
# VitalSigns
# Evaluator's Guide

January 2010

**RPR Wyatt,Inc.**
2200 N. Central Avenue, Suite 500
Phoenix, Arizona 85004
USA

Voice 602-263-7779
http://www.RPRWyatt.com/VitalSigns

# Introduction

This guide introduces evaluators and reviewers to the key functionalities of VitalSigns™. The guide is not intended to provide a comprehensive explanation of every feature of VitalSigns, but rather to point out some of its highlights to help the reader decide if VitalSigns is likely to be a fit for their organization or not.

First, we'll tell you what VitalSigns is and what its purpose is. Then we'll help you get in installed, describe some key concepts, and point out some areas of the product you should look at.

## What is VitalSigns?

VitalSigns is an expert Domino administrator in a box-- designed to provide continuous piece of mind about the functioning of your messaging infrastructure. VitalSigns continually and tirelessly checks the status of your Domino servers looking for problems that could affect end users. Then it either fixes the problem if it can, or it alerts a human so the problem can be fixed before end users find out about it.

VitalSigns is also an IT management tool that allows you to plan, anticipate, and forecast Domino server performance. VitalSigns shows trends on usage, performance, and mail delivery to allow maximum performance and utilization. VitalSigns provides trend analysis in the form of Daily, Weekly, and Monthly graphs and reports that are easy to create and understand.

The goal of VitalSigns is to make sure you always know when your servers are in trouble before your end users do.

**VitalSigns allows you to be the expert you are, rather than the firefighter you sometimes have to be.**

VitalSigns does more than watch over Domino servers. In fact, it is a comprehensive monitoring and reporting tool for Lotus Domino servers and clusters, Lotus Notes Databases, Lotus Sametime Servers, BlackBerry Enterprise Servers, BlackBerry Users, BlackBerry Devices, standard Internet Mail Services such as POP3, IMAP, SMTP, and LDAP, DNS Servers, Network Devices, and even URLs (for monitoring iNotes or other mission-critical URLs).

## We Feel Your Pain

Have you ever gotten a call from a high-profile end user asking if one of your Domino servers has a problem? It is not pleasant to be scrambling in the background to find the answer while the end user knows more than you do.

Do you know the status of your Domino servers? Is mail piling up on one of your servers or is one of your servers running low on disk space? Has one of your servers become slooooooow? If so, trouble is headed your way!

VitalSigns answers these questions and more—before end users notice and complain about system failures.

## Getting Started

Installing VitalSigns is a simple, straight-forward matter. But before you start, it's important to note that VitalSigns is a *client* application—that means you do not install it on a Domino server. This means you don't have to make any changes to your production environment.

For purposes of evaluation, the best approach is to simply install it on your own workstation. Any server your Notes client can reach, regardless of server platform, version, and domain, can be monitored.

To get started, click the setup file, as shown below, and follow the setup wizard.


Note: VitalSigns requires that the Notes Program directory be on the system Path.

## Running VitalSigns for the first time

The first time your run VitalSigns you will be greeted with a configuration wizard.


### Enter your Evaluation Key

To configure your evaluation period, select File, Preferences, Performance and Licensing. Then click the button "Enter Evaluation Code"

### Start the Service

Click the Start Monitoring button in the icon bar to start the service.


Now you can take a break. After ten minutes or so, the Status tab should be populated with data, and after an hour or so the Graphs tab should have enough data to be interesting.

## Product highlights

VitalSigns is a *very* rich application with lots of subtleties and nuances that reflect years of development and feedback from real-life administrators. However, when you are evaluating the product for the first time, it's important to hit the highlights to see if it is worth uncovering the subtleties later.

The purpose of this section is simply to point out those highlights and to hopefully pique your interest to learn more after this brief introduction.

### Problems that VitalSigns Detects and Corrects

VitalSigns is really, really good at monitoring Domino servers. The primary thing it does is periodically verify that the Domino server is responding to

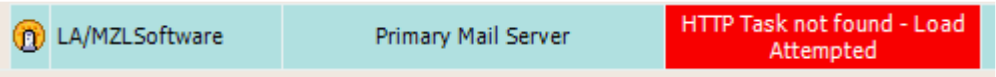
Notes client requests—this is the number one thing that end users care about!

