

Observe-IT

a freeware solution for system monitoring



Manual

Content

Preface	3
System requirements	3
Software	3
Hardware	3
Installation	3
The main window	4
1 - The menu	4
2 - The symbols	5
3 - The system tree	5
4 - Detail display	5
5 - The result log	5
The properties of a system	6
Tab „Properties“	6
Tab „Actions“	7
The properties of a service	8
Tab „Base“	8
Tab „Other“	9
The program options	10
The collection options	10
Tab „Sound“	10
Tab „E-Mail“	11
Tab „Command“	12
Checkable service types and their parameters	12
PING	12
HTTP	13
HTTPS	13
FTP	13
OPEN PORT	14

Preface

Observe-IT is a free software (freeware) for system monitoring in a network. It can check the services PING, HTTP, HTTPS, FTP and open ports on specified systems. If a service fails for a number of times, it can execute some actions, too. Observe-IT can play a sound, send an e-mail or run a command line.

It is mainly designed for administrators and advanced users, who will be able to react soon on failures. Naturally it can't compete with the big commercial solutions. But it is much smaller and its cleared up surface is easier to use. It is free of charge and this might be the greatest argument to use it. This was also the intention for my development and I hope that it is useful for you.

Please note that I make it available free of charge for private and commercial use, but without any warranty for its function and/or obligation for support. By installing or using the software you must agree to the license, which you can find in the menu help -> about.

System requirements

Software

- Windows 2000 or XP (2003 and Vista were not tested yet, but should work too)
- .Net Framework 2.0 from Microsoft

