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MIGRATING TO THE NEW DELL MANAGEMENT CONSOLE

The Dell™ Management Console Powered by Altiris™ from Symantec™ centralizes multiple aspects of systems management into a single easy-to-use tool. Administrators can upgrade existing systems to the Symantec Management Platform architecture and migrate data from Dell OpenManage™ IT Assistant to help smooth the transition to this powerful, flexible console.

The complexity of systems management can be an ongoing source of problems in enterprise data centers, requiring administrators to rely on a host of different tools to manage the disparate servers, storage, software, and other devices and platforms that make up their IT environments. This complexity can burden not only IT staff, but also the organization itself—driving up day-to-day operational costs, increasing the risk of failure, and slowing problem resolution.

The new Dell Management Console¹ is designed to significantly simplify systems management, enabling administrators to manage the myriad aspects of their IT environments—including deployment, help-desk support, security, backup, and servers and storage—from a single centralized console. Based on the flexible, extensible Symantec Management Platform architecture, this tool can integrate easily with an entire catalog of high-value plug-ins without requiring complicated integration services.² Implementing a single console that can support a wide variety of management tasks not only helps reduce operational costs, but can also help simplify training for IT staff and enable administrators to focus on enhancing the business value of their IT infrastructures rather than on managing their management tools.

Administrators can implement the Dell Management Console either by performing a clean installation of

the software, which includes the Symantec Management Platform, or by first upgrading an existing Altiris Notification Server™ 6 installation to the Symantec Management Platform and then installing the console as a plug-in solution. After upgrading to the Symantec Management Platform, administrators can then migrate discovery ranges and schedule settings from an existing installation of Dell OpenManage IT Assistant to help smooth the transition to the new console.

UPGRADING TO THE SYMANTEC MANAGEMENT PLATFORM

When upgrading from Altiris Notification Server 6 to the Symantec Management Platform, administrators can either replace the existing platform on the current hardware or migrate to new hardware. Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages. Leveraging existing hardware helps keep migration costs low, but does not enable administrators to easily roll back to the previous infrastructure if needed. Migrating to new hardware, on the other hand, does require additional equipment costs, but enables administrators to run each system in parallel, migrate with a phased approach, and gain the performance and processing benefits that new hardware can provide.

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¹ The Dell Management Console had not yet been released to ship at press time (February 20, 2009); features and capabilities in production version are subject to change.

² For more information on the advantages of this architecture, see "Managing Operating Systems and Applications with the Dell Management Console," by Jordan Gardner, in *Dell Power Solutions*, March 2009, DELL.COM/Downloads/Global/Power/ps1q09-20080451-Altiris.pdf.

In either case, the Symantec Management Platform installation wizard and upgrade framework, known as the Symantec Installation Manager (SIM), can guide administrators through the upgrade process and help ensure that the data is migrated correctly. Even following an upgrade, administrators can retain the legacy database in case they want to access it later.

Performing the upgrade

At a high level, the upgrade process is the same for both an in-place upgrade on existing hardware or a migration to new hardware: administrators export data from Altiris Notification Server 6, install the Symantec Management Platform, and import the data into the new environment. However, the specific steps may differ depending on the option chosen.

Unlike Notification Server 6, which uses the integrated Solution Center to install additional features and functionality, SIM is a portable, stand-alone application that installs both the Symantec Management Platform and additional features and functionality. By default, SIM installs only the core platform, but administrators can easily add plug-in solutions like the Dell Management Console by selecting them from the solution list within the installer. When performing an in-place upgrade, SIM detects the existing Notification Server 6 installation, and then uses the Symantec Upgrade Wizard to enable administrators to choose which data to export before uninstalling Notification Server 6 and its solutions (see Figure 1). It then installs the Symantec Management Platform and the corresponding solutions and runs the Upgrade Wizard in import mode, enabling administrators to choose data to import.

