Web Host Industry Review

BMC Software
Offers Service Providers Remote QoS Monitoring

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BMC Software provides service providers and enterprises with remote management solutions that ensure quality of service (QoS). By remotely monitoring system performance and availability against user-defined service level objectives, both large corporations and hosting firms can improve QoS, reduce costs and improve their value propositions.

Hosted management services from BMC Software allows customers to remotely monitor Web applications and enterprise infrastructure; set service level thresholds for alarms, warnings and Web site response times; and easily and securely access reports and status views through a Web browser. One of the most notable services that the company offers is PATROL Express.

An agentless monitoring solution, PATROL Express delivers system monitoring while reducing costs and improving customer satisfaction through enhanced availability and performance. Out of the box, PATROL Express permits customers to remotely monitor a range of platforms and applications across firewalls, in a secure manner, while greatly improving time-to-value for customers. Because it is an agentless solution, agents are not required on the device being monitored, which reduces overhead and complexity. In effect, PATROL Express runs external to the hosting service or equipment that the enterprise or service provider is monitoring.

The solution provides QoS monitoring, notification and reporting across customers' servers, networks and application infrastructures. The key benefit of the product is that it drives down operating costs by remotely monitoring availability of network devices, systems and applications. It improves services levels by reporting service problems and notifying the appropriate

contact after identifying the problem.

"This product is extremely popular because it is a unique technology that is specifically designed for multi-tenant hosting environments," stated Jason Andrew, Director of Product Management and Development for PATROL Express, in an exclusive interview with the Web Host Industry Review. "PATROL Express is firewall friendly and utilizes protocol monitoring, meaning that no installation on customer premise equipment is required."

The product is a scaled-down version of BMC Software's SiteAngel Web site performance and availability subscription service and GuardianAngel, a solution for complete end-to-end infrastructure monitoring.

SiteAngel is a Web-based service that monitors online customer satisfaction by continuously measuring the real end-to-end customer experience at a Web site. It can be accessed from any location via the Internet and is platform and browser independent. The detailed information about the customer's experience provided by SiteAngel can be used to ensure that Web sites are meeting the standards set out in service level agreements (SLAs).

GuardianAngel provides service monitoring of a customer's server, network and application infrastructure with subscription terms, dramatically reducing service providers' operating costs.

Rackspace Managed Hosting, the world's second largest provider of managed hosting services, utilizes both SiteAngel and GuardianAngel to ensure reduced costs and improved customer satisfaction through enhanced availability and performance. The use of the Angel series product allows large hosting operations like Rackspace to monitor their extensive physical and logical infrastructure.

The scaled-down version of the Angel products, PATROL Express, on the other hand, creates opportunities for smaller enterprises and hosting firms. According to Jean-Pierre Garbani, a research analyst who released a brief on the product for Giga Information Group, "[t]he Patrol branded product, which can be acquired by a small company to start a local management service provider (MSP) business or used as a product that does not require a heavy investment by SMEs, could be the right ticket to a largely untapped market. There are not many products in this area that can combine the confidence level attached to big name branding with the cost level of entry products.

"Enterprises looking for a simple way to deploy a management product, either as an enterprise-wide solution or as one limited to remote divisions, must look at BMC Patrol Express as a potential candidate. The advantage of BMC Software against its competitors lies in the future potential of Patrol Express and in its integration with other BMC products: BMC has expertise and resources to apply to the evolution of the product, while its competition may be budget-constrained. For growing enterprises, starting with Patrol Express offers guaranteed integration later with the extensive array of solutions available under the Patrol umbrella."

Andrew agrees with the assessment from Giga Information Group. "BMC Software differentiates itself from its competition through the breadth of its support. The application does not simply monitor a box but all the constituent components of a server, its network and applications. We believe that all the pieces within a single structure will determine service performance."