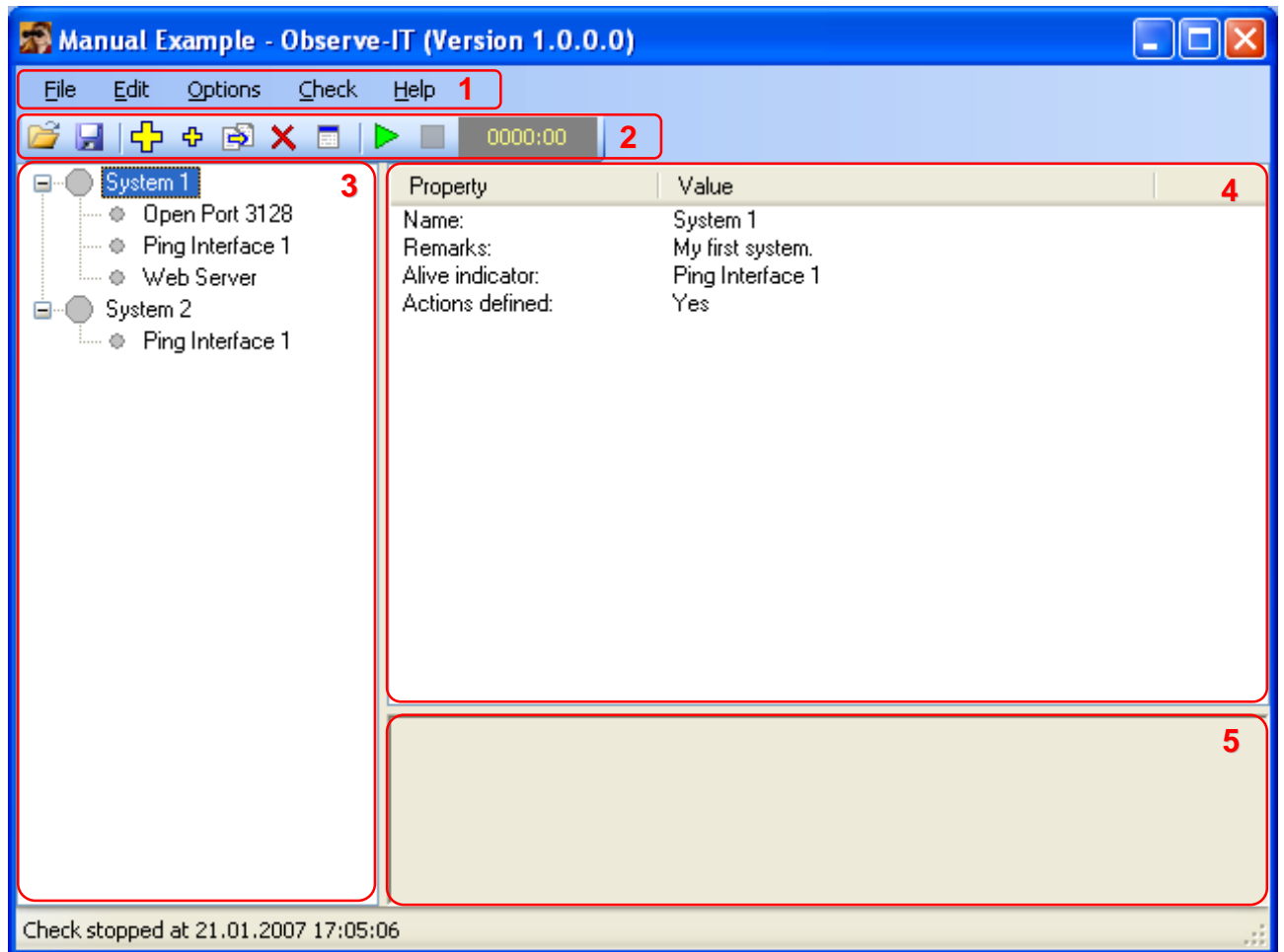
Hardware

- According to the requirements of the operating system
- Network access is available and configured

Installation

01. Download the newest installation file from <http://www.observe-it.de>
02. Execute the installation file in your user profile (it's a click-once installation) and in the appearing window click on "start"
03. After unpacking of the archive into the temporary folder the setup will be started automatically
04. Follow in the further installation process the instructions of the setup

The main window



1 - The menu

01. File

- 01.01. New: Creates a new collection (of systems)
- 01.02. Open: Opens a collection from a file
- 01.03. Save as: Saves the current collection in a file
- 01.04. Recently used: A list of the last loaded collections which can be directly opened
- 01.05. Exit: Exit the program

02. Edit

- 02.01. Add -> System: Adds a new system
- 02.02. Add -> Service: Adds a new service
- 02.03. Copy to: Copies the selected object (in the system tree)
- 02.04. Delete: Deletes the selected object
- 02.05. Properties: Opens the properties of the selected object (for editing)

03. Options

- 03.01. Program: Opens the options of Observe-IT, where you can define a collection to be always loaded on program start
- 03.02. Current Collection: Opens the options of the current collection, where you can specify the details of the actions
- 03.03. Clear recently used: Clears the list of last loaded collections

04. Check

- 04.01. Start: Starts the check of systems and services
- 04.02. Stop: Stops the check

05. Help

- 05.01. Observe-IT online: Opens <http://www.observe-it.de>
- 05.02. About: Shows information to the program and the license-agreement

2 - The symbols

Here are the most common program functions from the menu directly available. The past time in hours and minutes is also displayed here while a check is running.

3 - The system tree

A list of all systems and services in the current collection. The states (results of the check) are displayed in the colours red, yellow and green. Select a system or a service in the system tree in order to work on it or to show its information in the detail display and in the result log.

Tip: Right-click in the system tree to open a context menu with all functions of the edit menu.