VitalSigns will look for issues related to disk space, mail delivery, memory, performance, and server tasks.

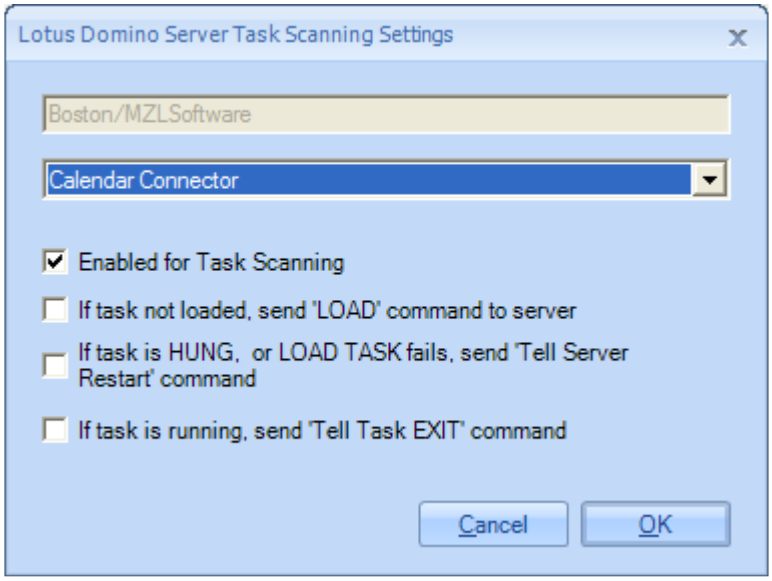
## Monitoring Domino Server Tasks

VitalSigns can scan any Domino server task, including custom 3rd Party Tasks. VitalSigns can detect when tasks are hung, when they are missing, even when they are running but aren't supposed to be. Then it can take action: it can send a "load task", "tell task exit", or even "tell server restart" command to the server, depending on the task and how you configure it.

Here's an example of VitalSigns taking action in response to a server task issue-- HTTP was not found, so a "load http" command was automatically sent.




Configuring Domino server tasks is easy.  Just open the server properties box and click the Server Tasks tab.

