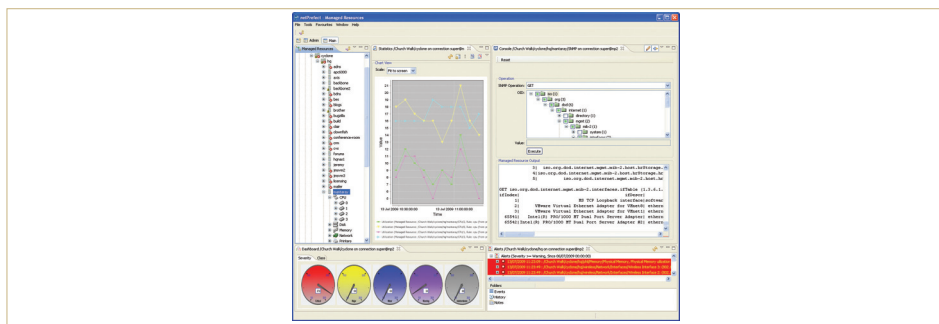


## netPrefect from Cyclone Technology



# PRODUCT REVIEW PRODUCT REVIEW PRODUCT REV

There may be plenty of choice for network management products at the enterprise level, but the majority of these come with a high price tag and an exponential learning curve. Cyclone Technology's netPrefect offers a welcome alternative as it provides a complete network monitoring and management solution with ease of use, versatility, and good value all high on its agenda.

netPrefect looks particularly appealing to MSPs (managed service providers) as it provides full access to all network resources and yet it can maintain a very low profile. Along with all network devices it can monitor in-band and out-of-band traffic, and offers a simplified licensing system allowing MSPs to keep track of usage providing a 'pay-as-you-go' billing service.

The product comprises three main components with a Server Manager being the only one that is deployed to the monitored network. No intrusive agents are required, but nothing will slip past netPrefect, as it supports all main protocols including TCP/IP, SMTP, SNMP, SSL, SSH, SYSLOG and Telnet. A key feature of netPrefect is that it translates all monitoring and event data into ASCII and presents in human readable plain text.

The Server Manager supports failover as multiple instances can be deployed onsite in an active/standby configuration; so if the primary Server Manager fails, the second instance takes over. The netPrefect engine

maintains a SQL database repository and provides event and message processors. This component is maintained at the MSP's own site and brings in continuity as multiple engines can be clustered together.

Deployment in the lab was a swift process and netPrefect's auto-discovery routine identified all of the various Windows servers and workstations plus switches and firewalls on our network. You start with a browser connection to the netPrefect engine which provides a tree view of all managed resources along with counters and dials showing events and their severity, plus a table below the dial with more information. Usefully, Cyclone Technology can customise this web interface to meet specific customer requirements.

The main netPrefect GUI is installed directly from the browser and offers a very intuitive user interface. An administrative window provides views of managed resources, options for configuring auto-discovery processes and access security, where you create users and groups which determine what netPrefect functions and managed resources they are allowed to access.

The GUI can connect to multiple engines allowing you to keep an eye on different sites from a single interface and it uses plug-ins so that you can customise it with only those functions required. Cyclone provides a wide choice with plug-ins available for managing netPrefect, accessing monitored resources,

viewing logs and events, creating web reports and an events dashboard.

The GUI organises managed resources into a tidy tree structure and devices with alerts have their icon changed, making them easy to identify. Hovering the mouse pointer over an icon pops up a window showing details of the alert and you can drill down to view the device's resources such as CPU, memory and network adapters. Rules make netPrefect very versatile as it queries a device, checks its response, and triggers a set of events. These range from notifications via email and SMS, to writing events into a problem ticket database. Audit trails are also provided so you could, for example, see when a user accessed a router or firewall and gather details of their username and connection specifics.

MSPs with strict customer SLAs will find netPrefect the perfect ally as it delivers a comprehensive network management solution that is simple to deploy. It has minimal impact on the network and yet provides a wealth of easily accessible information, allowing support staff to respond in a timely manner to network issues and problems. **NC**

**Product:** netPrefect  
**Supplier:** Cyclone Technology  
**Telephone:** 01584 811467  
**Web site:** [www.netprefect.com](http://www.netprefect.com)  
**Price:** Pay-As-You-Use for a 9-5 duty cycle starts at 3p per device, per day excluding VAT.