4 - Detail display

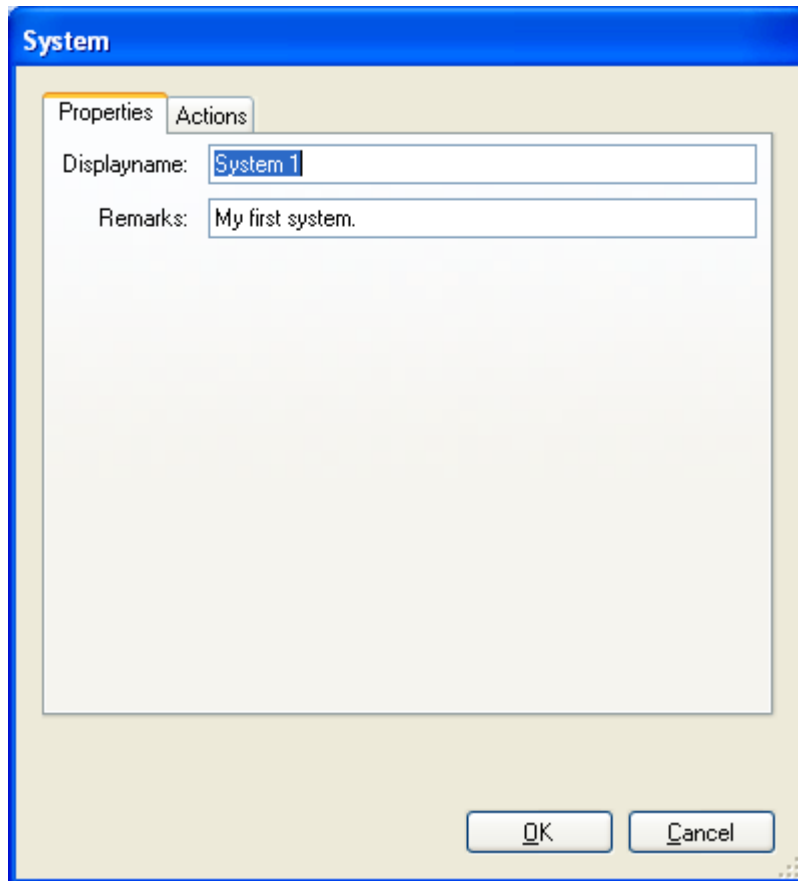
Shows detailed information of the selected object.

5 - The result log

Shows the last results of the check with date and time.

