

# Belkin makes monitoring easy

**REVIEW: DEVICE/SERVICE DUO IS SIMPLE TO GET UP AND RUNNING**

By **Tiffany Maleshefski**

**B**ELKIN WINS POINTS IN the ease-of-use category with its Pulse Network Monitor, a new device and hosted service duo that's geared toward IT technicians and network managers charged with overseeing the networks of small and midsize businesses.

In eWEEK Labs' tests of Pulse, which shipped April 18, we found that the product offers the advantages of a hosted software solution along with the simplicity of an appliance and merits consideration by companies seeking a monitoring and remote access solution that they can get up and running with minimal hassle.

We accessed the hosted service side of Belkin's Pulse through a Web-based management interface that Belkin built with Adobe System's Flash technology. This interface, which Belkin calls the Dashboard, was rather easy to read and provided us with details and history of each node monitored. The Dashboard also provided information pertaining to the Pulse device itself, such as device location, load average and temperature. Thanks to its Flash foundation, the Dashboard felt more like a desktop application than a Web interface. What's more, the console worked just as well for us on Linux as it did

on Windows.

Belkin's Pulse can monitor any device with an IP address, such as servers, routers or switches, and offered us a solid means of ensuring that particular network services, such as FTP shares or Web sites, were up and running.

In addition, Pulse ships with agent software for Windows hosts, which allowed us to dive deeper while keeping tabs on particular processes, services, events and storage statistics on the Windows Server 2003 machines we tested.

When Pulse detected outages in services we'd asked it to monitor, the device sent out a series of e-mails to us with "panic" or "warning" alerts, depending on the notification thresholds we'd set.

We could create customized charts that we could then designate as favorites for later reference. Pulse also kept track of which charts we viewed most often and did a good job of providing us with premade charts that gave us a snapshot of our test network. Pulse also offered to e-mail these charts to us on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

We were also impressed with Pulse's capacity for enabling remote access to the nodes on our network. Working through Belkin's nifty Flash-based Pulse

Dashboard, we were able to single out particular systems on our network, specify the port through which we wanted to access these machines and then connect to our remote systems through an IP address/port combination provided by the Dashboard.

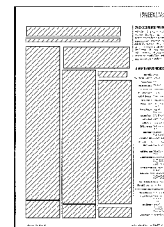
These remote tunnels were accessible only from the host through which we'd accessed the Dashboard, and the tunnels were set to time out automatically after 60 minutes.

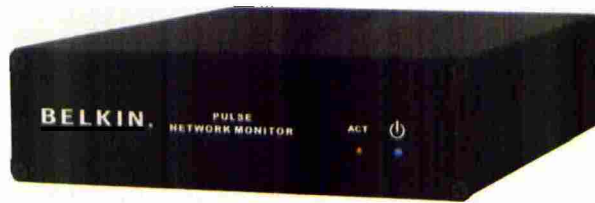
The connection between the Pulse device and Belkin's service is secured via SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) with 168-bit encryption, which is essential considering the sensitivity of the communications that travel across that link.

Subscriptions to Pulse vary in price depending on the subscription term and number of nodes monitored. Prices range from \$1,499 for one year and as many as 10 devices to \$5,999 for three years and up to 50 devices.

The Pulse device measures 7 by 5.5 by 1.5 inches and weighs 1.5 pounds, making it extremely portable and perfect for businesses with limited space. #

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**The Pulse Network Monitor's  
size belies its utility.**