White Paper

Why Law Firms Use Argent

Product Benefits

Executive Summary

Argent Software has provided mission-critical monitoring for over 25 years. Some of our most satisfied customers are law firms, big and small. Argent has offices worldwide, from New York through to Singapore, Hong Kong, London, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Seoul, and Zurich.

Argent is recognized as one of the world's leading system management software companies. This is due to Argent's focus on its primary product lines, which includes monitoring and alerting, batch job scheduling and web site analysis solutions for Windows, UNIX, Linux and iSeries systems.

This White Paper discusses the unique benefits only Argent can provide to a law firm with offices worldwide.

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Benefits

Scalability

- Mother-Daughter architecture with robust Argent Generators provide full failover/load balancing capability and scaling for monitoring and alerting

- Argent Offload Generator can each monitor 200+ servers remotely

- Argent Omega can handle various loads, ranging from 100 to 10,000+ servers

Agent-less Architecture

- Remotely monitor all servers and devices

- Streamlined configuration and maintenance

- Additional software does not have to be installed on critical production servers

Accessibility

- Web Interface - This eliminates the needs of maintaining client machines and allows user access from anywhere. NO IIS dependency is required.

- Argent Reporter provides reports via web client, email, file share, web page or XML

Notification and Automated Actions

- Notification via: email, pager, SMS, event log, network message, third party help desk

- Actions: service control manager, SQL, command/batch file, system reboot, event log, WMI script, Power Shell script, UNIX shell script, SNMP, and AS/400 command

- Argent acts as another administrator on the network. The real administrators can work on other projects

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Benefits

Alert Escalation and Calendaring

- Full escalation chains featuring separate recipients based on date/time

- Calendaring functionality extends to monitoring: suspend monitoring during regular or special maintenance periods

As the severity of an issue increases, appropriate teams can be contacted based on time or location.

Supports All Platforms

- Argent control information is compatible with any ODBC-compliant database

- Monitors Windows, UNIX, Linux, AS/400 through to SNMP-compliant devices

- Argent monitors the entire enterprise and all critical applications

Dynamic Views

- Check the status of an enterprise from a worldwide view down to a server rack/wiring closet

- Customizable views show enterprise applications as a whole, rather than isolated components

Integrated Security

- Full Windows/Active Directory support

- Product view/manipulation configurable for each module

- Only the appropriate teams will have access to the product and its views/reports

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Benefits

Intuitive Interface

- 10-minute installation, production monitoring same day

- Hassle-free maintenance and administration

- Expensive consultants are not required. 24/7/365 support is available when questions arise

Industry Leading Support

- 24/7/365 support available with every purchase

- Free on-site Health Checks available

- Argent proactively engages its customers to ensure satisfaction and maximized use of its products

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Monitoring Scope

Argent provides the ability to monitor major operating systems, and the applications hosted on the servers. Full hardware/device monitoring is provided through SNMP. All monitoring thresholds can be stored for reporting (trend analysis, log auditing).

Monitoring Candidates

- Windows, UNIX, Linux, AS/400 through to SNMP-compliant devices
- All SNMP-compliant devices includes routers, switches, firewalls, UPS… even air conditioners
- Argent can monitor the operating systems, servers, and the hardware in the enterprise network

Third Party Product-Specific Methods

- Databases: Microsoft SQL Server, Oracle
- Messaging: Microsoft Exchange, Lotus Notes
- Web: IIS, Apache
- ERP: SAP
- VMware ESX
- Other applications supported through operating system objects and customizable scripts
- Argent can monitor applications in the enterprise, without being tied to a specific vendor

Log Management

- Full Windows Event Log filtering and alerting
- Full ASCII log filtering and alerting (ANY ASCII log is eligible)
- Log consolidation (storage of event logs and ASCII logs for Sarbanes-Oxley compliance)
- Argent can alert against or consolidate any ASCII log, no matter which application

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Monitoring Scope

Operating System Monitoring

- Windows, UNIX/Linux, AS/400 OS performance; Windows, UNIX/Linux, AS/400 application performance

- Windows service; UNIX/Linux daemon; AS/400 job

- Windows process; UNIX/Linux process; AS/400 subsystem

- Windows Active Directory

- System Alive: Windows API; UNIX Telnet/SSH; System File check; TCP/IP port check and ping

- Batch/command file; WMI script; UNIX/Linux shell script; AS/400 command

- Argent provides full coverage of major operating systems

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Case Study: A Large Law Firm

This section discusses in general a production customer's use of Argent to monitor its world-wide network of 12,000+ servers, 125,000+ devices, 3,400 lawyers and 70 offices across 38 countries.

Infrastructure and Personnel

The central datacenter is in Chicago, where the majority of the production servers are hosted. Each country will host at least one regional office. Some sites will only have a single server to monitor, while others will have upwards of 100. Each site has a server "owner" responsible for dealing with serious issues requiring on-site intervention.

The events and detection team is hosted in Manila. This team is responsible for managing events and alerts during the day. The team responsible for managing the monitoring infrastructure is also based in Manila where they've deployed a 72" plasma screen with Argent Dashboard rotating through critical Argent SuperMaps, Enterprise Application Views, and a full-screen Argent Console.