The properties of a system

Tab „Properties“

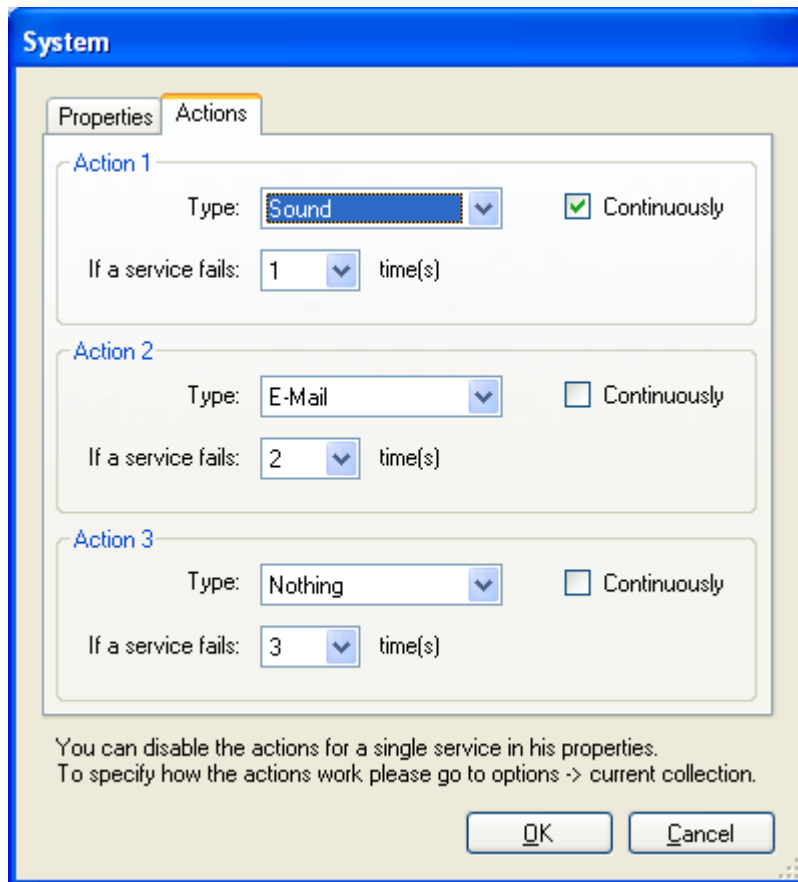


The image shows a dialog box titled "System" with a blue header bar. Inside the dialog, there are two tabs: "Properties" (which is selected and highlighted with an orange border) and "Actions". Below the tabs, there are two text input fields. The first field is labeled "Displayname:" and contains the text "System 1". The second field is labeled "Remarks:" and contains the text "My first system.". At the bottom right of the dialog, there are two buttons: "OK" and "Cancel".

The „Displayname“ is the name of the system, which will be shown in the system tree and in the actions (if defined). The length is limited to 20 signs.

In the „Remarks“ you can enter a describing text to this system.

Tab „Actions“



Here you can define three actions, which will be executed if a service of the system fails for a number of times in sequence.

Under „Type“ you can choose the type of the action.

The numeric value „If a service fails: X time(s)“ defines the number of times (X), on which the action is to be executed. For example if a value of 3 is entered here, the action is executed in case of the third sequential failure of a service.

If „Continuously“ is activated, the action will be executed continuously when the service fails again (in sequence).

Tip: You can disable the actions for a single service in its properties if necessary.

The properties of a service

Tab „Base“

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Service (of system System 1)" with two tabs: "Base" and "Other". The "Base" tab is active. It contains the following fields:

- Displayname: Ping Interface 1
- Type: PING (dropdown menu)
- Host or ip-address: 192.168.0.2
- Check every: 1 (dropdown menu) minute(s)
- TTL: 128 (dropdown menu)
- Timeout: 500 (dropdown menu)

Below these fields is a "Description to the type:" section with a scrollable text area containing the following text:

Sends a ping to the host. TTL is the number of times the ping can be forwarded, default is 128. Timeout is a limit for the lifetime of the ping, default is 1000 milliseconds.

At the bottom of the dialog are three buttons: "Test", "OK", and "Cancel".

The „Displayname“ is the name of the service, which will be shown in the system tree and in the actions (if defined). The length is limited to 20 signs.

Under „Type“ you could choose the type of the service, for example PING, HTTP or OPEN PORT.

In the field „Host or ip-address“ (in some types named “URL”) you enter the ip-address or hostname of the service. For example with a PING you enter the ip-address or the host name, with HTTP you enter the URL (if necessary inclusive a port).

