



How To Find That ZenPack You Never Knew You Always Wanted

By Robyn Weisman



Zenoss Core has over 350 ZenPacks, with more being uploaded all the time. This extensibility is one of many reasons why Zenoss Core is the best open-source monitoring tool out there (integration with Google Maps is another; see below).

The new Zenoss Community Wiki has made locating and using ZenPacks easier than ever before. I'm going to use the recently released RANCID ZenPack to show how easy it is to locate and keep tabs on them.

Get thee to the Catalog!

Not surprisingly, the ZenPack Catalog has become the go-to place for browsing ZenPacks. You can find every publicly available ZenPack there.

The first page of the Catalog lists all ZenPacks through to "M," so click on the (next 200) (<http://wiki.zenoss.org/index.php?title=Category:ZenPacks&pagefrom=MySQL+SSH+Monitor%0AMySQL+SSH+Monitor#mw-pages>) link either above or below the listed ZenPacks, and go to "R."

There you will find two RANCID ZenPacks listed. The first one, RANCID Integration ZenPack, is a Zenoss Commercial version ZenPack (you can glean a Zenoss Commercial ZenPack by checking for a pretty gold box in the top right corner of the page, and contact Zenoss for more information about that ZenPack).

Commercial ZenPacks will not work with Zenoss Core. Choose the next one, Rancid Integration (community) ZenPack, by clicking on that link.

💡 Note: When given a choice between two ZenPacks for the same item, choose the one that has "Community," "Open Source," or "Core" appended to the name.

Right there on the page

Each ZenPack Wiki page offers a lot of semantic information about individual ZenPacks, including:

- Author(s) of the ZenPack (usually with a link to the author's user page)
- Current Maintainer(s) of the ZenPack

- Organization affiliated with the ZenPack
- License attached to the ZenPack
- Additional Information about the ZenPack (oftentimes a GitHub (<http://www.github.com>) page)
- Link to more documentation
- Git sources (for cloning)


Just below the main title for the ZenPack, you'll find the "Releases" subhead. It provides a changelog for the ZenPack, along with download links to the "egg" file. The "Background" subhead provides an overview of what the ZenPack can do, additional background information (of course), and screenshots and links to additional information, if available.

The next subhead "Installation" provides instructions to load your ZenPack. For the Rancid ZenPack, you're given information both for performing a normal installation, using the packaged "egg," as well as information on how to install it in developer mode.

Join the Core Community

Before going any further, become a member of the Zenoss Core community. Membership gives you lots of benefits, including the ability to track multiple ZenPacks via a personalized Watchlist.

At the top right corner of any page, click on "Create Account," and follow the directions on the web page. Once you've done that, fill out your "User page," so that people in the community can learn more about you. To do so, find your username at the top of the page (or use the keyboard shortcut "control-alt-."), and choose "Edit with form." Then fill out your information to gain your place amid other luminaries of the Zenoss Core universe.


 **Note:** If you signed up as a member at the old community site (<http://community.zenoss.org>) , you will need to sign up again on the Wiki site. this account will work on the new Zenoss community site coming in October. This is a great opportunity to rid yourself of that dated moniker and choose a more up-to-date username. Those of you who have chosen classic geek names (like community manager Andrew Kirch's [trelane](http://en.memory-alpha.org/wiki/Trelane) (<http://en.memory-alpha.org/wiki/Trelane>)) may ignore this directive.

Track your chosen ZenPack

You can track ZenPacks in one of two ways. The first is simply clicking on the Recent changes page under the Navigation menu to the left of every Wiki page. There you can scan for every update over the last 30 days.

A better way to keep tabs on your ZenPacks is to add them on your Watchlist. To add a ZenPack to your Watchlist, click on the arrow just to the right of the "View History" tab of the ZenPack's Wiki page. That will reveal a drop-down menu. Click on "Watch," and a splash screen will pop up saying

The page "ZenPack:Rancid Integration (community)" has been added to your watchlist. Future changes to this page and its associated talk page will be listed there.

 **Note:** Use the keyboard shortcut “control-alt-w” to add a ZenPack to your Watchlist.

Get email notifications

Although your Watchlist consolidates all the ZenPacks you’re currently tracking, you still need to check it every so often to make sure your installations are up-to-date.

A safer option is to receive immediate updates via email. To set this up, click on the Preferences link to the right of your username. Under the User Profile tab near the bottom, you’ll find “Email options.” Confirm your email address. Once you’ve confirmed your address, return to Preferences and check, “Email me when a page or file on my watchlist is changed.”

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