that go undetected, even for a small period of time can become very costly, very quickly. Consider an internet store front that can no longer accept orders, those customers probably won't come back. Or hardware that operates at a reduced rate of performance because of some reportable exception that isn't reported on. That's productivity that cannot be regained.

Overview of PageAlert

Today's computer environments require that services be operational at all times. There are a number of system and application monitoring products available that can automatically monitor the health of applications, computer systems, and networks. Although these products can detect system problems and anomalies, they normally only report problems they detect to a console, an email address, or system logs. If no one is watching or available when problems occur, those problems can go unaddressed for long durations while other company areas suffer the consequences.

With PageAlert, monitoring by itself (or along with other products such as HP OpenView Operations Manager), event notifications can be automatically sent as paging/text/voice

messages at the moment problems are detected. System administrators know about problems as soon as they occur and can react quickly, reducing and perhaps eliminating lost productivity.

Operations personnel can be notified immediately . anytime, anywhere via phone, cell phone, email, pager, or other device . instead of by the end-user who has just experienced the problem. Lights-out operations can be conducted with less risk and greater confidence by notifying on-call operations personnel of problems or exceptions as they occur, on a real-time basis, heading off costly time delays and reruns.

Main Features & Core Functionality

- Client/server architecture, centrally managed configuration and use of standard communication devices.
- PageAlert server runs on Windows®. PageAlert client trigger software runs on UNIX, Linux and Windows®.
- Windows & web interfaces for current alert status monitoring and control.
- Windows interface for administration and configuration.
- Client trigger command line interface for integration with system management, task management, monitoring software, user-written shell scripts and other applications employing notification or alerts. A Windows interface is also included.
- Event monitoring features may be used to directly monitor hardware, software, log files, and custom applications. Includes monitors for website availability, disk space, resource availability, CPU temps, etc.
- SNMP trap listener monitors hardware and software that support trap generation anywhere on the network.
- Notification device protocols include: TAP (alphanumeric paging via modem), numeric pagers via modem, SNPP (internet paging) and e-mail (SMTP), and inbound/outbound interactive voice response (IVR) when using a Dialogic telephony board.
- May be integrated with Microsoft Exchange Server, Microsoft System Center Operations Manager, HP® OpenView® Operations for Windows (OVOW) and UNIX, and OpenView Network Node Manager® (NNM) to provide escalation and multi-protocol device support, Quest Big Brother, and others.
- Confirmation and acknowledgement (depending on protocol) of alerts tracks delivery of important messages.
- Variable device retry periods and limits means notifications and messages can loop through multiple devices indefinitely or they can be cancelled by the recipient.
- Escalation paths ensure that if one user doesn't respond to a message within a set time period, the next user in the chain will be notified.
- Logging tracks activity and data that can support accounting, performance analysis, and delivery auditing.
- Broadcasting allows PageAlert server to send a messages to multiple recipients at once.
- Group alerting through configurable distribution lists.

Alert Processing

PageAlert is a client/server alert generator utilizing a central server component and zero or more client trigger systems. Alert trigger messages are received from:

- UNIX/Linux/Windows command line trigger programs run from monitored apps
- SNMP traps
- Server monitored events

Alert trigger messages are analyzed and matched against stored configurations to determine if alert generation is required, and if so, who to notify and what to tell them. When an alert is generated, the escalation path is configured for the alert and the alerting process is initiated.

When the alert message is received on the device, depending on device and the protocol being used, the user has the ability to accept, decline, and/or cancel the alert.

If the protocol does not support two-way communication, then the alert is cancelled either automatically via timeout, from email, through an interface dialog, via web page, or command line program. Alerts may be configured so that only the active recipient may cancel the alert. SNPP and IVR protocols provide for pre-programmed responses.

PageAlert is the perfect solution for IT departments requiring a comprehensive, interactive, responsive monitoring, notification and escalation system. For IT centers using products like Nobix JobQue/X to handle task management and error detection or event monitoring software such as HP OpenView to control and monitor their networks, PageAlert can be used to notify the right people when an alarm occurs, a threshold is exceeded, or a critical system message needs to be delivered. Notification messages can be sent to an individual, multiple individuals, or to a group; and alerts can be escalated and/or resent until all the right people have acknowledged receipt.

