



Application Performance Aggregation: The Next Wave In Cloud APM

Posted by Michael Biddick on June 1, 2010

As organizations start the slow move toward cloud computing and begin deploying more of their infrastructure in off-premise private cloud environments, the challenge of end-to-end APM becomes increasingly complex. Application Performance Aggregation (APA) as the next big wave in end-to-end application performance monitoring (APM) and where the APM market will be in a few years.

Traditional end-to-end APM is already tough. In a cloud environment, you lose control and visibility into the underlying infrastructure and the integrated monitoring along with it. Cloud providers will limit your ability to perform monitoring of platforms and infrastructure, so while you can monitor the user experience and access to resources, finding the root cause of the problem is really tough.

But, that may not be a bad thing. One of the drivers of moving into a cloud environment is lowering costs and increasing the scalability of systems. APM tools in enterprises can be incredibly costly and labor intensive efforts. APM in the cloud may require a different mindset, and instead of enterprises attempting to monitor their environment inside the cloud, the cloud providers need to step up by providing much more visibility and transparency into the health of the components for their customers. Enterprises then need to transition from monitoring to aggregation.

As the cloud environments become more prolific, APA will be required to enable enterprise environments to move into the cloud in the first place. The ability to analyze and collect data from multiple data streams and provide a holistic service view will be an accelerator in the cloud environment. These organizations can also take advantage of the scale in their environments and justify the larger costs involved in the purchase, deployment and customization of APM solutions. Instead of agent technology to monitor discrete values of components inside the cloud, the APA systems need to receive data sets from internal and external providers and the work of the IT organization will be to provide an end-to-end service health view, aggregating this data.

Some vendors are starting to tackle this challenge. APM vendor SL is focusing on providing APM metrics to critical infrastructure components required to run the cloud environment, like grid technologies. These grid technologies like Tibco ActiveSpaces, Oracle Coherence and IBM WebSphere eXtreme Scale are tough to monitor, especially when providing multi-tenant cloud services. While monitoring the health and performance is important SL's RTView can also offer the cloud providers the ability to expose data to enterprise customers.

SL historian can provide exposure at different levels of data granularity to different customers, and their ability to cache and provide fast access to data across an environment for presentation as well as root cause analysis is suited to the cloud environment. Compuware's Vantage is also focused on correlating different data sources across a variety of platforms and looking at real-time and historical data that will be critical for the cloud data center environment.

As cloud providers offer more capabilities, they need monitoring platforms that go beyond Java and .Net monitoring, but can monitor the relationships within the data center, especially as physical infrastructure moves around. Bringing all of the information into a single view and then exposing a subset to customers is not easy, but it's the direction the market needs to go.

These data grids will play a large role in telecommunication and cloud environments enabling the exchange of information and the ability to dynamically scale capacity, but are also the platform to expose the data to customers and provide real-time visibility into performance. APM will become even more critical in could

environments, but it will involve an evolution of thinking for enterprise IT managers.



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