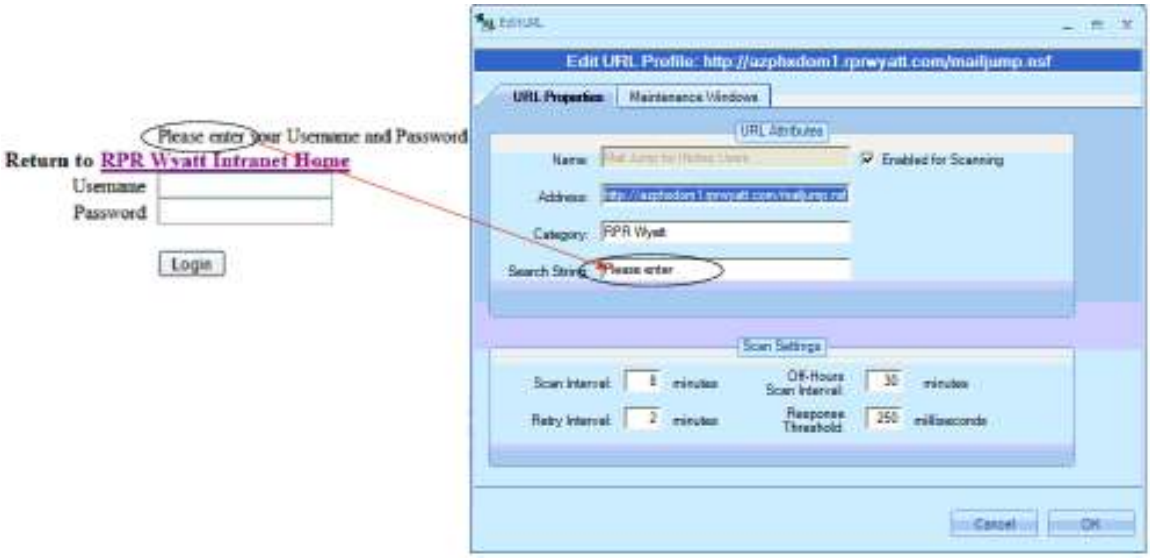



For instance, you might need to restart the server immediately if HTTP is hung, but you might decide to wait until after hours if the Calendar Connector is hung.

## Monitoring iNotes and other URLs

If you support iNotes in your organization, you need to know that not only is the main "mail jump" URL responding, but you also need to know that is responding as expected – by prompting the users to enter their username and password, rather than displaying a "404 error" or something similar. For example, your primary web page might look something like this:

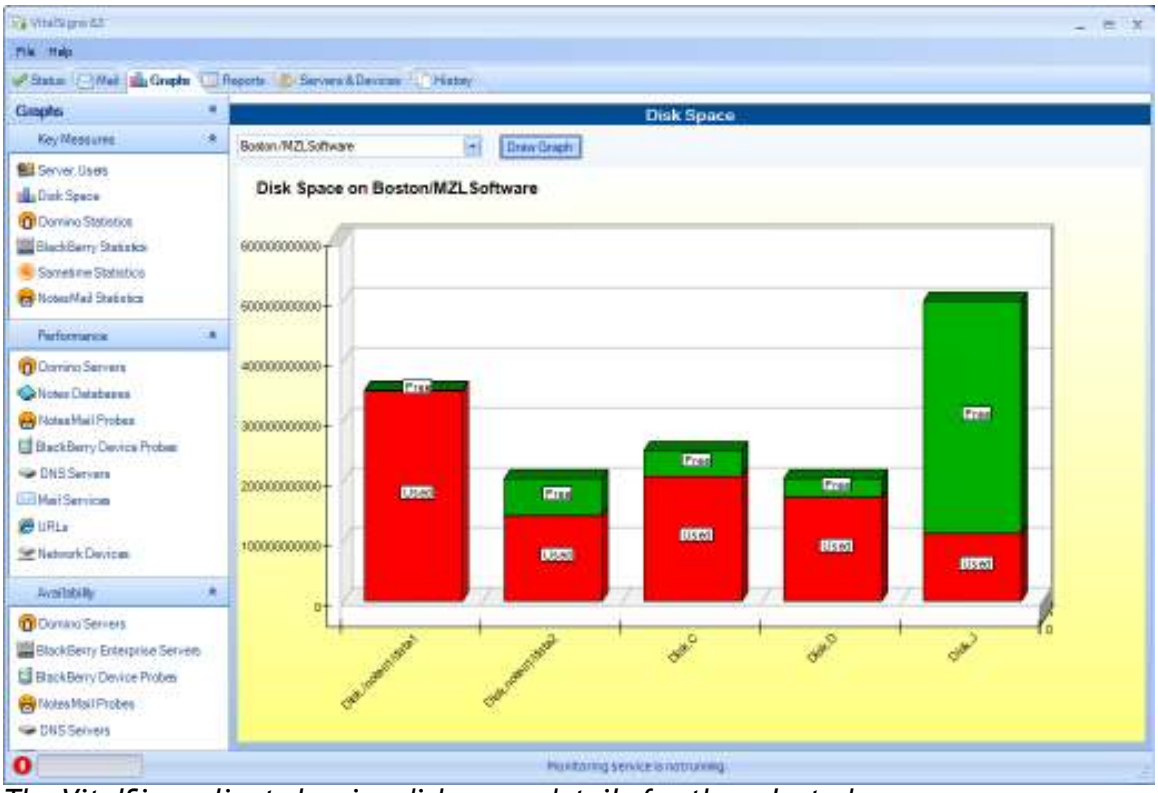

If this is the case for you, you can set up URL monitoring to check the server response a specific string that should be found on the web page, for instance the string "Please enter" shown above.