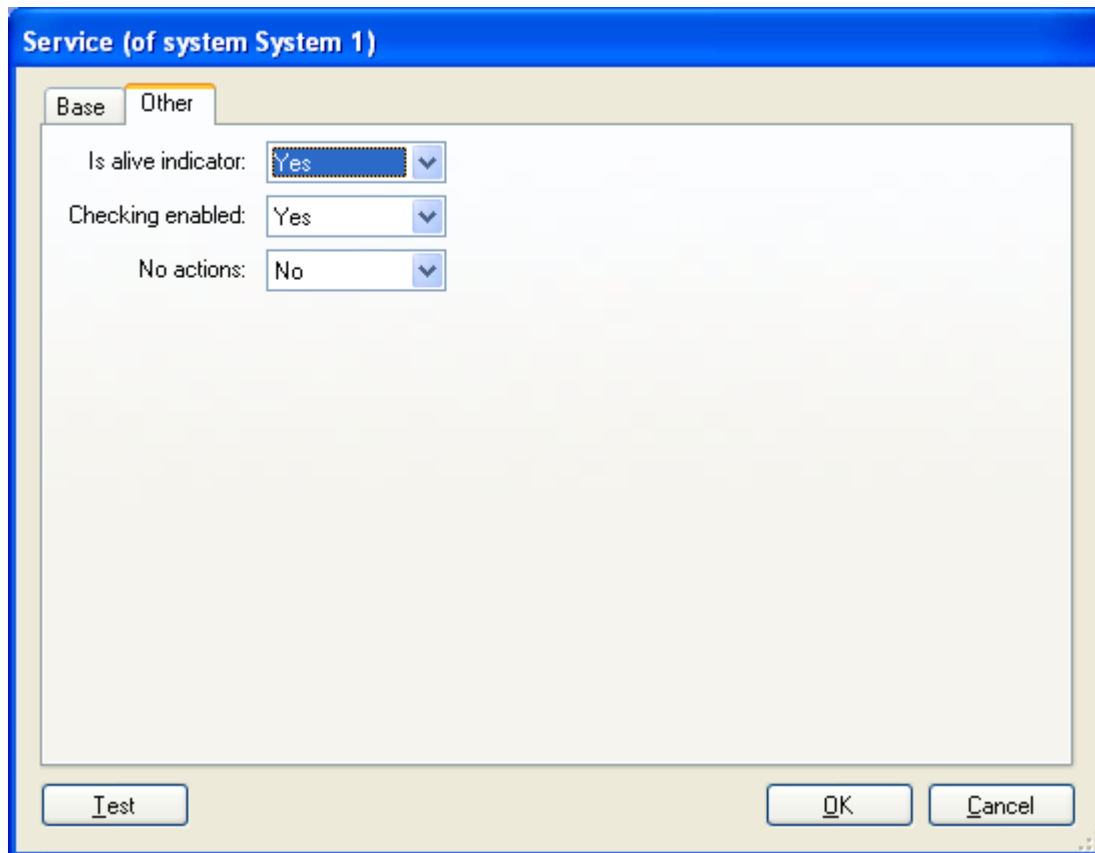
In „Checks every: X minute(s)“ you specify in which interval of minutes the service is to be checked. Please note that the check needs time and therefore unimportant services should have longer intervals.

The below fields are depending on the selected type of service. In them further characteristics of the service can be specified.

In „Description to the type“ you find explanations to the current service type. See also „Checkable service types and their parameters“ further below.

The button „Test“ starts immediately a check of the current service. You can examine by the displayed result whether your inputs can be processed correctly.

Tab „Other“



The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Service (of system System 1)". It has two tabs: "Base" and "Other". The "Other" tab is selected. Inside the dialog, there are three dropdown menus:

- "Is alive indicator:" set to "Yes"
- "Checking enabled:" set to "Yes"
- "No actions:" set to "No"

At the bottom of the dialog, there are three buttons: "Test", "OK", and "Cancel".

The value „Is alive indicator“ defines, that the current service should be used as proof of life for the system. Only one „alive indicator“ in a system is allowed.

If the service marked as „alive indicator“ fails, the whole system and all its other services will get the state failed.

Because the check of further services will not be executed in this case, it positively affects the speed of checking while a system fails. It is recommended to define an „alive indicator“ per system.

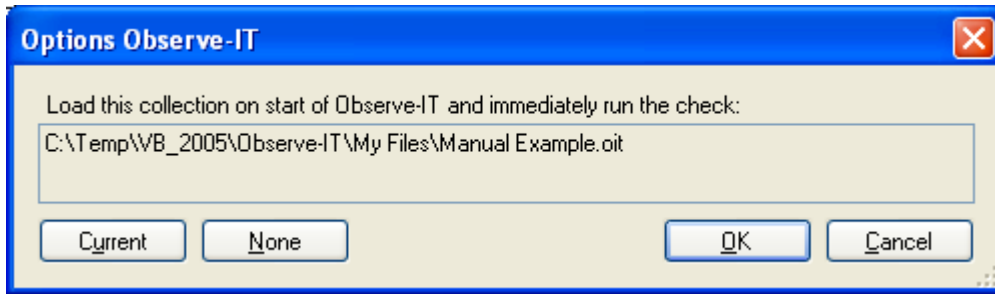
„Checking enabled“ specifies, if the service will be checked or not. Disabling is intended for temporary purposes (for example during maintenance work).

