Be Proactive, Not Reactive!

Configuring FTP Availability Monitoring

With Sentry-go Quick & Plus! monitors

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Many sites and external systems transfer files using the File Transfer Protocol or FTP - e.g. to upload or download files to or from the server. Alternatively, you may use it internally for the underlying files that are used by dynamic pages on your site. Either way, knowing that FTP is running is of key importance if these transfers are going to be successful, yet checking them manually can be a slow process, especially when the only true way of checking is to try it!

With Sentry-go, you can automate all these checks so they're run in the background and the results analysed automatically - in effect, automating an FTP client. If connectivity or transfer problems are found, Sentry-go can either take action itself or alert you to the fault for further investigation, thus freeing you to concentrate on other tasks when FTP transfers are running smoothly.

When checking FTP you can ...

- Check that the FTP site is accessible.
- Check that a remote file on the FTP server exists - e.g. a file that should always be available for download etc.
- Check that a remote file on the FTP server does not exist - e.g. an error file.
- Check that a local file can be transferred to the FTP server (i.e. a PUT request can be made successfully).
- Check that a local file can be transferred from the FTP server (i.e. a GET request can be made successfully).
- Check that an FTP command can be run successfully on the server.

In this guide

System requirements 2
Recommended monitoring settings 2
Monitoring FTP availability 2
Configuring FTP access & transfer monitoring 3
Running FTP Commands 6
Testing FTP access 7
Temporarily ignoring a configured check 8
Configuring an automatic response 8
Configuring an alert 8
More Information 9

System requirements

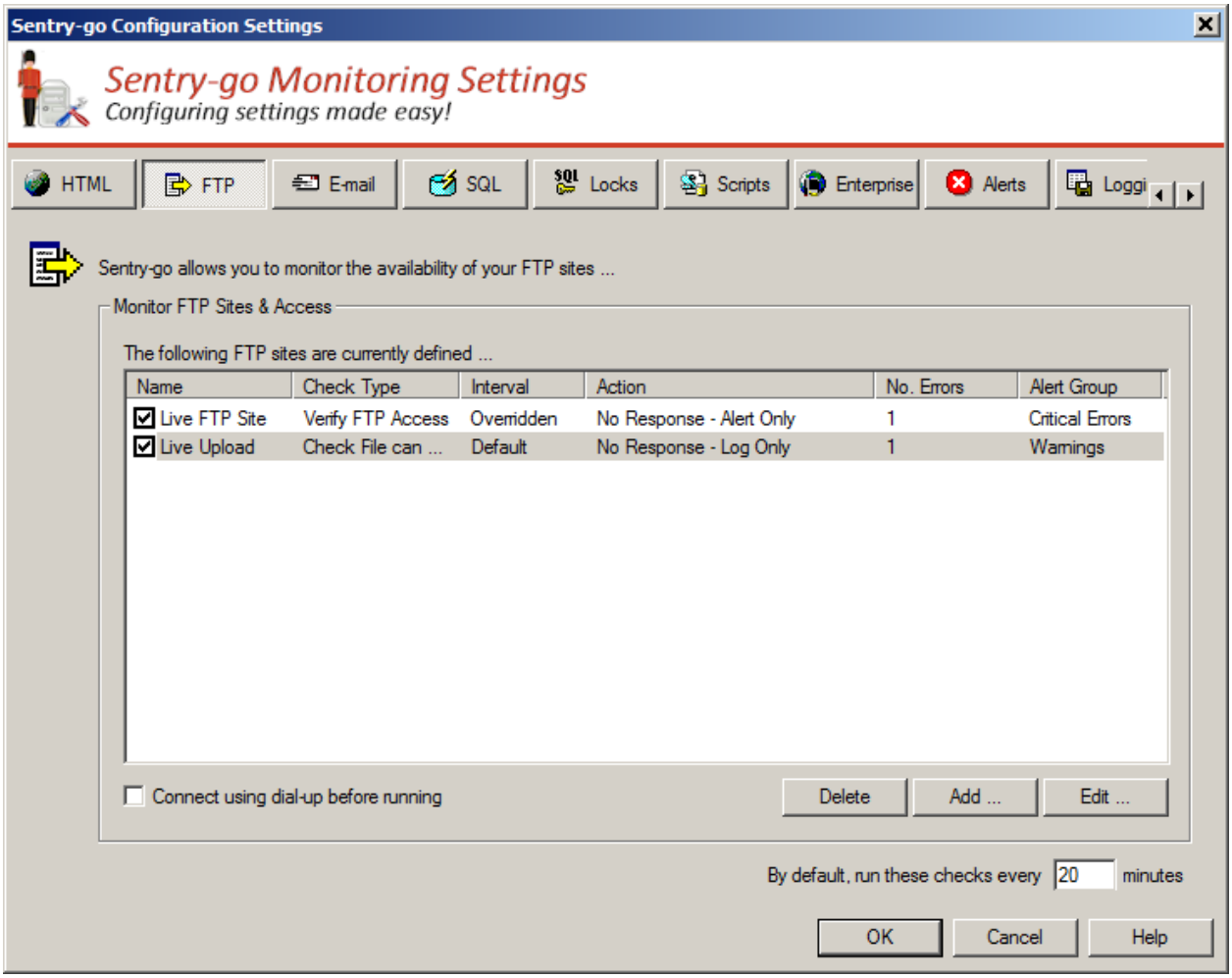
This component is fully compatible with both Sentry-go Quick Monitors v6 and above, and Sentry-go Plus! v6 monitors and above.

