WHITEPAPER

How IT Can Start Tackling Business Goals

IT teams are doing an awful lot of work these days. They're doing what used to be their primary job—maintaining an on-premises infrastructure or a data center and enabling users—in addition to a whole bunch of new functions. Those include supporting mobile devices and remote users, configuring the network to support increased bandwidth needs at multiple locations, and understanding the ins and outs of hundreds of third-party apps and cloud services.

This means that IT is troubleshooting any and all problems that arise in the applications and networks. Of course, the human element of business and tech means that IT is sometimes working against shadow IT apps without even knowing it, and they're trying to meet high user expectations all the time.

A study from Kensington found that IT teams spend 50% of their time in meetings or fixing issues instead of upgrading equipment or other proactive tasks. This certainly doesn't match up with the big-picture goals and CIO priorities that are often discussed, like this list. Some of the big dreams that CIOs have for IT are delivering services faster, replacing legacy systems, optimizing storage and implementing redundancy for critical systems. Tackling those priorities would add up to an IT team that's proving its value and helping the business grow.

Of course, those two desires may seem to be at cross-purposes. How can IT possibly initiate change and become more valuable as an innovation partner when it's already swamped with break/fix tasks?

How AppNeta can Relieve IT burdens

The really good news is that the right modern technology can help IT get what they need—namely, visibility and control over their environment. There are some truly complex infrastructures out there, with systems and users distributed around the world, connected by a whole tangle of networks that many IT teams have zero visibility into. Here's how IT can take charge.

Clean House

The first step toward IT getting ahead of this complicated situation and into strategy-building is actually seeing what's included in the company's infrastructure. That visibility might turn up some scary legacy servers or rogue SaaS applications, but failure to do it isn't an option. It'll help the entire organization in the long run for IT to know exactly what it's dealing with and what it's supporting.

Monitor All the Things

Performance monitoring software takes on the visibility part of the equation by offering a view into every app, network and cloud provider involved in a company's IT infrastructure. A monitoring solution should give a clear view into the user perspective, tracking the experience from the end user through the network and to the application provider. IT gets user-specific usage data. And APM provides one single-dashboard view of all network monitors for a quick big-picture status update. That's a major bonus for IT teams, who otherwise can get bogged down managing their monitoring tools, taking time away from the actual monitoring and problem-solving. Performance monitoring tools today can monitor all networks—WiFi, VPN, LAN and over the wider internet to cloud providers. They can also monitor outside the firewall at any user location, and give a view of trends using data from multiple network monitors.

Stay Ahead of the Problems

Once IT can see what it's dealing with, the next step is taking back control over those disparate systems and apps. Alerting and reporting in a performance monitoring tool offer a way to automate a lot of IT's troubleshooting work while also providing proactive notice of rising issues. Performance monitoring tools should do automatic testing to detect the causes of network faults based on SLAs that IT sets up. Teams can see months' worth of performance data, and narrow down timelines and sources to see where latency is, whether in the app, network or browser. They can set up tailored alerts on usage changes to prevent helpdesk tickets and complaints.

After that, the sky's the limit. When performance monitoring software is doing its job, IT is eliminating recurring network issues and getting to the bottom of common user complaints. With saved time and resources, and other improvements like reduced bandwidth costs, IT is on its way to proving its value to the business side. And from an operations perspective, it's now possible to standardize systems and hold providers to SLAs. With firefighting kept to a minimum and reduced troubleshooting time, IT might actually have a chance to get to that CIO wish list and start moving toward a modern, agile infrastructure.