Project Showcase:

N-able Migrates from FrameMaker® to Flare

PRESENTED BY
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AGENDA

- Migration Process – Hits and Misses
- Tools Currently In Use
- Pulse Trial
- Tools We'd Like To Use
- Questions

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MIGRATION PROCESS – CONTEXT

- N-able by SolarWinds produces remote monitoring and management software
- N-central (the primary product) manages IP-enabled devices and IT infrastructure
- Documentation provided in the form of online help (HTML) and print (PDF)

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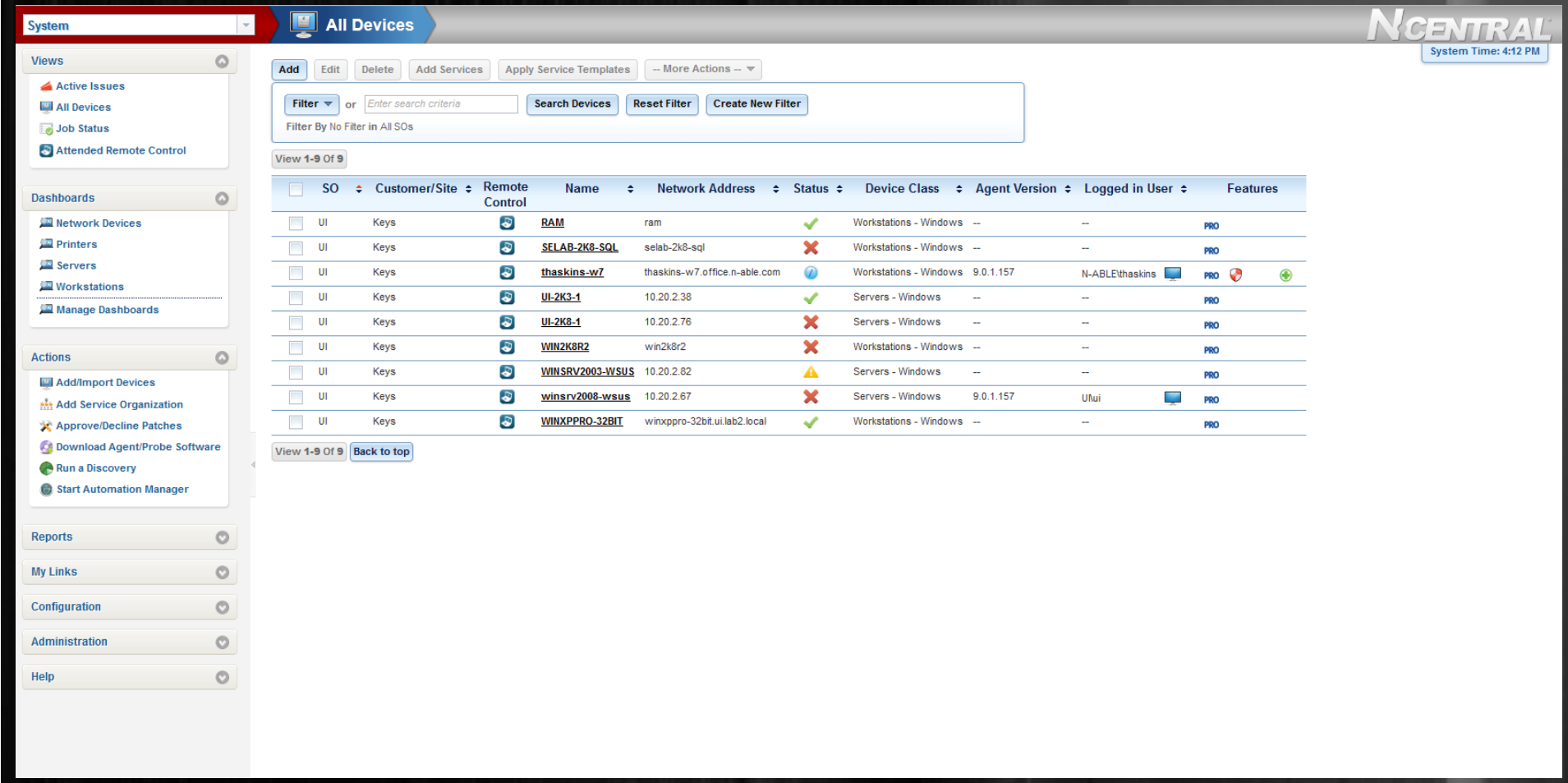
MIGRATION PROCESS – CONTEXT



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PRE-MIGRATION ENVIRONMENT

- In 2007, documentation for N-central 6.0 was produced using Adobe® FrameMaker® and processes designed for print output
- To produce online help for N-central, Quadralay® WebWorks Publisher® was used to convert source files to HTML
- Online help was “bundled” with UI and could not be revised after GA release
- Significant pre- and post-generation effort required to produce online help