Recommended monitoring settings

It is recommended that your FTP sites are monitored for availability (especially external, customer-facing sites) as well as periodic uploading and downloading of files.

Monitoring FTP availability

To monitor FTP availability, simply configure the monitor and select the “FTP” tab.



Connect using dial-up before running checks

Tick this option if your server isn't permanently connected to the network & you want Sentry-go to use dial-up to connect prior to running FTP checks.

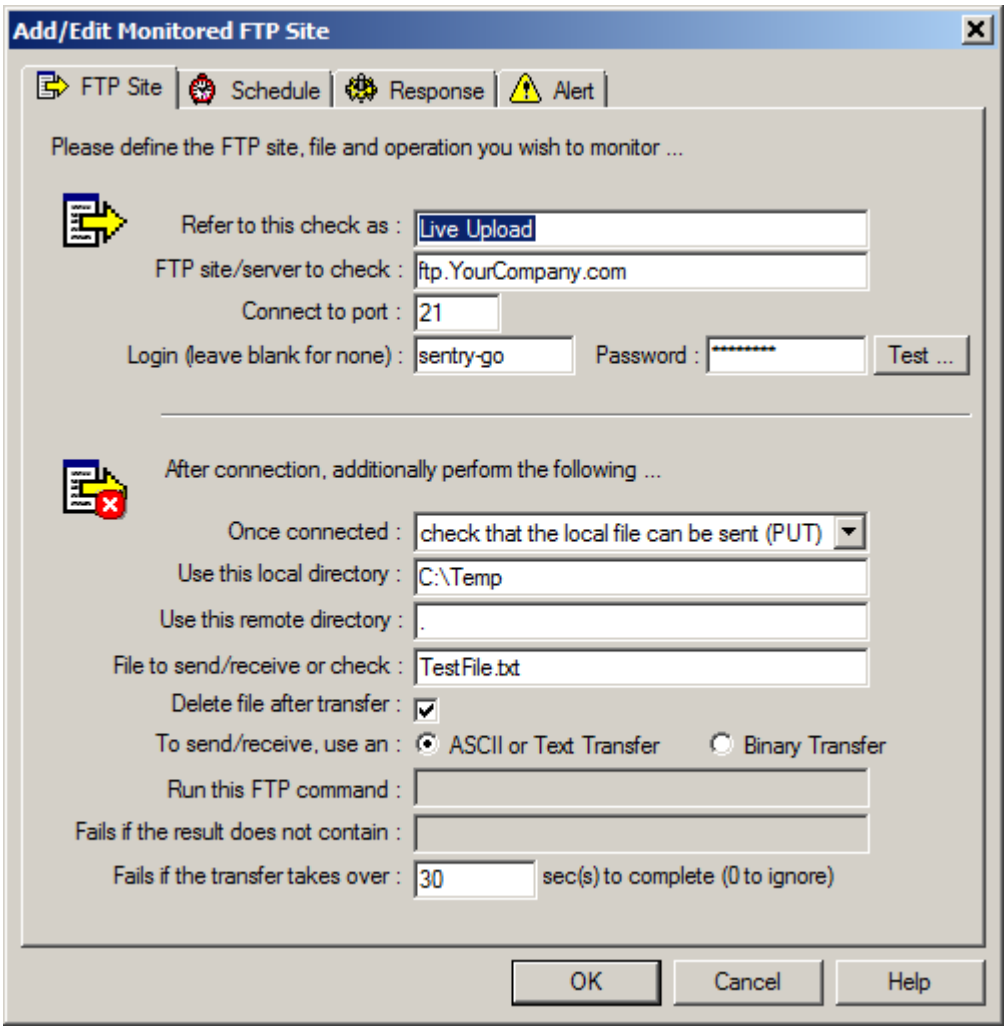
For more information, please see the "Sentry-go Dial-up Networking guide.