When migrating to new hardware, SIM installs the Symantec Management Platform and the plug-ins on this hardware, and then provides instructions on how to export the existing data from Notification Server 6. The necessary files for export are copied to Notification Server 6 along with the upgrade framework, after which the Upgrade Wizard exports the data to a data

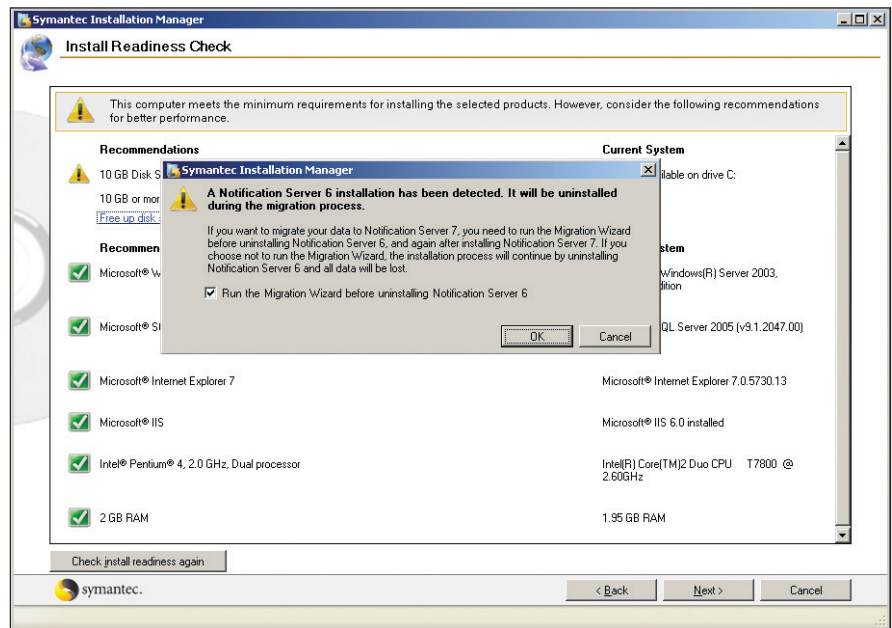


Figure 1. Symantec Installation Manager preparing to upgrade from an existing Altiris Notification Server 6 platform

store. This data store is simply a file-based store that has no dependency on the Microsoft® SQL Server® platform, and is typically easy to copy, back up, and move. Administrators should keep in mind that the data store is not encrypted and therefore must depend on other security mechanisms for protection. Administrators then copy the data store from the Notification Server 6 system to the Symantec Management Platform system and run the Upgrade Wizard to import the data.

Administrators can use SIM to both support customized installations and modify configuration options later, enabling them to carry out an upgrade in phases. For example, they can extract data for certain plug-ins and install them in a specific order to help minimize testing. If they experience problems, they can reexport the data from the legacy system and reimport it into the new Dell Management Console system. Figure 2 lists several current plug-ins and shows how their functionality translates to the new framework.

After administrators have completed the upgrade, they can complete the transition by running the Dell Management Console installer to add the console to the Symantec Management Platform.

MIGRATING DATA FROM DELL OPENMANAGE IT ASSISTANT

The Dell Management Console is designed to incorporate nearly all of the features of Dell OpenManage IT Assistant 8 while also introducing additional features and enhancements. Administrators can migrate discovery ranges and schedule settings from IT Assistant, run a discovery on the migrated ranges to discover managed devices, and run inventory cycles to retrieve detailed information on those devices.

Administrators should keep in mind that although the Dell Management Console includes much of the same preconfigured information as IT Assistant, the initial release version of the console does not support migrating customized tasks; reports; device groups; favorite application launch points; event actions, filters, categories, and sources; and inventoried device data. After installing the Dell Management Console, however, they can re-create these items manually using equivalent functions.

Performing the migration

Before performing a migration, administrators should ensure that their IT Assistant database is version 8.0 or later, the Dell Management Console system can ping the

Current plug-in for Notification Server 6	Replacement plug-in for the Symantec Management Platform	Notes
Altiris Monitor Solution™ for Dell Servers plug-in	Dell Management Console	The Dell Management Console is designed to incorporate all features of Altiris Monitor Solution for Dell Servers and adds a new event console.
Altiris Patch Management Solution™ for Dell Servers plug-in	Dell Management Console	The Dell Management Console is designed to incorporate all features of Altiris Patch Management Solution for Dell Servers and adds new features to help download, manage, inventory, and apply Dell Update Packages. However, no data from Altiris Patch Management Solution for Dell Servers is migrated to the Dell Management Console during the upgrade.
Altiris Dell Client Manager™ plug-in	Symantec Dell Client Manager	Because Dell and Symantec have released a new version of Dell Client Manager that can coexist with the Dell Management Console, no migration utility is provided. Dell Client Manager functionality is expected to be incorporated into future releases of the Dell Management Console, at which time a migration tool is expected to be provided.
Altiris Deployment Solution™ for Dell Servers plug-in	Altiris Deployment Solution for Dell Servers	The advanced functionality of Altiris Deployment Solution for Dell Servers is not included for free with the Dell Management Console, and therefore continues to be available for purchase as a separate plug-in.