If the service is an „alive indicator“, it loses this state when the checking is disabled.

With the setting „no actions“ can be specified that the loss of the service will not lead to an execution of any actions defined with the system.

If the service is an „alive indicator“, it loses this state when the actions are disabled.

The program options



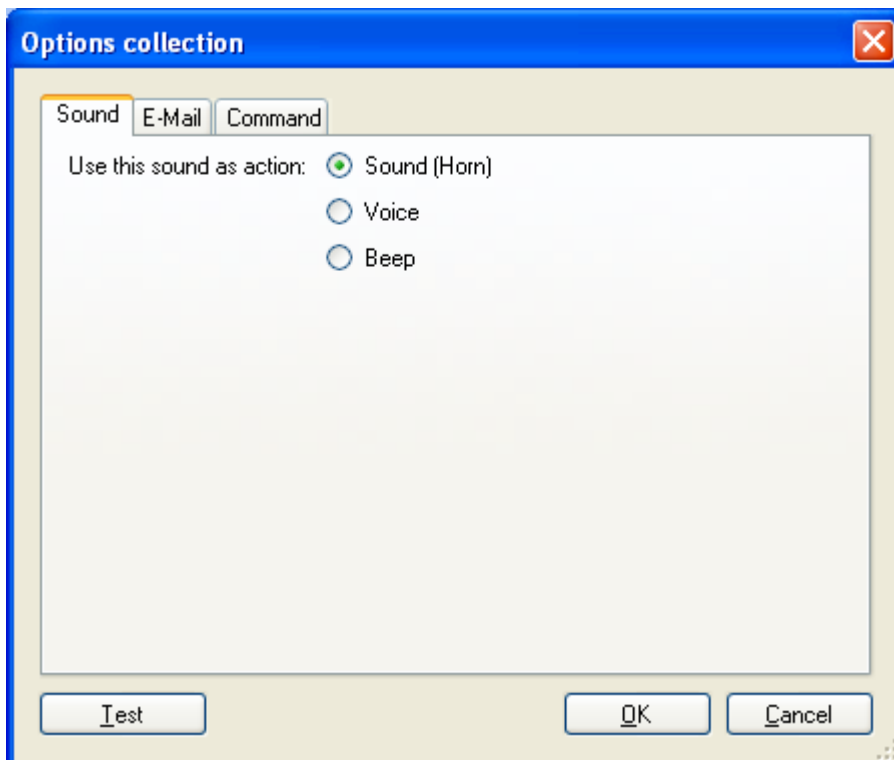
In the options of the program a collection can be defined, which is to be automatically loaded during the execution of Observe-IT. In the following the check is automatically started, too.

The button „Current“ takes over the path to the currently loaded collection.

The button „None“ deletes the entry.