VitalSigns will request the web page using an ordinary HTTP Get command, then parse through the text that is returned, and check to see if the expected string is found or not.

## Managing Disk Space

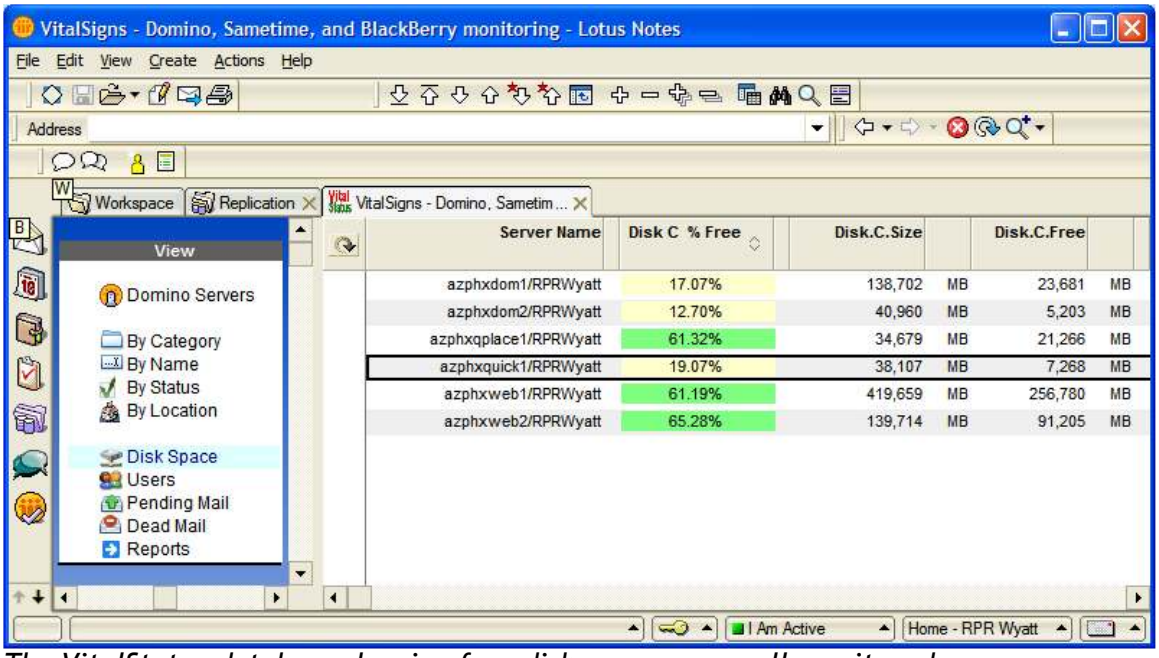
The VitalSigns client Graphs tab has a Disk Space link that will show a detailed graph of every drive on the selected server. This graph looks great and can be easily copied to the clipboard when you email your manager asking for a new drive!



*The VitalSigns client showing disk space details for the selected server.*

Another option for managing disk space is to use the VitalStatus database, which is described in the next section. The VitalStatus database is a Notes database that contains a Notes document for every server. Every time VitalSigns scans a server, the document for that server gets updated. In each document there are two fields for each drive on the server. For instance a Domino server that uses the C drive would have fields named Disk.C.Size and Disk.C.Free. Servers with other drives would have similar fields.

The Disk Space view, which is included in the VitalStatus template, takes advantage of this information to calculate the free space on the drive and color-code it to make it easy to see where problems might be looming.




*The VitalStatus database showing free disk space across all monitored servers*

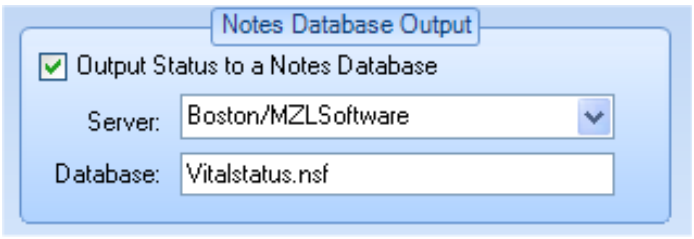
The advantage of this view is that you can see all the disks across all your servers in once place.