Figure 2. Example plug-ins for Altiris Notification Server 6 and their replacements for the Symantec Management Platform

IT Assistant database system, and the discovery ranges they want to migrate are enabled in IT Assistant. Administrators can then use a migration wizard in the Dell Management Console to import these ranges and schedule settings. They can launch this wizard from either the Dell Management Console Portal or Portal Pages and Web Parts sections of the console.

Administrators first provide the necessary information to connect to the IT Assistant database (see Figure 3), after which the wizard guides them through the process of fetching the data. Because the wizard retrieves only ranges that are enabled in IT Assistant, administrators can prevent specific ranges from being migrated by disabling those ranges in IT Assistant and relaunching the wizard. They can also edit the schedule settings for the migrated ranges, or can choose to run a discovery immediately after the migration has completed.

Understanding Dell Management Console objects

The Dell Management Console uses different objects and terminology than IT Assistant to manage discovery ranges and schedule settings (see Figure 4):

- **Network discovery tasks:** Include and exclude ranges from IT Assistant are combined into individual *discovery tasks* in the Dell Management Console.

Discovery tasks do not contain the protocol information associated with discovery ranges, however; instead, each discovery task is associated with one connection profile that contains this information.

- **Connection profiles:** Protocols that were part of include ranges in IT Assistant are part of *connection profiles* in the Dell Management Console. These profiles contain only generic information about each protocol, such as time-out and retry settings. Protocol credentials—such as Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) community strings, domain names, Intelligent Platform Management Interface (IPMI) KGKeys, usernames, and passwords—are stored by Credential Manager items

associated with each connection profile. Each connection profile can be shared across multiple scan groups and can be associated with multiple Credential Manager items.

- **Credential Manager:** Protocol credentials for include ranges in IT Assistant are stored as *Credential Manager* items in the Dell Management Console.
- **Network discovery task schedule:** The discovery schedule in IT Assistant is the *network discovery task schedule* in the Dell Management Console. The Dell Management Console also provides *shared schedules*, which allow administrators to schedule tasks in various advanced ways (such as weekly or monthly) and share these schedules across multiple tasks.