By default, run these checks every (mins)

This value specifies how often, in minutes, Sentry-go should check that the defined FTP can be accessed and are allowing upload/download as appropriate etc. This value can be overridden for individual pages by scheduling those checks to run at specific times. To do this, select the "Schedule" tab from the Add/Edit window.

Configuring FTP access & transfer monitoring

To monitor a new FTP site or file transfer/access, or edit an existing one, select the Add or Edit option from the main window.



From here you can define which FTP site you wish to check and how it should be verified.

Refer to this check as

This is the name that you will refer to the check as on both web reports and in any alerts generated. It is recommended that a short and accurate description be placed here - e.g. Primary File Download.

FTP Site/Server to check

This is the name or IP-address of the FTP server you wish to connect to in order to perform the check. It is the same server as used by your web site or external users when FTP transfers are to be made.

Connect to port

FTP server's listen on a given port for inbound requests from client PCs or other servers. The default port for FTP servers is port 21. However, if you know your FTP server uses a different port, this can be specified here.

If in doubt, this value should be set to 21.

Login & Password

These fields allow you to specify the user and password used to access the FTP site. If no login is required, you can leave these fields blank. Otherwise, enter the name/password that you would enter when prompted by your FTP client.

If no user/password is specified and the FTP server requests one, the connection will fail.

Once Connected

The option selected here defines the actual check you want Sentry-go to make. Simply select the option you want to run from the list ...

- **Verify that the site can be accessed**

  Select this option if you simply wish to ensure that the FTP site is available and can be connected to. No file transfers or other command beyond logging on will be run.

- **Check that the remote file exists**

  Select this option to connect to the FTP server and then verify that the file specified below exists within the remote directory (also specified below). If the file is missing or the connection cannot be made, an alert will be triggered.

- **Check that the remote file does not exist**

  Select this option to connect to the FTP server and then verify that the file specified below does not exist in the remote directory (also specified below). If the file is found, or the connection cannot be made, an alert will be triggered.

- **Check that the local file can be sent (PUT)**

  Select this option to connect to the FTP server and perform a file transfer. In this test, Sentry-go will attempt to send the file specified, from the local machine to the remote server using FTP (a "PUT" request). If the connection cannot be made, the local file is missing or the file cannot be transferred, an alert will be triggered.

- **Check that the local file can be retrieved (GET)**

  Select this option to connect to the FTP server and perform a file transfer. In this test, Sentry-go will attempt to retrieve the file specified, from the FTP server to the local machine using FTP (a "GET" request). If the connection cannot be made, the remote file is missing or the file cannot be transferred, an alert will be triggered.

- **Check that the FTP Command can be run.** Select this option to connect to the FTP server and run a command directly on the server using FTP. The command, which is specified below can be any command recognised by your FTP server and as such is installation specific.

  See Running FTP Commands below for more details.

Use this local directory

This is the base directory that should be used on the local machine. Before files are transferred, the FTP session will use this as the current local directory. So, if you are transferring a file called C:\TEMP\TEST.TXT, you would set this field to "C:\TEMP".

Use this remote directory

This is the base directory that should be used on the remote FTP server machine. Before files are transferred, the FTP session will use this as the current remote directory. If you are transferring a file to a remote subdirectory called MyFiles, you would set this field to "MyFiles". If you wish to use the home directory (the directory you are automatically placed in when you connect to the FTP server), the this field to "."

File to send/recv or check

This is the name of the file you wish to either send, receive or check. It is this file, plus the local or remote directory specified above that indicates (i) the full path to the source file and (ii) the full path to the target.

Delete File after transfer

Select this option if, after a successful file transfer, the newly created target file should automatically be deleted. This option does not remove the source file, just the file that was copied will be deleted.

File Type

File transfers typically copy either standard text (ASCII) or binary images such as .GIFs, .JPGs etc. This option allows you to specify the correct type of transfer that should be performed.

Although this option will not affect the ability to transfer the file itself, an incorrect setting here may adversely affect the file's contents.

Run this FTP Command

This option allows you to specify the command you wish to run on the FTP server once a connection has been established.

See Running FTP Commands below for more details.

Result

If you are checking that an FTP command can be run, this field allows you to specify the text that should be returned by the FTP server in order to indicate success. If the text entered here is found in the command result's output (e.g. simply the return code such as 220), then it is assumed that the check ran successfully. If the text is not found, an alert will be triggered.

To find the text that should be entered here, simply run an FTP session from the command line, connect to the FTP server, run the command manually and note the output returned. See below for more details.

