

# O&O Enterprise Management Console 2



## Lab Report: Practical Test of a Management Console

Thomas Bär, Windows IT Pro Magazine, April 9, 2009, 2:12 p.m.

System administrators have specific requirements and perceptions of the successful application and functionality of programs designed to manage a system and networks within a company. IT experts expect a certain convenience, for example remote installation, a central console and an overall easier administration/usability. We have tested one console program, which claims to fulfill all of these needs.

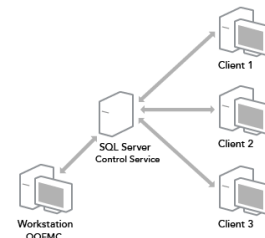
The software publisher O&O Software based in Berlin, Germany has been providing administrators, consultants and other professional users with specific programs, designed to accommodate different needs, for 12 years now. The repertoire of the publisher includes defragmentation software for Servers and workstations, a file cache optimizer for Servers and PCs, data rescue programs or the famous imaging solution O&O DiskImage. For more specific needs concerning system management, programs such as PartitionManager and BlueCon 7 are on offer, which allows a repair function even if Windows is not working anymore, as well as Disk status analysis programs.

One of the newer products is the O&O Enterprise Management Console (EMC). It enables the user to manage all the other programs by O&O Software in the Server and Workstation editions from one central location. The O&O EMC uses a Microsoft SQL Server Express 2005 Edition as a database system, which also delineate the scope of its employment: it has to run under Windows 2000 or higher. Yet, its employment does not require any wonders: a CPU of the Intel Pentium III generation, storage of minimum 512 MByte and 130 MByte free hard disk capacity, if the SQL Server is not installed on the same computer. Together with the database system the requirement is increased to a moderate 400 MByte. Besides the x86 variants of Windows, O&O EMC also supports the x64 variants of the operating systems.

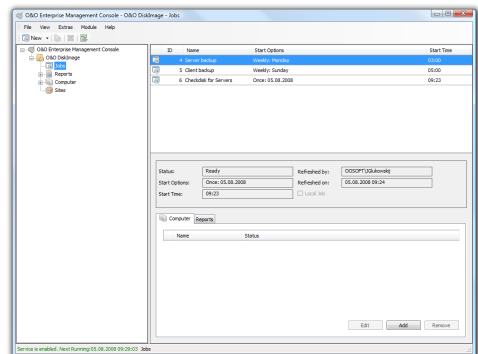
During installation, which depending on your computer might take up differing times, the user will recognize that the symbol of the program represents a remote control for cars: a symbol which we think fits perfectly. After the installation, you will be prompted to have a look at the "read me" document. There, as well as in several sections in the handbook, you will find the information that the firewall under Windows XP/2003 needs to be adapted before a remote installation is possible. The following command has to be entered:

**netsh firewall set service type = remotedadmin mode = enable**

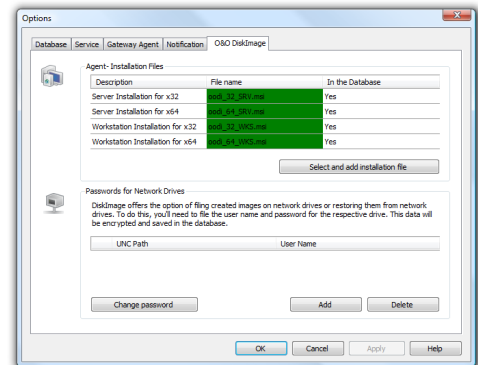
More specific port information, which is needed to adapt other firewalls than the one integrated into Windows, can also be found in the overall informative and well structured handbook.