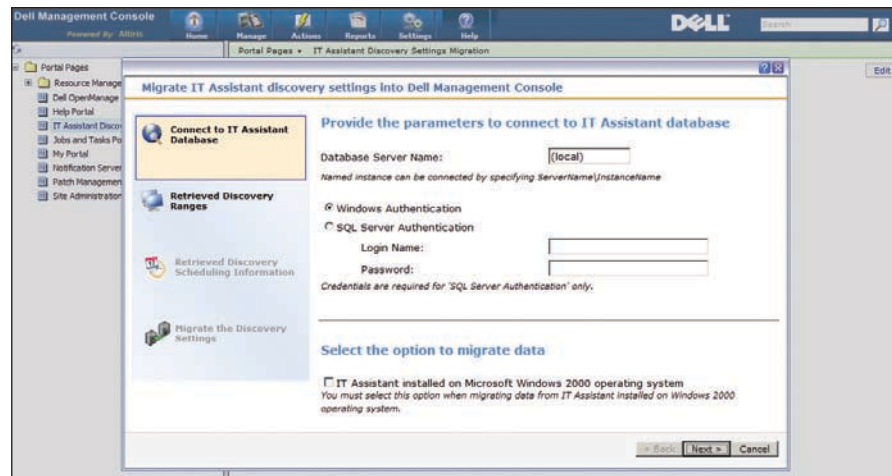


Figure 3. Migration wizard for importing data from Dell OpenManage IT Assistant

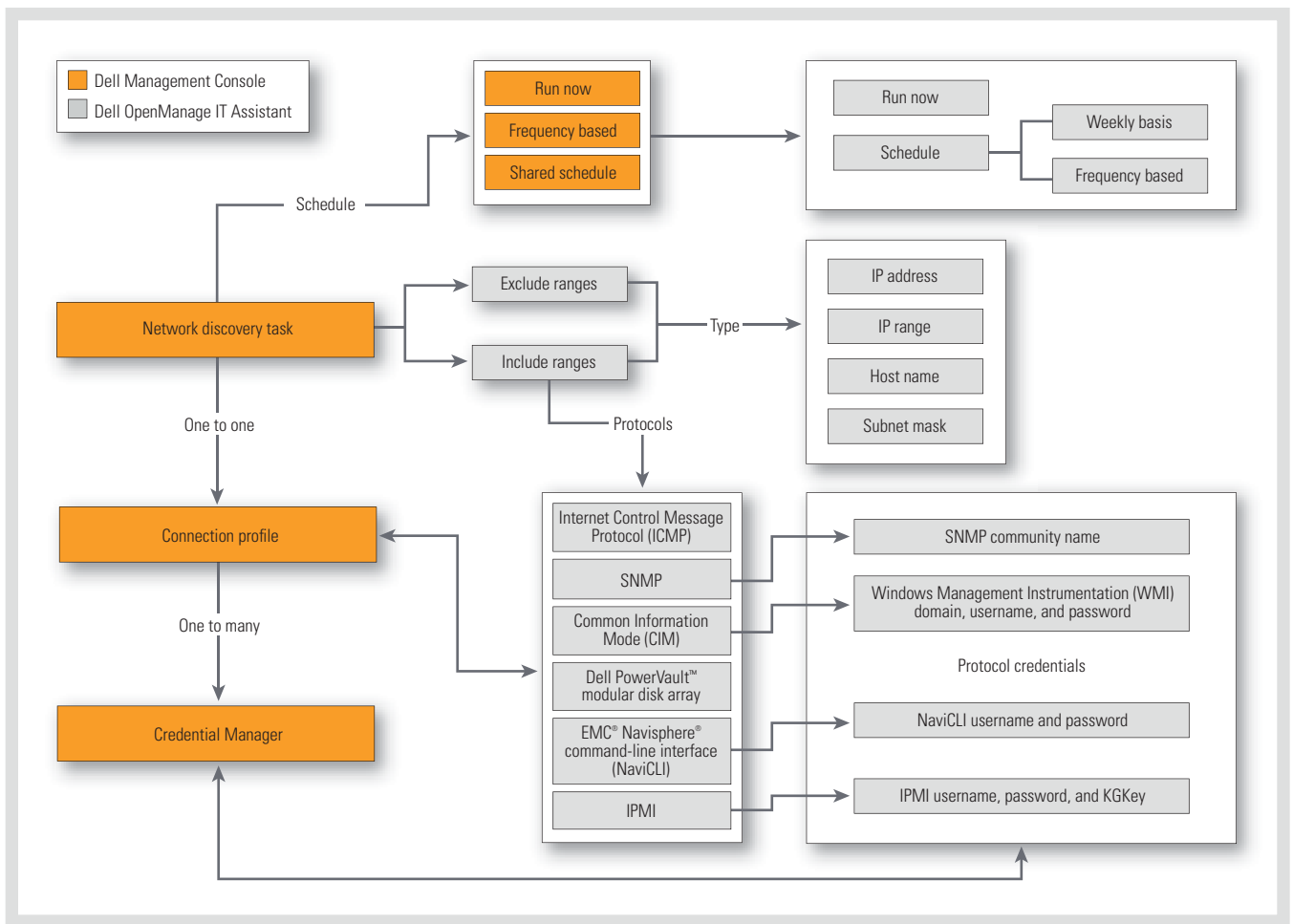



Figure 4. Relationships between Dell Management Console objects and Dell OpenManage IT Assistant objects

After the migration has completed, the discovery tasks, connection profiles, and Credential Manager items are created using the imported data, including the associations between each of these objects. The number of discovery tasks for each node is the same as the number of migrated include ranges, with each discovery task containing both the include range and all exclude ranges. The number of connection profiles may be less than the number of include ranges, however, because these profiles can be shared across discovery tasks; if IT Assistant had the same protocol settings across all include ranges, for example, only one connection profile would be created. A Credential Manager item is created for each protocol in IT Assistant that has associated credentials. Credential Manager

items can be shared across multiple connection profiles. After the migration, administrators can change or edit the associations between discovery tasks, connection profiles, and Credential Manager items as needed.

MAKING A SMOOTH TRANSITION

The Dell Management Console provides a flexible, simplified tool for systems management that integrates easily with other plug-in solutions through the Symantec Management Platform. By upgrading from an existing Altiris Notification Server 6 infrastructure and migrating data from Dell OpenManage IT Assistant, administrators can help ensure a smooth transition and begin taking advantage of this powerful console in their own environments. 

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