

# N-central® 6.7 Express Essentials

**Cisco Partner Guide for Deployment and Best Practices**



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## Introduction

N-central Express™ is a free trial version of the award-winning N-central® remote monitoring and management software. With built-in, in-depth monitoring and management for many Cisco networking products, N-central Express is the tool of choice for over 2,000 IT companies and managed service providers to maintain network environments, increase technician efficiency and boost productivity and profits.

N-central is a very broad, industry-leading remote monitoring and management platform for IT service providers. It provides in-depth monitoring and management of virtually all IP connected devices including sophisticated manageability of Windows environments. Please feel free to explore beyond the features outlined in this document. You may also contact [cisco@n-able.com](mailto:cisco@n-able.com) for more information on the rest of the N-central feature set or for a full demo of the product.

### About this Document

The purpose of this guide is to help you not only learn how to use N-central Express, but also to learn how to monitor and manage Cisco devices using N-central Express. As such, this guide has been organized into three major sections:

- [Preparing a Network for N-central Express](#)
- [Creating Your First Customer](#)
- [Monitoring and Managing Cisco Devices](#)

**Throughout this document, you will notice boxes such as the one shown here. Take note of these boxes as they highlight best practices and offer valuable tips and hints.**

## The N-central Express Trial

This N-central trial program – available exclusively for Cisco Partners - is intended to give you an overview of N-central's capabilities, with an emphasis on monitoring and managing Cisco devices. Specifically, you will be able to:

- 1) Discover, and monitor both Cisco devices and other devices on your network
- 2) Apply Cisco-specific monitoring templates to discovered Cisco Devices
- 3) Use N-central Express to remotely control Cisco devices

## Preparing a Network for N-central Express

Prior to deploying N-central Express to your network, there are two steps you should take to ensure that the N-central Express trial proceeds as smoothly as possible:

- Ensure that your network allows the appropriate outbound ports
- Install and/or configure SNMP on your Cisco devices

### *Outbound Ports Required by Agents and Probes*

Networks in which N-central Express Windows Probe are deployed need to have the following **outbound** ports open:

- **HTTP (Port 80)** for software download (scripts, management tasks)
- **HTTPS (Port 443)** for secure data transmission between the agent/probe and your N-central server
- **SSH (Port 22)** is required for device remote control

### *Configuring SNMP on your Network*

N-central Express uses SNMP to discover and gather information from networking devices like switches, routers, printers, non-Windows devices (for example, Linux or UNIX servers) and Windows devices.

Because N-central uses SNMP so heavily for both discovering devices on your network and monitoring those devices once they have been discovered, it's critical that you install and configure SNMP on all devices that support the SNMP protocol.

**HINT:** Configure every device on your network with the same SNMP community string. Keep the SNMP community string handy, as you will need it later on in this document.

## Creating Your First Customer

Now that your network is configured, it's time to deploy the N-central Express Windows Probe. This chapter will walk you through the process of creating a customer in the N-central Express UI, setting up a Windows Probe and importing devices that the Windows Probe has discovered.

### Using the Customer Wizard

**HINT: Login to the N-central Express UI from the Windows device where you intend to install the Windows Probe. This will make downloading and installing the Windows Probe quick and easy.**

1. Login to the N-central Express UI using the login information provided to you via e-mail
2. Accept the EULA
3. When prompted, download the **PS Tools** zip file, and then upload the **PSExec.exe** executable to the N-central Express server
4. In the bottom left-hand corner of the screen, select the **Customer Wizard**.
5. In the **Company Name** field, enter the name of your customer.
6. Uncheck the **Auto-Import** checkboxes in the **Device Discovery Options** section
7. Click **Save and Continue**.

### Installing the Windows Probe Software

1. After completing step #7 above, the **Add Devices** page will be displayed. Click on **Download the Windows Probe Software** link.
2. Download the Windows Probe installer, and install it by completing the following steps:
  - a) Select the language to install the Windows Probe with and click **OK**.
  - b) Choose your destination folder for the Windows Probe software.
  - c) Click **Next**.
  - d) If the Windows probe will need to communicate via a proxy server, input the required proxy information. (see the [Installing a Windows Probe or Windows Agent behind a Proxy Server](#) section of this document for further details on configuring a Windows Probe to communicate through a proxy server)
  - e) Click **Next**.
  - f) Assuming that the Windows Probe is being installed on a domain, enter the appropriate domain name, domain admin username and password, and click **Next**.
  - g) On the **AMT Datastore Registration** window, click **Next**, unless you use Intel V-Pro enabled devices and wish to input your AMT User credentials.
  - h) In the next screen, you can create a Network Discovery task. In the **Discovery Name** field, enter "Initial Discovery", Click on the **IP Range** radio button and input the IP range (for example, 192.168.1.1-254) in which the probe will be installed. Be sure that you input the SNMP community string in the **Community String** field, as doing so will allow for the discovery of routers, switches and printers.
  - i) Click **Next**.

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- j) Click **Install**.
- k) Click **Finish** when the installation is complete.

*Congratulations, you have now created a customer with N-central Express and started an asset discovery on your customer's network.*

## Importing Devices

In the N-central Express UI, the **Add Devices** page will change based on the devices that get discovered by the Windows Probe. N-central won't start monitoring those devices until you've imported them though, so the next step to take is to import those devices into N-central Express.

**Important:** With the N-central Express Trial, you are limited to monitoring and managing a maximum of 10 devices.

1. In the left-hand pane of the N-central Express UI, click **All Devices View**
2. Click the **Import** button.
3. Put a checkmark beside each device that you want to import.
4. Click **Continue**.
5. Click **Finish**.