Argent's ease of deployment through agent-optional architecture, along with its unique ability to monitor a hybrid network of Windows, UNIX, and SNMP devices remains as one of the key reasons why Argent is instrumental to their daily operations.

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Case Study: A Large Law Firm

Monitoring Overview

- Primary Generator in Chicago, responsible for monitoring servers hosted in the datacenter

- Secondary Generators are installed at each large regional office, which provide monitoring failover capability and distribute monitoring loads

- Smaller sites host single Primary Generator; supervising Secondary Generators provide failover

- Smallest sites monitored remotely by closest geographical Generator

Monitoring Sample

- System alive (API, SSH, ping)

- Performance (cpu, disk, memory, network utilization)

- Log alerting/consolidation (Windows Event Log, UNIX SYSLOG, application-specific logs)

- Messaging (Exchange-specific metrics such as queue length and round-trip email times)

- Databases (SQL and Oracle; database size, locks, SQL queries)

- VMware ESX (host performance, guest changes, guest startup/shutdown)

- SNMP (full coverage for routers and core switches; hardware checks on critical servers)

Reporting Overview

- Daily/Weekly/monthly performance trends sent to applicable server owners and management

- Events generated/event response time/unresolved events reports sent to EDT management

- Enterprise Application View reports sent to upper management

- Application-specific reports sent to application/server owners

- Event Log/SYSLOG reports sent to security management

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Summary Of How Argent Can Help You

Argent starts where the old, static backup tools end – just archiving critical data is no longer sufficient. All the data must be intelligently analyzed while it is consolidated into readily accessible databases.

Your Compliance Solution needs the following:

- Scalable – able to grow with your needs

- Complete – just scanning Event Logs won't do

- Comprehensive and Escalating Alerting – no alert can afford to be missed

- Open – not tied to one vendor's database

- Cross-Platform – one solution for all production servers, regardless of Operating System

Scalable – Able To Grow With Your Needs
All too often, a vendor's product is purchased and – initially – it works perfectly. Call this the "Honeymoon Period." But – there's always a "but" – your needs grow and you start to hit performance issues with the product. Sadly, this is often the rule rather than the exception.

Argent is engineered for the real world, where slow and unreliable links are far more common than T3 lines. Argent's architecture enables additional servers to be added as your needs grow. Case in point: a large state government agency in Albany, N.Y. currently uses Argent to scan and consolidate 500 gigabytes of data per day. (That's up from 200 gigabytes six months ago.) In the next 12 months, the growth will be in the neighborhood of 1,000 gigabytes. To support this growth, the Customer simply adds a few more servers dedicated to Argent and Argent handles the increased load.

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Summary Of How Argent Can Help You

Complete – Just Scanning Event Logs Won't Do
Your Monitoring Solution needs to be able to scan all your disparate data sources. Of course, Windows Event Logs are crucial and must be consolidated and archived and scanned, but these are just one small component of the larger picture.

The Monitoring Solution needs to be open to enable Customers to add their own programs for site-specific scanning and alerting. And the solution needs to support all common programming languages, such as VB, CPP, .NET, and PERL.

Comprehensive and Escalating Alerting – No Alert Can Afford To Be Missed
Many archival products lack scanning, and many scanning products lack archiving, and none have Alert Escalation. (Some don't even have different types of Alerts.)

With Argent's Alert Escalation, if the first person alerted does not respond in the allotted time, Argent automatically alerts a second person, and Alert Escalation continues until the Alert is answered.

This is an excellent point to make in your report to your Auditors.

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Summary Of How Argent Can Help You

Open - Not Tied To One Vendor's Database

With all the tasks you have to juggle each day, and your need for 28 hours in every day, you don't have the time – or budget – to buy and install a new dedicated database, simply because your brand-new Compliance Solution only runs on one vendor's database.

All Argent products use ODBC – Open Data Base Connectivity. The first word is the key – Open. So if your site's database standard is Oracle, or DB2, or SQL Server, or MySQL, or Sybase – or any ODBC-compliant database – then Argent supports it.

Better still, you can mix and match with Argent. If you like, you can have your Windows Event Logs archived and consolidated to a SQL Server database, your Web logs to an Oracle database, your MVS mainframe logs to a DB2 database, and so on. There are no limits with Argent.

Cross-Platform – One Solution For ALL Production Servers, Regardless of Operating System All too often a Compliance Solution does a great job for Windows, or iSeries, or Linux, but just one of these platforms.

Argent provides Universal Compliance – regardless of the flavor of Operating System and server hardware, Argent handles it.

This means Argent covers all your Compliance needs with one product that covers all the different data sources on all of the different hardware platforms for all your servers.

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Summary Of How Argent Can Help You

Argent Omega is popular among large law firms because of its simplicity, scalability and flexibility.

Argent Omega is simple because it can be rolled out in a very short time without having to hire consultants and programmers.

Argent Omega is scalable because it can monitor hundreds of servers located in offices across the globe. Argent Omega is flexible because it does not require special programming training but can monitor more than other products, including custom applications.

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