

Toolbox New Products for IT Pros

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Make announcements over the network

NetSupport Notify

www.netsupportnotify.com

The PC-based work environment is nearly ubiquitous in the office workplace. Most users are in front of their screens during the day and are connected to a network that you help manage. Besides providing a transport for shared resources, applications, and the Internet, your company's network can also be used as part of your organization's strategy for communicating important messages to users. One tool that can help you deliver messages to users across the LAN and wide area network (WAN) is NetSupport Notify, from NetSupport Limited.

This lightweight application server gives you quick and reliable broadcast messaging support. You could, for example, easily alert users about an unexpected service loss to a shared resource, let people know that the security alarm they are hearing was triggered by accident, or notify employees about a building emergency.

Some simple broadcast messaging tools you may come across are limited to the LAN on which they are installed. NetSupport Notify, however, is agent-based, and with its notification gateway component, it can easily traverse your network topology, reaching both Windows® and Mac clients, whether they are connected directly, over a wireless connection, or connected via virtual private network.

The notification service runs as a Windows service, and you connect to the service via the administrative notification console, which can be installed on the same or a different machine. Notifications from the service are classified into one of three levels of severity: message, alert, or a critical. Once a message is received by the client, an event log entry is made and the server is notified that the message has been received. Other message options include playing a beep in addition to showing the window, forcing the notification to always be visible, and setting an automatic timeout on the message to self-close.

You can also choose to target just specific notification groups. The notification console can connect to multiple notification servers, so one console can be the center of the message broadcast.

In addition to the server and console, NetSupport Notify also includes a deployment tool that allows you to remotely deploy the agent to your end users, saving you a visit to the desktop. You can specify target machines by IP address range or through Windows networking domains and workgroups discovery.

The deployment console also gives you a quick view of your network, showing you the version of the agent installed along with vitals, such as the DNS name, MAC address, IP address, platform, and whether the console has access to the remote machine. If you use Active Directory®, you can manage the configuration and deployment via group policy.

To protect against unauthorized broadcasts (such as "Hey, there's a party in my office at 4:00!"), the agents and consoles employ a security code similar to a Windows Management Instrumentation (WMI) key string. In addition, you can control the ability to send alerts through Active Directory policy.

Price: Starts at \$180 for a 75-user license.