

RoboCentral v3.0 - Remote Console Monitoring & Management

Introduction

Managing an eBusiness infrastructure is an ongoing challenge, particularly in distributed computing environments. The biggest problem facing every IT department is how to ensure smooth IT operations in the face of increasingly heterogeneous, complex, geographically dispersed, and rapidly changing computing technology.

One significant aspect of this challenge comes from the need to manage multiple system consoles. These consoles receive vital system messages, and must be used by operations personnel to control and reboot systems when necessary. Traditionally, this means having a terminal connected to each system. To control a system or see key messages, IT staff must go to the terminal in person. In today's distributed environments, where these computers can be in different rooms, buildings, towns or even countries, this creates a real problem.

With RoboCentral, you can bring all the consoles together onto a single screen in any location. Whether across the street or across the world, RoboCentral brings your system's consoles to your desktop.

Overview

Heroix RoboCentral is remote console management software designed to provide centralized, agentless monitoring and management of eBusiness infrastructure components.

RoboCentral allows organizations to use a single Windows NT/2000 server as the system console to remotely manage hundreds of UNIX/Linux and OpenVMS systems, as well as any device that communicates via a serial port, including bridges, switches, and routers.

In UNIX/Linux and OpenVMS terms, a system console is a device that displays vital messages regarding the state of the system and enables an operator to issue commands in order to respond to system problems.

RoboCentral consolidates the consoles for each and every computer system you connect to it. RoboCentral enables you to

monitor and control all your systems from a single location, regardless of where the computers are located. Once connected, RoboCentral offers four major features:

- Consolidates all system consoles, providing full control of all systems from any location
- Time-stamps and logs all system messages sent to the console port, creating local system logs on your Windows NT or 2000 server
- Identifies messages of importance using advanced text searching algorithms
- Notifies users of important messages using a wide range of mechanisms

Controlling a Managed System

RoboCentral makes it possible for you to control any managed system using a terminal emulator and TELNET connections (RoboCentral uses the standard Windows NT or 2000 terminal emulator by default, and fully supports other popular versions).

You can connect to managed systems using either RoboCentral's GUI or a Command Line Interface. Once connected to a managed system, you can enter commands and read responses as if you were physically at the system console.

RoboCentral Management Console & Event Monitor

System	Reported by	Time	Event	Severity	Class	Text
AlphaVMS	SJO	4/7/00 10:24:33 AM	SECURITY_SE...	INDETERMINA...	SECURITY	The security server is starting up
VAX:VMS	SJO	4/7/00 10:24:34 AM	SCHEDULER_J...	WARNING	SCHEDULER	Job number 55 has started [BANK1_HOURLY]
VAX:VMS	SJO	4/7/00 10:24:38 AM	SCHEDULER_J...	CLEAR	SCHEDULER	Job number 55 has completed [BANK1_HOURLY]
VAX:VMS	SJO	4/7/00 10:24:40 AM	SCHEDULER_J...	CRITICAL	SCHEDULER	Job number 55 has failed [BANK1_INIT]

Event Monitor Gauges:

- Critical: 3
- Major: 15
- Minor: 9
- Warning: 2
- Clear: 0
- Indeterminate: 6

Administrative functions you can carry out include:

- Shut down or reboot systems
- Boot into maintenance mode
- Add or modify user profiles
- Run diagnostics and execute system repairs
- Perform backup & restore operations
- Install software applications

Message Collection and Filtering

Once a system is connected to RoboCentral, all data sent to the console port is collected, time-stamped and stored in a file specific to that system. Thus each managed system has its own log file containing the history of messages sent to the console port. In addition to SYSLOG messages for UNIX and Linux systems, and OPCOM for OpenVMS systems, console messages include information not found anywhere else, such as:

- Boot ROM messages
- Low level hardware errors
- Cluster messages

RoboCentral also scans the text being gathered, identifying important messages and generating events. RoboCentral events add structure to console messages, enabling consistent monitoring across platforms. Out-of-the-box pattern matching solutions are provided for UNIX/Linux, OpenVMS, and NT/2000 systems.

Once a match is made, RoboCentral can execute any corrective or notification action you desire, including:

- Send a pager message
- Send an e-mail message
- Send a SNMP Trap (to link to a network manager such as HP OpenView, Micromuse Netcool, IBM NetView, or SunNet Manager)
- Log to an ODBC compliant database (SQL Server, Access)
- Log to a file
- Execute an OS command
- Write events directly to a local RoboMon database
- Forward an event to RoboMon or another machine
- Forward events to a framework (Tivoli, HP IT/O, CA Unicenter TNG)

Event Monitoring

The RoboCentral v3.0 GUI includes an Event Monitor. This provides a single display from which you can manage and monitor all system consoles. "Dials" showing open events on each system enable you to quickly identify problems before they escalate. User defined event views allow you to tailor the event display, showing events from specific systems or groups of systems, open, closed or repeat events, events of specified severity, etc. Events can also be forwarded to the RoboMon Event Monitor for centralized monitoring.

Failsafe Operations

Each managed system console can have a preferred and an alternate RoboCentral server. Under normal circumstances, the preferred server will connect to and manage the system. If the preferred RoboCentral server cannot function for any reason, the alternate RoboCentral server takes over all management, monitoring and logging, and continues to provide full functionality until the preferred server is back online.

Security

RoboCentral has a powerful built-in security system. A user must log into RoboCentral with a valid NT/2000 username and password to gain access to any systems. In addition, you can define which systems or groups of systems a user may access, and what privileges they have on those systems (read only, R/W, etc.). Users only see systems for which they have authorization. Multiple users can simultaneously access the same system and the numbers of users with simultaneous write access can be controlled.



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