Network Computing Editorial Review of IOLAN SCG Console Servers

An independent product review testing the Out-of-Band Mangement capabilities of IOLAN SCG Console Servers. Originally posted by **Network Computing here**.

Managing data centres and large distributed networks demands remote access to critical infrastructure devices as issues can be quickly resolved before they become disasters. This avoids tedious and expensive site visits, but if the network at the remote site fails, support staff will lose access to these devices.

Perle Systems has the ideal solution as its **IOLAN remote console servers** provide highly redundant OOB (out-of-band) management access to critical network devices. They look to have every eventuality covered as along with dual, redundant Gigabit copper and fibre ports for WAN access, they can fall back to a wireless network, an integral V.92 modem or a high-speed 4G LTE cellular network.

The IOLAN SCG on review is highly versatile as its modular design allows up to three 16-port serial interface cards to be installed for a total of 50 management ports. The RJ45 modules support software-selectable RS232, RS422 and RS485 modes and can be mixed with USB versions. Teaming the latter up with the two USB ports at the front allows Perle to claim an industry-leading USB serial port density.

The appliance provides full IPv4/IPv6 routing capabilities plus support for RIP, OSPF, and BGP protocols for easy integration into data centres including VRRPv3 for network redundancy support. Zero-touch provisioning ensures a swift initial deployment while RESTFul API and VPN support allows it to work closely with customer's third-party management systems.

Deployment is simple and the appliance's web console dashboard shows plenty of detail on the system while a list of all interfaces below reveals their link status along with inbound and outbound traffic. Interface high availability and failover are handled by health profiles which use Ping and traceroute tests to determine their availability. If the primary WAN connection goes down, you can elect to automatically swap to another available WAN connection or assign priorities to them for load sharing.

Each RJ45 serial interface offers a wide range of services with the Console Management profile used to create a serial port for Telnet or SSH access. Other profiles include Trueport virtual COM ports, TCP and UDP sockets, virtual modem and Modbus gateway emulation while the USB ports can use Console Management, Trueport and TCP socket service profiles.

Access security is excellent as along with an integral firewall, you can enable 2FA on selected user accounts and apply a range of AAA (authentication, authorisation, accounting) services using Radius, TACACS+ or LDAP. When creating user accounts, you can set them as operators so they can't manage the appliance and decide which ports they are allowed to access.

Operators have two options for accessing serial port devices as they can use their personal web console to view the ports they are permitted to see, choose one from the Monitor and Stats screen and click on the Easyport button to load an SSH session in a new browser. The other alternative is to use a client such as PuTTY to SSH to the appliance using the port number assigned to the serial port they want to connect to, login in with their IOLAN username and then supply the device credentials.

It's very simple to use and we had no problems connecting the RJ45 console ports of our lab switches to the appliance with standard Cat6 network cables. Using either method, we could quickly set up SSH sessions and access their CLIs.

Perle's IOLAN SCG is the perfect solution for support staff that need always-on remote OOB access to their core network devices. The appliance is easy to manage, its modular design makes it very flexible and its tough security measures allow access to be strictly controlled.

Product Tester: – **Dave Mitchell, Director at Binary Testing**

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