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## eXprescient Inc. and DS eXpress Tools

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## Contents

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>DS eXpress Tools – The Need</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Full Description</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Competition</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DS eXpress Tools is Unique</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>4</b>

### Introduction

DS eXpress Tools uses innovative mesh architecture to manage multiple "Altiris Deployment Solution" installations thus allowing IT organizations to perform cost effective centralized enterprise software deployment and management.

### DS eXpress Tools – The Need

Existing Altiris Deployment Solution 6.9 users are clamoring for more functionality associated with their favored tool, Deployment Solution 6.9. Much of this available functionality is available in Symantec's Notification Server (NS) product, but many customers do not want to make the investment in additional hardware and training that will be required to deploy NS. Furthermore, since it is a web-server based product, many network administrators refuse to install NS on their servers. This is particularly true in the government and education sectors or large corporate data centers for security reasons.

Others tend to avoid it because of its sheer complexity or because of the non-real-time nature of its performance profile. Still others are unable to use it because it does not support diskless workstations (known as thin clients). Regardless of the reason, there is significant, pent-up demand for additional functionality surrounding Deployment Solution 6.9, hence the need for eXprescient's DS eXpress Tools product to fill the feature gap.

The potential market includes every one of the tens of thousands of Altiris Deployment Solution 6.9 users that currently exist.

### Full Description

eXprescient provides endpoint management tools that extend and enhance industry-leading Altiris Deploy Solution 6.9 from

Symantec. Endpoint management tools allow information technology (IT) organizations to remotely manage and monitor all of the servers and workstations in their corporate networks, as well as deploy and upgrade software, including new operating system upgrades (such as Windows 7). Leading endpoint management tools avoid most desk-side visits and reduce associated costs.

eXprescient's initial product, DS eXpress Tools (DeT), leverages and extends Deployment Solution 6.9 (DS 6.9) by adding reporting and a single console that lets IT personnel manage multiple DS 6.9 servers in a seamless, consolidated fashion. This is made possible through the use of eXprescient's innovative mesh architecture (described more in depth below).

Historically, large enterprises have needed to deploy multiple DS servers in their networks due to geographical separations and due to the fact that each DS server can only manage about 5000 network nodes. Because of these multiple servers, IT administrators have been unable to manage them in an efficient, homogenous manner. Instead, the portions of their network being controlled by a single DS server 6.9 have had to be managed separately. In addition, DS 6.9 manages the deployment of software and the collection of network management information by running "jobs" on individual workstations or "groups" of workstations all at once. These jobs are essentially sequences of actions that accomplish software deployment or management activity on the individual workstations.

Historically, DS 6.9 servers can only run jobs on the subset of a company's network that are managed by that particular DS 6.9 server, and each workstation can only be a member of a single group associated with a single DS 6.9 server. But with eXprescient's DeT solution running in conjunction with DS 6.9, not only can jobs be managed and launched simultaneously across the entire network from a single console, but cross-server, multi-membership groups can be created so that IT personnel can flexibly manage endpoint workstations. Combined with its cross-server inventory reporting and status rollup reports, DeT gives a consolidated view of an organization's entire network.

The distributed nature of DS eXpress Tools' innovative mesh management architecture, allows IT organizations to keep managing their networks using DS 6.9 without migrating to complex and inefficient hierarchical management methodologies. Those methodologies rely upon single-point "controllers" at the top of the management hierarchy with resulting inefficient use of resources and an accompanying performance hit. This is where the mesh architecture becomes important. By implementing a true peer-to-peer communication architecture where no one computer is in charge of a hierarchical operation, the processor and network-bandwidth intensive tasks associated with such things as deploying a new operating system enterprise wide, can be completely performed in an automated and distributed fashion with peak performance. eXprescient's system does NOT require huge additional investments in expensive hardware that can be associated with a hierarchical management tool.