*Congratulations, you've now successfully discovered and imported devices into N-central Express!*

## Monitoring and Managing Cisco Devices

### *Monitoring Cisco Devices*

N-central Express comes pre-loaded with the following Cisco monitoring templates:

**CCM 4.x**

**CCM 6.x**

**CCM Unity Express**

**Cisco ASA Firewall**

**Cisco PIX Firewall**

Applying the monitoring templates is easy:

1. In the left-hand pane of the N-central UI, click **All Devices View**
2. Click on the appropriate device
3. Click on the **Service Templates** tab
4. Click the **Apply New Service Template** button
5. Put a checkmark beside the service template to be applied
6. Click the **Apply Service Templates** button

In addition to the Cisco-specific service templates, N-central Express can monitor any Cisco device for bandwidth utilization, dropped packets, Syslog messages, and dropped frames using its built-in Traffic, Interface Health, and 'FW – Cisco' monitoring services.

### *Managing Cisco Devices using SSH, Telnet, or HTTP*

N-central Express allows you to easily manage Cisco devices by allowing you to remotely access the web page of the Cisco device, or login via SSH or Telnet – regardless of where you are, and without having to first open a VPN tunnel.

To remotely control a Cisco device, complete the following steps:

1. In the left-hand pane of the N-central UI, click **All Devices View**
2. Click on the appropriate device
3. Click on the **Remote Control** tab
4. In the **Connection Type** drop-down menu, ensure that the correct type of remote control (for example, Web Page, Telnet or SSH) has been selected
5. Click the **Launch Remote Control** button

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### **Managing Cisco Devices using CCA 2.1**

If CCA 2.1 has been installed on the device running the N-central Windows Probe, N-central can be used to access that device remotely using VNC. To access the device, please complete the following steps:

1. Select the device from **All Devices View**
2. Click on the **Remote Control** tab.
3. Select **VNC** from the **Remote Control Type** drop-down menu
4. Click the **Save** button
5. Click the **Launch Remote Control** button

Once the VNC session has started, you can control the host PC, open CCA 2.1 and use it to control your Cisco SBCS network remotely.

## Summary

This guide has detailed the tasks required to begin using N-central Express in the quickest way possible, and has provided detailed instructions on how to monitor and manage Cisco devices with N-central Express. Topics covered include installation, deployment and configuration of N-central Express for effective monitoring and management of your customers' networks.

### **Learn More!**

- You can access context-sensitive help by clicking the **Help** menu button at the top of the N-central Express UI.
- For information about N-central and other N-able products, visit [www.n-able.com](http://www.n-able.com)
- Have a technical question? Please use the **Request Customer Support** link on the N-central Express login screen, or email [cisco@n-able.com](mailto:cisco@n-able.com). Be sure to include your company name when contacting us.



## Appendix: Installing a Windows Probe or Windows Agent behind a Proxy Server

<b>Problem:</b>	My network uses a proxy server. How do I configure your software to work with the proxy?
<b>Solution:</b>	<p>Windows Probes and Windows Agents are capable of communicating through non-authenticating proxy servers, clear-text authenticating proxy servers, and Internet Security and Acceleration (ISA) 2000/2004/2006 proxy servers. If a proxy server resides on your customer's network, you may need to configure the Windows Agent/Probe software so that it can pass information through the proxy server to your N-central Express server.</p> <p>To configure a Windows Agent/Probe to use a proxy string, specify the proxy string while installing the Windows Agent/Probe. Here are examples of proxy strings you should use:</p> <p><b>Non-authenticating Proxies</b></p> <p>The proxy string must have the following format:</p> <pre>http://&lt;server name&gt;:&lt;port number&gt; https://&lt;server name&gt;:&lt;port number&gt;</pre> <p><b>Example:</b>     <a href="https://192.168.0.10:8080">https://192.168.0.10:8080</a></p> <p><b>Clear-text Authenticating Proxies</b></p> <p>The proxy string must have the following format:</p> <pre>http://&lt;proxy user&gt;:&lt;proxy password&gt;@&lt;server name&gt;:&lt;port number&gt; https://&lt;proxy user&gt;:&lt;proxy password&gt;@&lt;server name&gt;:&lt;port number&gt;</pre> <p><b>Example:</b>     <a href="https://srichard:Password@192.168.0.10:8080">https://srichard:Password@192.168.0.10:8080</a></p> <p><b>ISA 2000/2004 Proxies</b></p> <p>The proxy string must have the following format:</p> <pre>https://&lt;domain of the proxy&gt;\&lt;proxy user in domain&gt;:&lt;proxy password in domain&gt;@&lt;server name&gt;:&lt;port number&gt;</pre> <p><b>Example:</b>     <a href="https://OFFICE\srichard:Password@192.168.0.10:8080">https://OFFICE\srichard:Password@192.168.0.10:8080</a></p> <p><b>Note:</b> Basic HTTP authentication must be turned on for this to work; refer to the Microsoft Knowledge Base document titled <a href="#">How to Allow Third-Party Internet Application Connections through ISA Server 2000</a> (specifically, <b>Method 2: Enable Basic Authentication for Outgoing Web Requests</b>).</p>

## Disclaimer

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## About N-able Technologies

N-able Technologies® is the global leader in network and systems management software and services for managed service providers (MSPs) and IT professionals. N-able's award-winning N-central software and complementary toolsets are proven to reduce IT support costs, improve network performance and increase productivity through the proactive monitoring, management and optimization of IP-enabled devices and IT infrastructure. N-able maintains operations in North America, the U.K., the Netherlands and Australia. [www.n-able.com](http://www.n-able.com)

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