The collection options

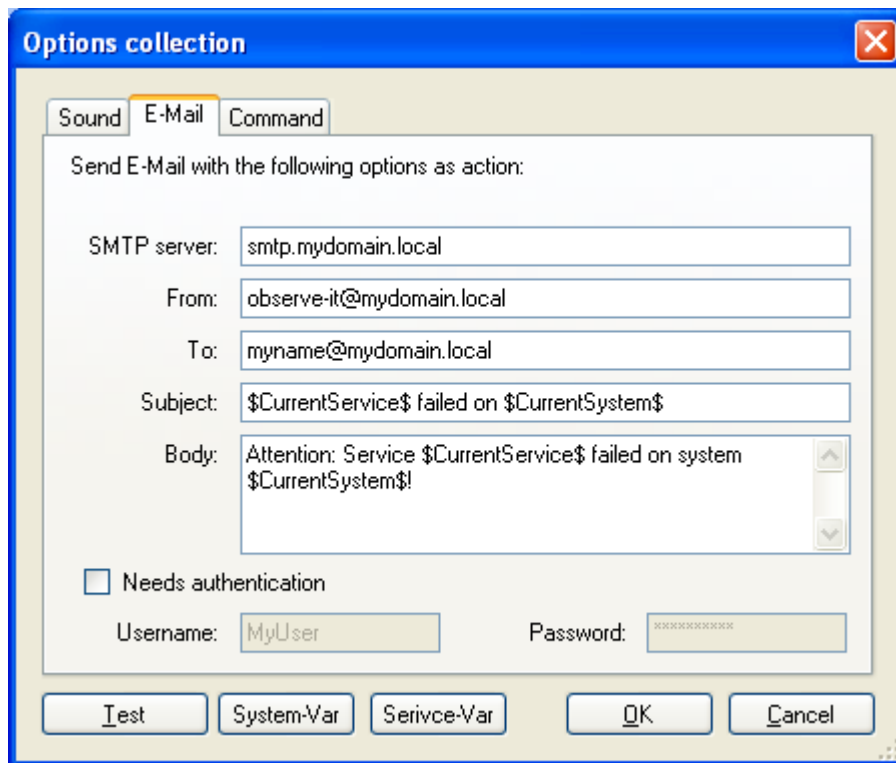
Tab „Sound“



In the register „sound“ you can specify, which sound will be used as action in case of a service failure.

With the button „test“ you can play the selected sound.

Tab „E-Mail“



In the tab „E-Mail“ you can specify how mails are send as action.

In the field „SMTP server“ you must enter a mail server, with which you are allowed to send smtp messages. Change the sender („From“) and recipient („To“) according to your requirements.

In the „Subject“ and „Body“ substitutable symbols can be inserted for the current service and the current system, which are replaced during execution of the action by the respective names.

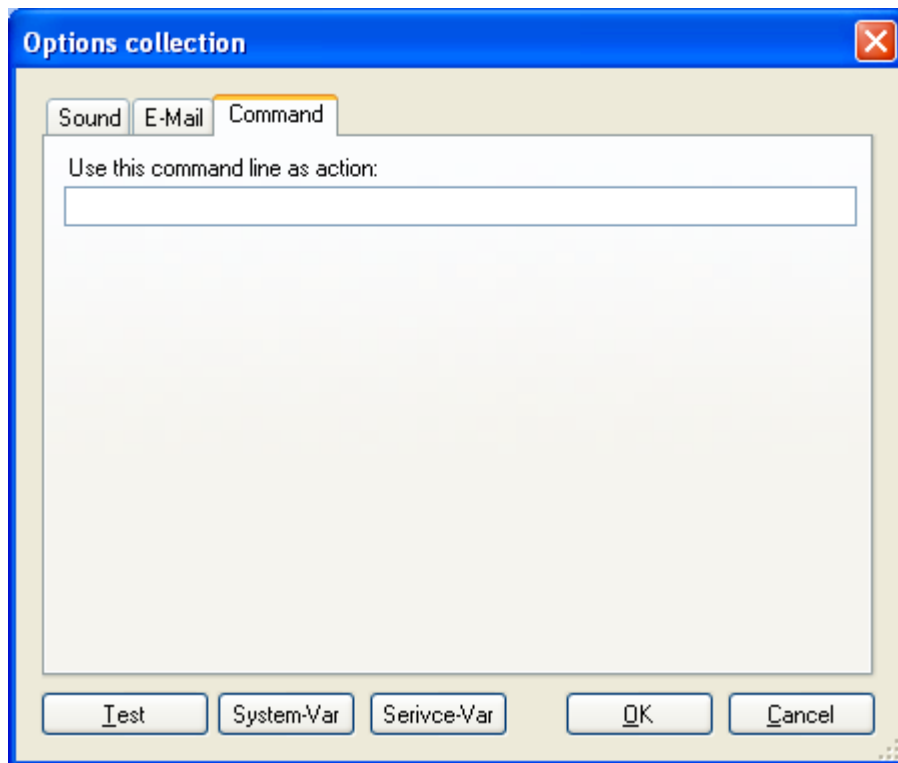
Click on the button „System-Var“ to copy a substitutable symbol for the system into the clipboard or „Service-Var“ for a substitutable symbol of the service. You can insert the substitutable symbols with the context menu or [CTRL] + [V] at the desired position.