General Communication Model

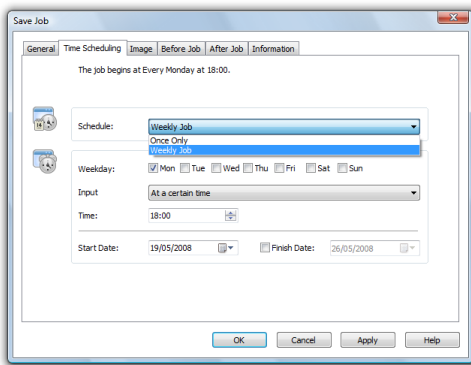


Start Page

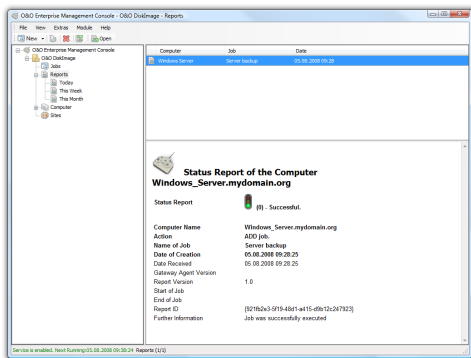


Settings for Remote Installation

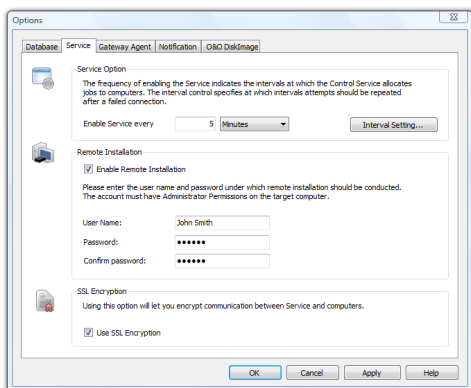
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Create a job schedule using, for example, O&O DiskImage



Status reports



Entering the User Account

Initially, an error message, stating that the program could not access the database as expected, popped up between the installation and the setup of our database in our test environment. The error code did not tell us anything. Nonetheless, we were able to complete the process after restarting the program and repairing the .NET Frameworks 2.0 (where we expected the error to have occurred) without further error messages.

Directly after the start, the program notifies the first user that the remote installation has not been enabled yet. The administrator is thus automatically guided to the options menu and names an administrative user to continue with the following steps. Picture 1 shows that the developers have in general designed the interface of O&O EMC modern and functional. The software reacted quite fast to our test entries and prompts. The current version includes the use of further programs by the same publisher, such as Defrag and DiskImage. O&O Software announced that other applications of O&O will follow successively. The tree view on the left window therefore is divided in the two branches of the programs.

Subheader: employment in the company network: the EMC only works in the Active Directory.

Whenever the system manager initializes a remote installation, the software reminds him of entering the corresponding license. This can be done very quickly and allows for an immediate search for computers and Servers within the network to be installed. The O&O EMC only works in conjunction with the Active Directory folder service. Computers located outside the domain structure cannot be assigned jobs in this way. The computers found are shown in the same OU structure like in the Active Directory. The user is not limited to the AD structure for the groups within O&O – own sites within the EMC allow the design of a different structure.

The MSI package, which is needed to distribute both applications is available to the EMC directly through the x86 and x64 versions. As a result, the administrator does not have to run a separate post installation over the product CDs. The installation and the setup of the software on the test system took us about 10 minutes; after that it was possible to gain access through the console. Besides the "remote installation", where the target systems are used directly, there are many individual cases where an automatic execution plan with its own schedule is an important feature.

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We really liked the very sensitive control: for instance, the system administrator can setup the defragmentation so that it will only run when the screen saver is enabled. Also shutting down after finishing a task can be setup easily. The problem free addition of batch script jobs makes the whole experience worthwhile. If a command variation is not possible, you can run a script before and after the O&O job, to realize your own requirements. The job assistant, which assists you during the setup of the product specifics, and an evaluation in the form of reports give the product overall a very positive grade.

During the test phase, we specifically liked that the developers have made an effort of integrating a check for errors while the user is entering commands. If for example, the data transfer interval between the console and the target system is set to below 5 minutes, then a yellow exclamation mark will appear in a red flashing circle right next to the entry and explain that the entry made is not "appropriate" – we have been looking for such a detail in many other solutions.

The O&O EMC is a „pretty“ as well as functional console. If you are using a lot of target systems by O&O Software, then you will save a lot of time by using a uniform console. The listed price of about €500 for a single installation is definitely justified. Public facilities as well as Non-profit companies only pay half, as is the case for all O&O products.  
(tb/fms)