SCCM vs. SCOM – You Shouldn't Choose Between Them, And Here's Why

Microsoft's system center family is comprised of two similarly named products – System Center Configuration Manager and System Center Operations Manager. A commonly asked question is which of the two products to learn, implement and integrate into the enterprise IT department. However, that's a flawed question. Let's find out why.

System Center Configuration Manager – The Grunt

The job of SCCM is to give enterprise IT departments the ability to manage the entirety of an organization's Windows infrastructure from a "single pane of glass." This includes configuring physical and virtual Windows desktops and servers, managing access permissions for on-site and remote users and deploying software across the enterprise. In addition, SCCM provides the tools needed to automate the important tasks required to effectively maintain Windows devices.

Some key use cases for SCCM are as follows:

- Giving users self-service access to enterprise applications via a secure portal
- Automatically provisioning user devices with the appropriate VPN, Wi-Fi and email profiles for access to company resources
- Detecting and delivering the appropriate software updates to devices
- Automatically deploying pre-configured Windows installs
- Providing IT departments with integrated security and compliance management tools to protect against malware and unauthorized access
- Managing the distribution of content via enterprise content delivery networks, or ECDNs

System Center Operations Manager – The Overseer

In contrast to SCCM which is all about doing, SCOM is all about viewing. Also focused around the concept of a "single pane of glass," SCOM is designed to be the information and monitoring hub of the enterprise IT department. It

gives administrators visibility into things like system security and performance and provides the necessary tools to configure alerts and notifications. Essentially, SCOM's job is to make sure SCCM is doing its job properly.

Some key use cases for SCOM are as follows:

- Agent-based monitoring of server and desktop hardware, Windows operating systems, system services and specific applications
- Agentless monitoring by proxy of systems that cannot have a monitoring agent installed
- Hypervisor monitoring, including Hyper-V and vSphere

A Combined Approach – The Best Option

As mentioned at the outset, it's a flawed question to ask whether SCCM or SCOM is better to implement in the enterprise IT department. Ultimately, the fact of the matter is that these two products are designed to work harmoniously together. With them, administrators can better ensure compliance and security within their Windows environment. They can save time, increase efficiency and reduce errors by automating the repetitive aspects of system administration. And perhaps most importantly, they can gain the necessary visibility into whether the company's systems are running at peak capacity or not. This allows them to better predict and remediate issues, plan maintenance windows and report on problem areas.

In a world where enterprises are under increasing pressure to modernize, adapt and evolve, the IT departments that support them are under increasing pressure to provide smooth technology operations amid a sea of globalization, disparate toolsets and BYOD mentalities. By leveraging both the SCCM and SCOM products effectively, the modern enterprise IT department is better positioned to become a well-oiled machine and meet the demands head on.