

■ How to Monitor SaaS Applications

Only two years ago, the average company adopting SaaS applications was a 50-person company, mainly because smaller companies were inclined to not invest in on-premise solutions. Since then, there's been a shift and SaaS has become the standard for any company implementing business applications or services. Even the largest companies in the world are now adopting SaaS applications and services, which may include Salesforce.com, Microsoft Dynamics CRM, traditional ERP systems such as those from Oracle and SAP, and other applications through which companies build their business.

To ensure they keep these applications running, and running well, companies task their IT teams with monitoring them, however the tools that IT teams have traditionally had for application monitoring aren't designed for monitoring SaaS applications. These tools are device monitoring products that can monitor internal applications — look at servers and devices on the network to make sure they are functioning properly — but, SaaS applications aren't on their network. They are over the Internet and in the cloud. The IT team needs another way to make sure that a SaaS application such as Salesforce.com is working properly.

In order to understand an application, there are three major challenges to overcome. To get full visibility into an application like Salesforce, you need to:

Measure the actual end-user experience.

If you could perform synthetic transactions, logging in to a SaaS service like a real user and using the application like a real user, this would allow you to directly measure how long it takes to perform common actions. You could look at how long it takes to activate a Salesforce account today versus what the application was able to do yesterday. You may find that the service is functioning properly but running slower than users may expect. You could detect if any part of the application is not working at all or if it's not working up to the expectations of the user or the SLA. To do this accurately, you would need to do it from your own location, your own network and Internet connection, making it as realistic a representation of the actual user experience as possible.

Identify what is competing for resources on your network.

Today, almost everyone has a tablet and smartphone, and these devices are capable of streaming images and audio. The biggest issue reported by the thousands of customers we have is congestion on their local network. Companies find that all their critical apps are now going out on the Internet, but those critical apps are also competing with recreational apps. The college intern who has their iPhone and is streaming music all day is actually going to consume more bandwidth than 20 sales people on Salesforce, and the network is going to treat them exactly the



same. Everything is web-based now. So much of your bandwidth is Internet, so much is email, and so much is FTP. That web traffic could be YouTube or Salesforce or who knows what. You need to identify what applications are on your network and where your resources are being consumed in order to determine if there are any apps that shouldn't be on the network that are consuming capacity.

Find and fix network problems.

If you're not getting what you paid for from your ISP or your network isn't configured properly, or your wireless isn't working as expected, that can have an immediate effect on every single application. Network issues tend to be localized differently than application issues, and they tend to be sporadic — 90% of the delivery path of a SaaS app like Salesforce is beyond your firewall. By monitoring the network all the way back to its hosting site, you can understand if the underlying infrastructure is up to the task of delivering a quality application experience to your users.

By integrating these three capabilities in one place, you could focus on how the application is functioning and not the individual technologies that support the application. By focusing on the full experience, you'll triage quicker and solve problems when it counts, no matter if it's Salesforce or SAP ERP, Office365, or anyone of your other critical applications.

About the Author



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Sean is the Vice President of Product at AppNeta where he tells people smarter than himself what to do. In his free time Sean enjoys many things he never gets to do anymore and anchors the reigning champion AppNeta trivia team.

ABOUT APPNETA

AppNeta is the only application performance monitoring (APM) company to provide solutions for all applications - applications you develop internally, business-critical SaaS applications you use and the networks that deliver them. AppNeta's SaaS-based solutions give Development, DevOps and IT Operations teams essential performance data to see across their web, mobile and cloud-delivered application environments as well as pinpoint tough performance bottlenecks. With AppNeta, customers have all of the performance data they need to assure continual and exceptional delivery of business-critical applications and end-user experience. For more information, visit www.appneta.com.