## VitalStatus Database

The VitalStatus database is a browser-enabled Notes database designed to keep stakeholders informed about the status of your Domino infrastructure.

The reports and status information is read-only, and the design of the database is open so it can be easily customized to the unique requirements of your organization.

Create the VitalStatus using the VitalStatus database template, then go to Preferences to tell VitalSigns where the VitalStatus database has been installed.




The VitalStatus database is browser enabled and is also optimized for viewing from mobile devices, such as the Apple iPhone or a BlackBerry.

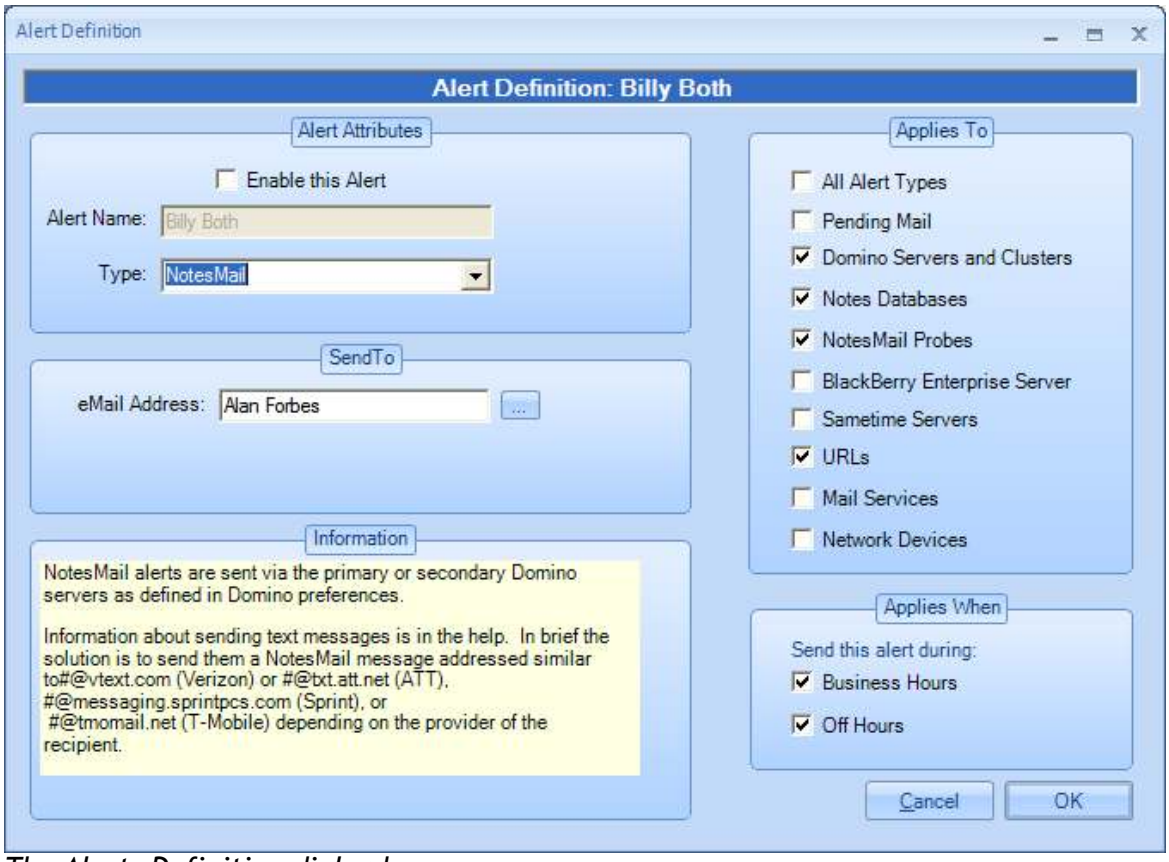

## Alerts

When VitalSigns detects a problem, it can send out an alert to the person responsible for fixing the issue. Alerts can be sent out via NotesMail, SMTP mail, or as an SNMP Trap to another monitoring station.