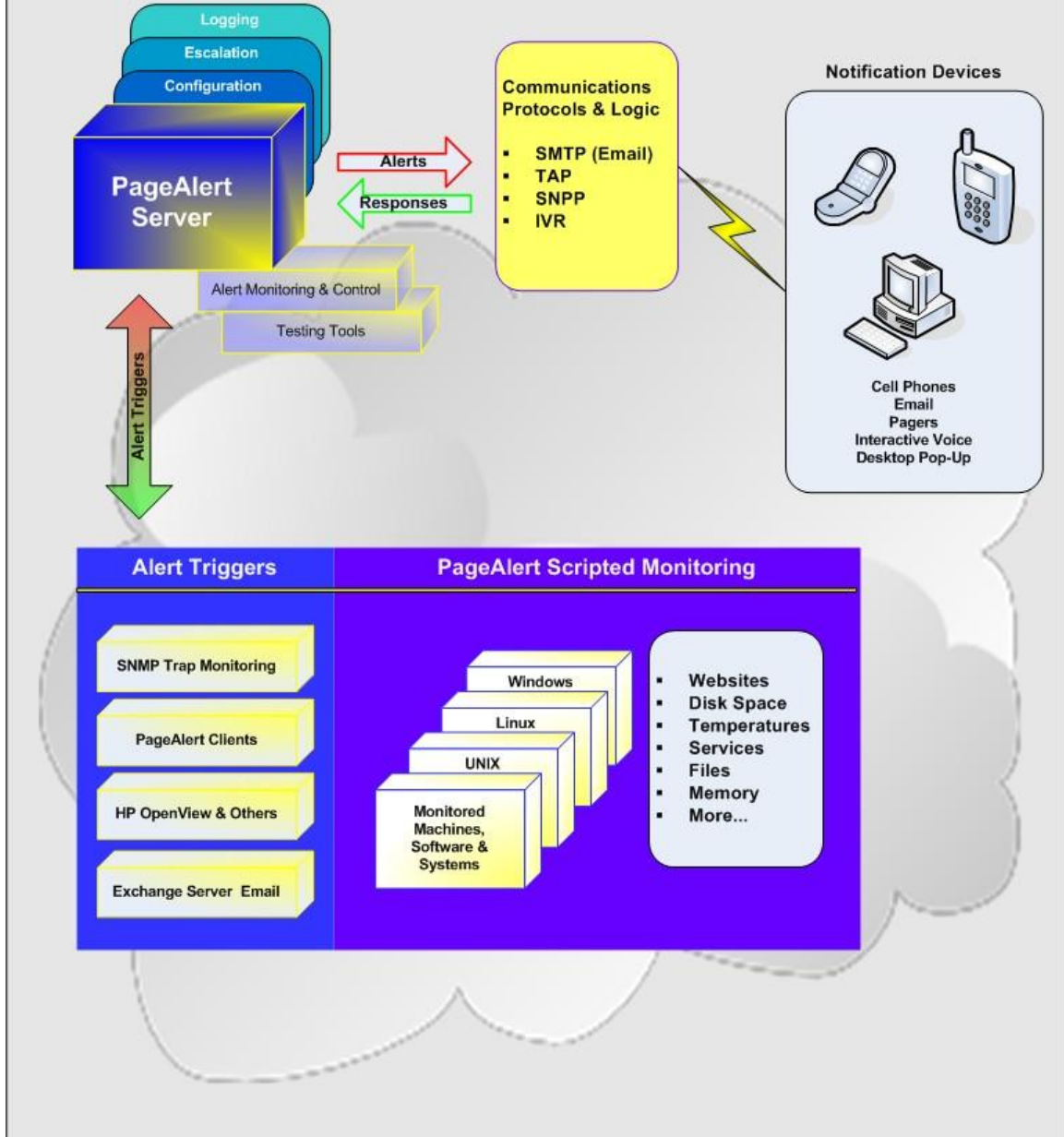
PageAlert supports an unlimited number of devices and service providers. All messages are date- and time stamped and properties are recorded in a detailed log for archival and auditing purposes.

PageAlert users are able to, out-of-the-box:

- Monitor exception messages in activity logs
- Monitor web sites and file systems
- Monitor for executing and non-executing processes
- Identify non-responding network or TCP ports
- Monitor SNMP traps
- Initiate escalating alerts

PageAlert customers may use and modify Nobix-supplied monitor and triggering scripts, write their own, or have Nobix write them. PageAlert client agents are implemented in the same way for all platforms.

PageAlert System View



System Requirements

PageAlert server requires Windows XP or later running on a Pentium or better processor, 256 Mb of RAM, 200 Mb of drive space, and a TCP/IP connection. Microsoft Data Access Components (MDAC) 2.7 (installed automatically) or later or Microsoft SQL Server 2003 or later is also required. A modem is required in order for PageAlert to communicate with pagers and/or TAP paging service providers. If you are utilizing a telephony board installed on the server, it must be a Dialogic® board. Communicating with PageAlert via telephone requires a sound card installed on the server. Email responses to pages are recognized and processed by Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 or later.

The PageAlert client triggers may be installed on UNIX (AIX, HP-UX, Solaris), Red Hat Linux, SUSE, MPE/iX, or Windows systems.

About Nobix

Nobix has been providing the best value in the IT management software market since 1985. Nobix delivers IT management products specifically for job scheduling, and problem alerting and notification at prices lower than alternative products. Nobix simple yet powerful products provide the core functionality required to cost-effectively manage interdependent IT jobs and deliver problem alerts across AIX, HP-UX, Linux, MPE/iX, Solaris, and Windows environments. Thousands of customers have benefited by using Nobix products to simplify and automate IT management functions. See for yourself . improve your IT capabilities and realize returns in a matter of days with Nobix free trial software available at www.nobix.com or call us at 1-925-659-3500.