

Why Visibility is the Holy Grail for IT Monitoring

Fail to succeed in today's fast-moving business environment and your competitors will be circling before long to steal your customers and market share.



Modern organizations are increasingly defined by the success or otherwise of their digital transformation initiatives.

Innovative tech-powered projects can theoretically help them become more agile, customer-centric and cost-effective.

Fail to succeed in today's fast-moving business environment and your competitors will be circling before long to steal your customers and market share. IT Operations is one of the key foundations on which successful digital transformation initiatives must be built. But there's a problem. Tool sprawl and IT silos have over the years made effective monitoring incredibly challenging.

Organizations must centralize monitoring and destroy these data islands if they want to regain visibility and ensure projects are successful.

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A digital impasse

According to IDC, global spending on digital experiences (DX) will reach a staggering \$1.7 trillion globally by the end of 2019. Yet the analyst also warns that firms aren't getting the results they crave. Over half (59%) of organizations questioned for the report were described as being stuck in the early stages of DX maturity, what IDC calls a "digital impasse". In many cases, this may well come down to their inability to manage IT Operations effectively.

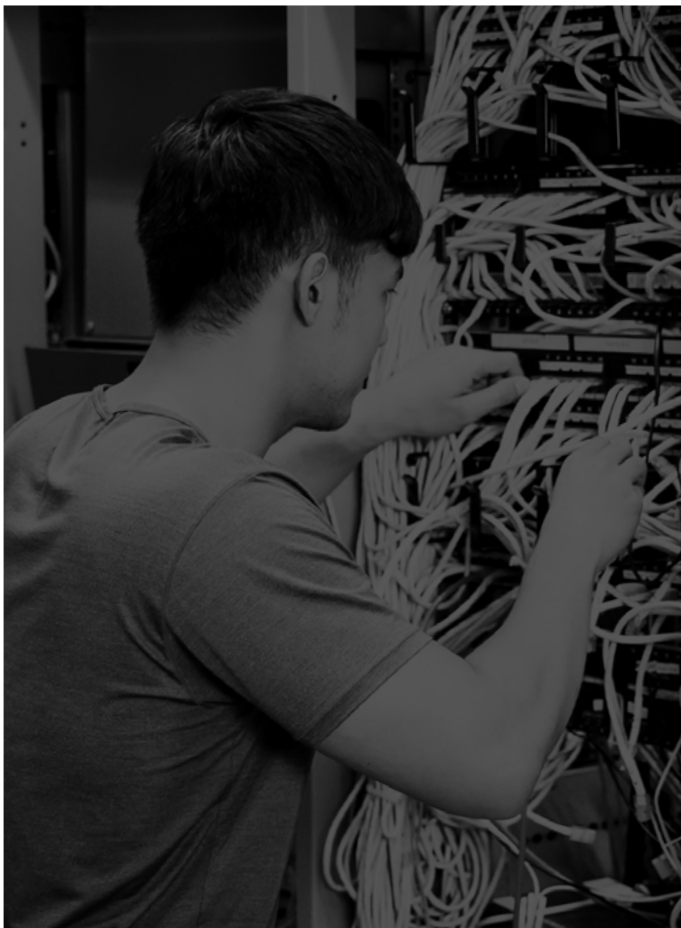
The truth is that behind every eye-catching digital transformation initiative lies IT Operations: the servers, networks, storage, clouds and virtual systems needed to support flashy customer-facing apps and services. The growth of this digital infrastructure has created a huge amount of complexity in modern IT: multiple moving parts, any of which could fail at any moment. These disparate, decentralized systems don't talk to each other, and they frequently fail. The challenge of managing this is compounded by the fact that many modern systems have components outside the control of the enterprise: just think of a typical cloud set-up.

That makes effective monitoring vital to spot the early warning signs of issues, keep systems up and running and customers happy. The truth is that consumer expectations are so high today, that there's not much room for error.



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IDC FUTUREScape: WORLDWIDE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION 2018 PREDICTIONS



Out of control

For monitoring to work as it should, visibility into systems is therefore crucial. Yet gaining that insight is a persistent challenge. It could be because the tools being used were designed only to monitor static, on-premise infrastructure of the past, rather than the modern, dynamic, cloud and virtual-based digital systems of the present. But more commonly, it's because organizations are using multiple tools, producing multiple versions of the truth for siloed IT teams.

Research from analyst firm Enterprise Management Associates has indicated that a vast number of organizations have more than ten different monitoring tools and that it can take organizations between three-six hours to find the source of an IT performance issue. This is clearly unsustainable as it leads to unnecessary load on the IT environment and wasted budget on training, implementation and integration. But most importantly, tool sprawl over the years has exacerbated the "silo-ization of IT, where various teams rely on often disparate views of monitoring, and are unable to find common ground." Related to this, and perhaps even more damaging, is the fact that it delays 'Mean Time To Repair' by creating too many data points, leading to finger pointing among teams and an IT department forever in reactive mode.



A SPECIFIC IT FAILURE MAY COST JUST

£100

IN STAFF TIME BUT IF THIS
EVENT HAPPENS 15 TIMES
PER MONTH, THAT COSTS YOU

£18,000

PER YEAR.

Expensive mistakes

In the meantime, your customers are getting angry because they expect a seamless experience with no downtime or slowness, and serious chunks of business revenue could be disappearing. Digital speed is of the essence and just a few minutes of downtime can completely destroy the customer experience and impact brand loyalty and profitability.

Even the small IT performance issues can mount up. You might, for example, calculate that a specific failure costs just £100 in staff time, lost opportunity etc each time it happens. That doesn't sound like a lot. But if this event happens 15 times per month, that's £4,500 each quarter it's costing you, or £18,000 per year. With effective monitoring you can reduce that bill by thousands. And this is just one of potentially hundreds of regular incidents that need managing each month.

The value of visibility is in enabling teams to learn how certain activities impact performance, so they know where the bottlenecks are that could delay projects or cause outages. It can also help you take preventative action by spotting the patterns which often precede a failure – thereby reducing downtime and costs. Effective monitoring driven by good visibility may also be a help to security teams, by detecting patterns that could indicate malicious activity on the network.

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Single version of the truth

To gain the visibility into systems IT operations teams crucially need, CIOs must centralize. Only by unifying ITOM under a single pane of glass can they hope to get a holistic view of what's going on. This single version of the truth will help bring siloed teams together, avoid duplication of effort and more importantly ensure that monitoring finally fulfils its promise to continuously improve service performance, availability, and the user experience.

Visibility is central to the customer experience and more broadly ensures teams aren't continually firefighting, meaning IT can be more strategic and innovative to truly support the business. This is the kind of win that will cement the CIO's reputation as a key enabler of digital transformation.