If an authentication at the mail server is necessary, please enter the username („Username“) and the password („Password“), after you have activated „Needs authentication“.

Please note that the username and the password are not stored encrypted in the collection (file). If access by others to it is not impossible, it is recommended to create an account with reduced rights on the mail server.

With the button „test“ you can send a test mail to verify your settings. If errors should arise, they will be displayed.

Tab „Command“



In the tab „command“ you can set any command line as action. Substitutable symbols for systems and services can also be inserted here.

When you click on the button „Test“ the command line is executed with sample names. If errors should arise during the execution, they will be displayed.

Checkable service types and their parameters

PING

A ping is a set of network packages (normally an “echo request” and an “echo response”) that fundamentally checks the availability of a system in a network.

Host or ip-address: Enter the hostname or the ip-address of the system here, for example „localhost“ or „127.0.0.1“

TTL: A value of 1 to 254, which specifies the maximum number of times the ping can be forwarded (for example over a router)

Timeout: The maximum lifetime of the ping within a range of 1 to 10000 milliseconds, later responses will be dropped

HTTP

Sends a HTTP request (comparable to the Internet Explorer) to the specified web server and tries to read from it.

A reliable check of web pages over a proxy is not possible at this time.

URL: Enter the URL of the web server or the web page which should be checked here, if necessary inclusive port (if it not uses the default port 80), for example „http://www.google.com/“ or „http://www.google.com:80/“

Tip: You can also open the site in your favourite browser and copy the URL from its address line.

HTTPS

Sends a HTTPS request (comparable to the Internet Explorer) to the specified web server for an encrypted connection and tries to read from it. Please note that only web pages with valid certificates can be checked.

A reliable check of web pages over a proxy is not possible at this time.

URL: Enter the URL of the web server or the web page which should be checked here, if necessary inclusive port (if it not uses the default port 443), for example „https://www.my-secure-site.com/“ or „https://www.my-secure-site.com:443/“

Tip: You can also open the site in your favourite browser and copy the URL from its address line.

FTP

Tries to establish a ftp connection to the desired URL and tries to read the name of the current directory (command pwd).

URL: Enter the URL of the ftp server or the ftp site which should be checked here, if necessary inclusive port (if it not uses the default port 21) and authentication, for example „ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/“ or „ftp://user:password@my-ftp-site.com:21/“

Hint: Please note that the username and the password are not stored encrypted in the collection (file). If access by others to it is not impossible, it is recommended to create an account with reduced rights on the ftp server.

OPEN PORT

Tries to connect to the specified port on the system and to read from it (if reading is enabled). A port is normally only open if a program is listening on it. This is often an indication for the fact that the program and/or the process works and is available.

Host or ip-address: Enter the hostname or the ip-address of the system here, for example „localhost“ or „127.0.0.1“

Port: The port on the system within the range of 1 to 32767, with which the connection is to be tried

Try to read: If it is set to “Yes”, reading on this port will be tried. Normally reading from a port is no problem, but in extreme situations this might cause failures on the host.

Hint: Please try to read from a port in a test environment first!