By improving the efficiency of IT personnel in their day-to-day activities, while avoiding costly retooling and retraining on unproven management platforms, DS eXpress Tools from eXprescient gives today's IT manager an economical and safe way to use existing Altiris Deployment Solution 6.9 resources at maximum efficiency.

## Competition

Primary competitors are LANDesk, Microsoft, Kace (recently acquired by Dell), and Symantec.

LANDesk has a leading full-spectrum endpoint management suite that was recently positioned in Gartner's "magic quadrant" as having the highest "completeness of vision." They are strong in software distribution for remote sites, with targeted multicast and peer download capabilities that get good customer feedback. LANDesk has been historically weak in the areas of operating system deployment and PXE servers (which allow workstations to be booted over the network as is often required for automated operating system deployment), using tools that are cobbled together from multiple sources rather than providing a single, robust solution.

Microsoft is, well, Microsoft. Their endpoint management solutions are often chosen by those who want to have a single vendor handling everything having to do with their IT infrastructure. While Microsoft's tools are generally complete and thorough in what they do, Microsoft products do not generally reflect the heterogeneous nature of most IT organizations. Because of the complexity and inflexibility, many companies and organizations avoid Microsoft endpoint management solutions.

Kace is a relative new-comer to the market with their Kace Box. It is an "appliance" solution which comes with its suite of management and deployment tools pre-installed on a plug-and-play Linux server. The clear advantage, particularly in the SMB (Small and Medium Business) space, is its simplicity of installation and its low cost. Kace's primary weakness is the lack of scalability, with most installations managing 2000 nodes or fewer. Dell, Inc. just announced its intention to purchase Kace.

Symantec (through its Altiris acquisition several years ago) has been the industry leader, with its flagship client and server management suites which include Altiris Deployment Solution. While Symantec is here identified as a competitor because of their on-going development and strategy with Deployment Solution, we view our relationship with them as "coopetition" rather than pure competition. We are a Symantec development partner, and our product, DS eXpress Tools, is an add-on to Symantec's Altiris Deployment Solution 6.9 product. We are providing a significant value add to that product, and we enjoy a good working relationship with Symantec, because they recognize the significant value that DeT can provide many of their existing customers.

However, DS eXpress Tools is also competing in many ways with Symantec's NS product. We are currently focusing on the market segments where Symantec acknowledges that NS is not a good fit. Currently, Symantec is attempting to launch a new 7.x product that combines the DS and NS products on one platform, but it has resulted in reduced performance and functionality for the DS component as well as zero backwards compatibility. The resulting uncertainty is creating a favorable environment for continued use of DS 6.9 along with additional adoption of our DS eXpress Tools add-on.

## DS eXpress Tools is Unique

The most valuable product in the endpoint deployment and management space has been Altiris Deployment Solution, culminating with the current 6.9 release. This product is the tried and true workhorse of the Symantec endpoint management suite, yet it lacks many features needed by IT network administrators, including reporting, and the ability to manage large enterprise networks from a single, common management console. DS eXpress Tools fills these needs for the first

time with a mesh management architecture that makes Deployment Solution (DS) a complete enterprise management tool where multiple DS servers can be accessed and controlled from a single console.

The eXprescient mesh architecture applies many of the principles discovered and created for the explosive growth of the internet to enterprise endpoint management, such as:

- Avoiding single points of failure.
- Hierarchical bottlenecks.
- High-speed routing of messages through intermediate points.
- Efficient endpoint identification.
- Unified naming space from disparate name sources

All of these characteristics can be found in the eXprescient mesh architecture, which is not limited to the DS eXpress Tools product and which is being designed with the purpose of bringing end point management tools to the “cloud” by extending management tools to a highly distributed yet locally controlled model.

## **Summary**

DS eXpress Tools provides functionality and choice for customers who have long used Altiris Deployment Solution and who are not prepared to move to the Symantec Management Platform version. Through innovative mesh architecture eXprescient is meeting the requests of customers today, while building a bridge to tomorrow and cloud based management products that don't suffer from the frustration and inherent insecurity of web only services.