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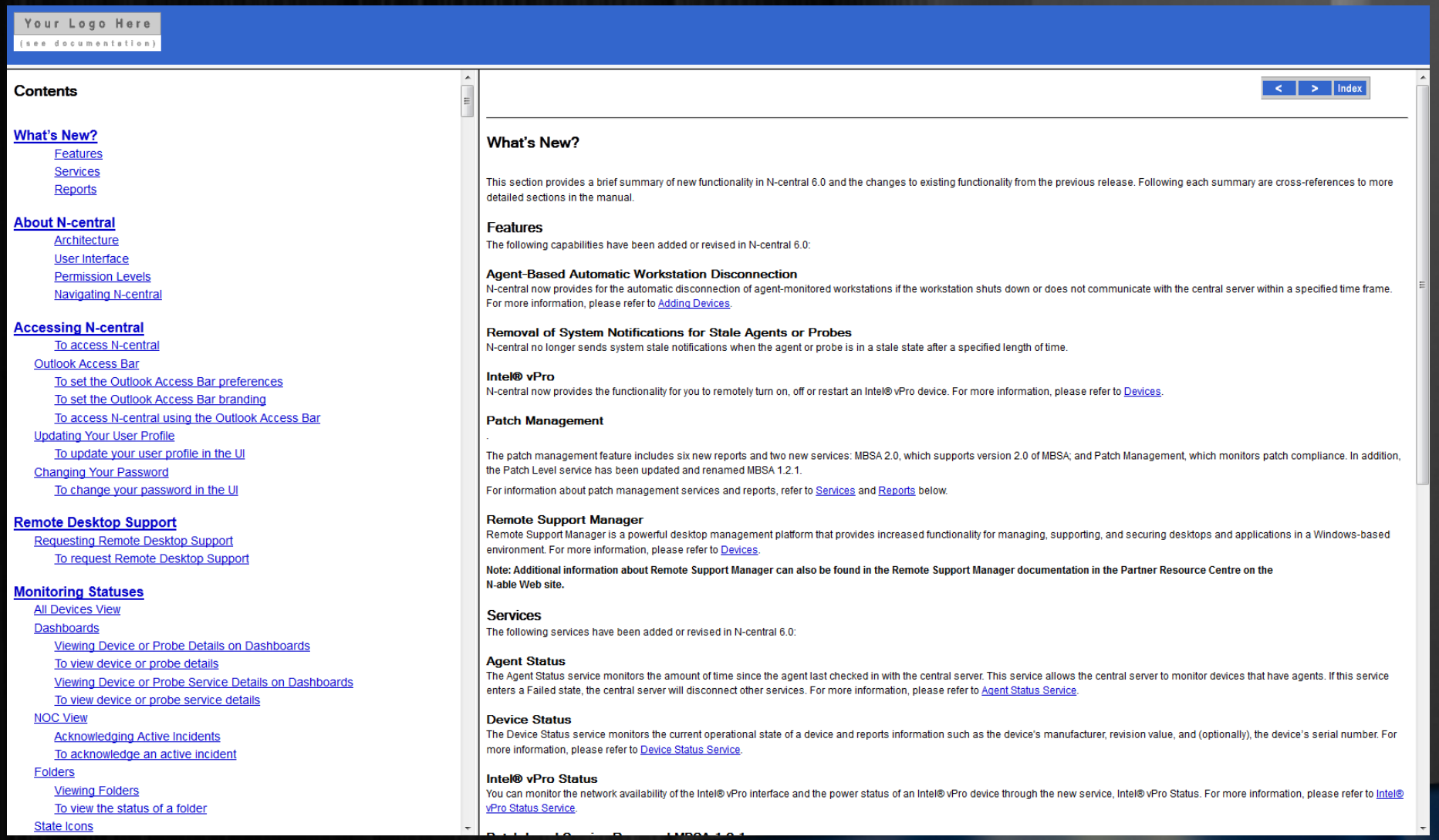
PRE-MIGRATION ENVIRONMENT



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WHY WE NEEDED TO MIGRATE

- Award-winning application not supported well by sub-standard delivery of documentation
- With no integrated search, navigating through help content was difficult and frustrating for customers
- Publishing process was convoluted and unnecessarily time-consuming

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NEW DIRECTION & EVALUATION

- Based on customer feedback, management was convinced that the print model was no longer suitable for a browser-based application
- Evaluated several help authoring tools including Flare 3.0 and RoboHELP 6.0
- Flare won hands-down based on features and open architecture

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MIGRATION PROCESS

- Due to an initiative to host docs through SharePoint, technical content was sub-divided using marker tags
- Marker tags allowed us to define filenames for individual topics
- Migration of source files went well with some code editing required after the process was completed

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IMMEDIATE POST-MIGRATION ISSUES

- SharePoint initiative required us to "de-construct" Flare web help output
- Individual topics were checked in as SharePoint documents
- All formatting, navigation and search features were lost
- Eventually, management was convinced to deploy web help output

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POST-MIGRATION BENEFITS

- Adopting Flare web help output radically improved speed of delivery of documentation – updates that previously took 2-3 days could be done in an hour
- Hosting help content on web server allows for flexibility in editing
- Customer experience improved with integrated search capability

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POST-MIGRATION BENEFITS

- Customers loved the online help improvements
- Online help uses same CSS as the browser-based application
- Web help output reduced in size to one-tenth that of previous releases' online Help files

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TOOLS CURRENTLY IN USE

- Flare 9.1 currently used for creating and editing all technical documentation content
- Analyzer 6.0 is used to assist in troubleshooting and problem-solving
- Capture 6.0 used for images
- Feedback Server purchased to solicit customer feedback and track usage of online help

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PULSE TRIAL

- To replace Feedback Server, Madcap Pulse is currently being evaluated in a small (12-person) internal trial
- Initial results are very promising with testers impressed by Pulse's features
- Reporting greatly expanded from previous Feedback Server capabilities
- Trial to conclude at end of September

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TOOLS WE'D LIKE TO USE

- N-central 6.7 was localized into French, Italian, German and Spanish
- Localization was problematic; translation service did not have Madcap tools!
- Approximately five (5) person-days required to troubleshoot problems
- Future localization would definitely be improved with Lingo

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QUESTIONS

Please feel free to ask any questions that you might have

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N-able Case Study

http://www.madcapsoftware.com/casestudy/n-able.aspx

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