Unless you wish to check the results of a command, this option can be left blank.

Running FTP Commands

In most cases, your FTP check will probably be to connect to the FTP server, retrieve (GET) or send (PUT) a file etc. But there may be times when you wish to run another native command directly against your server. To do this, select “Run this FTP Command” and specify the appropriate commands.

Commands You Can Run

FTP commands are sent as text strings to the server, which in turn responds with a numeric code, some text and then optionally some other data follows. Sentry-go allows typical FTP operations to be tested automatically as shown below. In this case, no FTP commands will need to be entered, you simply select the check you wish to perform. However, if you do want to check a specific FTP command, then in most cases can enter this and check the return code. Typical FTP commands that can be run are also shown below.

When specifying a native command, data itself may not be available as this could require multiple trips to the server which the monitor will not perform. It is therefore recommended that you check the FTP server’s response code – e.g. 250 rather than look for specific items. The expected response codes are shown below.

For example, sending a NOOP request should result in a 200 response (a response string starting with the code 200) being returned.

If you run the ABOR command, the command will execute but no previous command will have been run and therefore no command itself will be terminated.

Do not run logon or logout style commands – e.g. USER, PWD, QUIT etc. The FTP session will automatically be checked by Sentry-go and these commands may interfere with the monitor’s own connection logic which in turn may lead to false errors being reported.

To test this …	***Select this …***
You can connect to the FTP server	Verify that the site can be accessed
A given file exists on the FTP server in the directory specified	Check that the remote file exists
A given file does not exist on the FTP server in the directory specified	Check that the remote file does not exist
A local file can be sent (PUT) to the FTP server	Check that the local file can be sent (PUT)
A remote file can be retrieved (GET) from the remote server	Check that the remote file can be retrieved (GET)
A remote directory exists on the FTP server (though may be empty)	Check that the remote directory exists
A specific FTP command	Check that the FTP command can be run See also the table below

Specifying Native FCTP Commands

Enter this FTP Command	*Description*	*Expected Response*
ABOR	Aborts a previous command	225
	This will be executed by the server but in effect there would be no command to abort	
HELP	Return a list of valid commands	214
LIST	Starts a directory list	150
NLST	Starts a directory list (filenames only)	150
	The “Check that the remote file exists” check above also implicitly checks the directory listing.	
NOOP	Do nothing, simply interact with the server	200
PWD	Prints the working directory in the response	257
RETR <path>/<file>	Start to retrieve a file from the FTP server	150
	The “Check that the remote file can be retrieved (GET)” can also be used.	
SITE	Returns a list of site-specific parameters recognised by the server	214
STAT	Returns the connection’s status	211
SYST	Returns details of the FTP server’s Operating System	215
CWD <path>	Changes the remote working directory	250
CDUP <path>	Changes the remote working directory to the parent of the current working directory	250

Testing FTP access

You can optionally check connectivity to the defined FTP server by clicking the “Test” button. When selected, the Client Console connects to the target monitoring server (the server being configured) in order to run the test, the results of which are then displayed in the resulting web page.

In order to check the configuration, the target Sentry-go monitor must be running with web reports enabled.

The monitoring check itself is not run, only connectivity to the FTP server is verified at this stage.

The parameters, along with the test results are shown on the web page. In some cases, errors may be obvious and easily corrected; in others, additional diagnostic information may be found in the Sentry-go log file, accessible on the server or via the web reports menu.

For more information on the Sentry-go log file, see the “Configuring Logging Options” guide.

Temporarily ignoring a configured check

In some cases, you may wish to exclude a check from monitoring without removing it permanently. To do this, simply remove the “tick” or check against the entry you wish to ignore in the main list.

Configuring an automatic response

In the event an error is detected, Sentry-go can be configured to optionally respond automatically - i.e. to take action itself.

To configure this, select entry from the list and click Edit. On the resulting window, select the “Response” tab.

For more information on the options available as well as details on how to configure automatic responses, please see the “Configuring Automatic Responses” guide.

Configuring an alert

In the event an error is detected and either no automatic response is defined or the response doesn’t resolve the fault, an alert will be triggered. Depending on the monitor’s general settings, you can either notify one or more contacts individually, or specify the alert group you wish to inform.

To configure these options, select the entry from the list and click Edit. On the resulting window, select the “Alert” tab.

For more information, please see the “Configuring Sentry-go Alerts” guide.

More Information

If you need more help or information on this topic …

- Read all papers/documents on-line.
- Watch demonstrations & walkthrough videos on-line.
- Visit http://www.Sentry-go.com.
- Contact our Support Team.

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