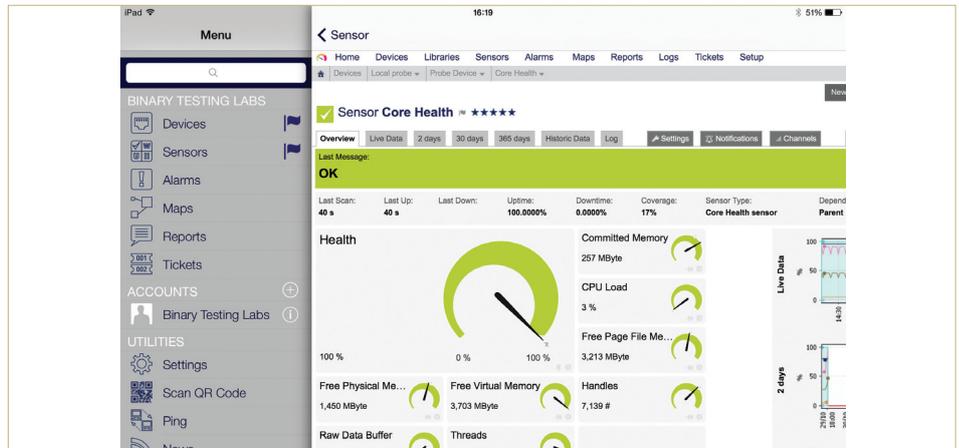


The PRTG Network Monitor from Paessler: version 14



PRODUCT REVIEW

Paessler's PRTG Network Monitor has always been a firm favourite for keeping an eye on the lab and it provides some of the best tools on the market. PRTG is continuously developed, and the latest version (14) now under review delivers an impressive number of new and useful features.

PRTG 14 scales more easily with enterprise networks as Paessler has gone back to the drawing board with its Syslog and SNMP trap receivers. Completely rewritten, they perform much faster and on a decent host system they can handle up to 10,000 messages per second. Administrators wanting to delegate will approve of the new ticketing system. Lists of outstanding issues are maintained on the core server and tasks can be assigned to support staff and their progress tracked.

Remote monitoring gets extended to mobile devices as Paessler now provides an app covering iOS, Android, Windows and Blackberry. Additionally, a new Mobile Probe provides local hardware monitoring, Wi-Fi coverage measurement, and a geolocation service for Android devices.

First time PRTG users will find installation simple enough and the Configuration Guru gets them out of the starting blocks by helping with initial setup and network discovery. As we already had it running in the lab, Paessler's continuous rollout service moved it up to the

latest version without us having to do anything.

The previous version saw a major redesign of the front end with the move to HTML 5 introducing the concept of a Single Page Application (SPA) using pure AJAX. This significantly reduces page reloads and reparsing of CSS, HTML and JavaScript as it only refreshes elements rather than the entire web page. The web console does indeed load in a flash and it is very responsive with waiting times reduced to an absolute minimum. Even small networks can generate a lot of data and the console has been designed to make it all very accessible.

The auto-discovery process can be scheduled to run regularly and it will add any new devices it finds with a base set of sensors assigned. PRTG is licenced purely on the number of supported sensors. This offers flexibility, but they can get used up quickly. We reduced the sensor count by simply deleting those we no longer needed and returned them to the pool. Paessler is continually developing its sensors so nothing escapes them. There are now new ones for Cisco UCS devices, disk and health monitors for SANs, and even WMI monitoring of disk fragmentation.

PRTG is also a lot better value than much of its competition as it includes Hyper-V and VMware sensors as standard, as opposed to

expensive optional extras. The PRTG Sensor Factory sensor adds extra versatility and can be used to take values from other unrelated sensors and present them in a single graph.

The new ticketing feature replaces the ToDo option and it is equally well integrated into the console. We could assign open tickets to PRTG users or groups, monitor tickets, and place them in the resolved list with an appropriate comment.

The iOS app gets our vote. We loaded it on our iPad 4 and connected to the core server running on our Windows 7 desktop. From here we could browse sensor data on all monitored devices, pull up lists of sensors based on their status, view reports stored on the core server, and receive alarm and ticket notifications.

Paessler's PRTG Network Monitor delivers a sophisticated toolbox of network monitoring tools neatly amalgamated into a single console. Its combination of excellent value, ease of use, and the ever increasing range of new features, puts the fun back into network monitoring. **NC**

Product: PRTG Network Monitor 14
Supplier: Paessler AG
Web site: www.paessler.com
Price: 1,000 sensors, annual support & maintenance: £1,566 excluding VAT