In the even that your Domino servers are down, you will still get the alert!

You can also fine-tune alerts to go to different people during business- and off-hours, or to different people based on the type of alert, such as whether it is a problem with a BlackBerry server or a Domino server.

Different people, different alerts, -- align the alert with the person distributed responsibility.



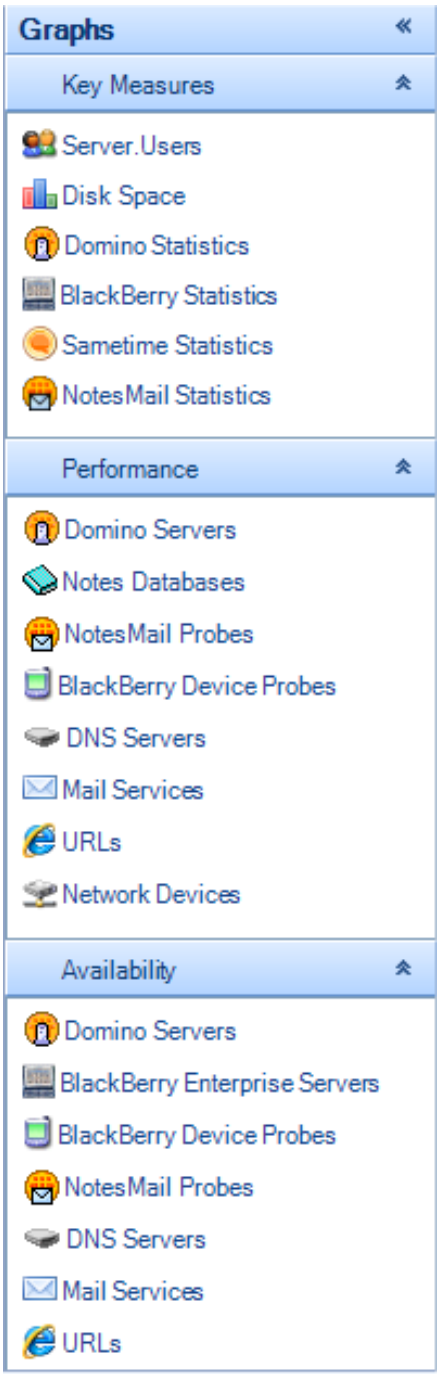

*The Alerts Definition dialog box*

## Graphs

The Graphs tab offers a wide variety of pre-defined graphs designed to provide key management information. Along the left side of the screen is a selection box which organizes the graphs into three main categories of Key Measures, Performance, and Availability.

Selecting an item, such as Domino Servers, under either Performance or Availability populates the selection box with the names of your monitored servers. Simply select a server and click the Draw Graph button.

For key measures, we suggest you take a look at Disk Space and the Domino Statistics such as Server.Availability. You may be surprised at what you learn about your environment!




## Summary

VitalSigns constantly watches over your servers and applies its administration expertise to uncover problems before end users are affected.

VitalSigns diligently alerts you or selected team members of issues as they uncovered so that they can take corrective action before stakeholders are affected.

It consolidates this information into one place (the VitalStatus database) to make it easy to understand what is going on and to make problems easy to spot and fix.

Keeps tabs on Notes, application, disk space, and replication clusters

We hope we've piqued your interest and that you'll invest the time to learn more about what VitalSigns can do for you.

### Additional Resources

Select Help, Help Topics from the VitalSigns client will bring up a compiled help file with comprehensive documentation

The “VitalSigns White Paper” takes a deep dive into how VitalSigns monitors Domino servers, Clusters, and Notes databases.

You can also visit the product website at
http://www.rprwyatt.com/vitalsigns for brochures, flash demos, and more.