The ABC's of NSM - I is for Iperf

Jason Rahm, 2009-19-02

Welcome back for another episode of the ABC's of NSM. What's NSM you say? We'll go with Network and System Management, but you could throw Security in there as well. We'll work our way through the alphabet over the next several weeks looking at tools and concepts along the way for all the administrators out there. By the way, you can thank Joe for the format & Don for the title (I couldn't for the life of me come up with one.)

abc_2

Today's letter I is for Iperf. Iperf is an open-source tool for measuring max TCP or UDP bandwidth performance, delay jitter, and datagram loss. Iperf is an easy to use

command line tool, but for those of you who prefer a GUI, it exists also as Jperf. I've never used the graphical version, but looking at the screenshots, I just might have to start. Looks sharp and all your switches are visible in a single pane of glass. The tool provides the options to be client, server, or both, and there are various knobs to tune window size, max segment size, server port, etc. I've used Iperf before in rough QoS policy testing on routing and switching architectures by running several instances of each client and server set to match the different classes in the policy. Available bandwidth to each instance of the Iperf flows indicated whether or not my policies were acting as expected.

Honorary Mention: iTalc. OK, it's not really intended as a sysadmin tool, but for those IT instructors out there who are tired of speaking to an audience captivated by hearts, minesweeper, or solitaire instead of paying attention, this tool gives you a snapshot of all the screens in the room and also gives you the power to lock, take over, or shutdown any ornery student's machines. You can also push your screen out to the class, which is useful in the absence of an overhead or when the view is less effective on a big screen.

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