Stopping The Application Management Blame Game Through Integrated Infrastructure Management Tools.

A ManageEngine Whitepaper

Introduction

Imagine the following scenario: A business critical order processing application is slow and sales personnel in branch offices are unable to process orders. Cash flow is impacted, help desk is flooded with calls, and business stalls. Application team blames the server team. But server team insisted that servers are operating at 99.9% availability and hinted something might be wrong at the network level. And the network team shot back saying the WAN links are up and kicking. Now who is to blame – the applications team, the server team, the network team, or the lack of integrated approach to infrastructure management?

When Did The Blame Game Start?

It all happened when the sales executive at one of the branch offices could not process an order when he tried accessing the ERP application over the corporate WAN. And he rang up the help desk not long before the customer walked out of his sight. Help Desk escalated the problem to the IT head. And the blame game started when the application team, the server team, and the network team said to each other that "if you can't prove it's my fault, then it's not my fault". And to further fuel the chaos each had their own reports showing their assets were highly available during the time of the call.

Reason For Chaos: False Security Assured By Point Products

Monitoring the network, systems, and applications as disparate entities without proper integration is the root cause for blame game. Moreover the individual tools assure false security by claiming that every entity was available at the time of problem. But the real- time user experience is a combination of lot of factors including which server they are served from , what was the health of that server a t that time, was the application really available at that time and what was the response time with respect to that server etc.

Poor application performance could be due to many reasons including:

At the network level
- o   Non-availability of the primary WAN link between head office and the branch office.
- o   Longer round trip time experienced in the WAN link due to congestion
- o   Performance issues on Router leading to increased latency. At the server level
- o   Insufficient resources (CPU, Memory etc.) on the Server due to increased loads
- o   Hard Disk or NIC card errors resulting in slow or poor server performance
- o   Unusually high traffic activity on the Server at certain times (Peak hours) At the application level
- o   Application's data persistence module was not optimized and was causing intermittent connection problems.
- o   Application went through a major revamp and was crashing often. Probably wasn't well tested before deployment.
- o   Application load shot up at the particular moment causing poor performance to everybody.

The first step in stopping the blame game is to avoid the false security assured by the point products which fail to pin point the root cause of the problem when hurricane hits your IT.
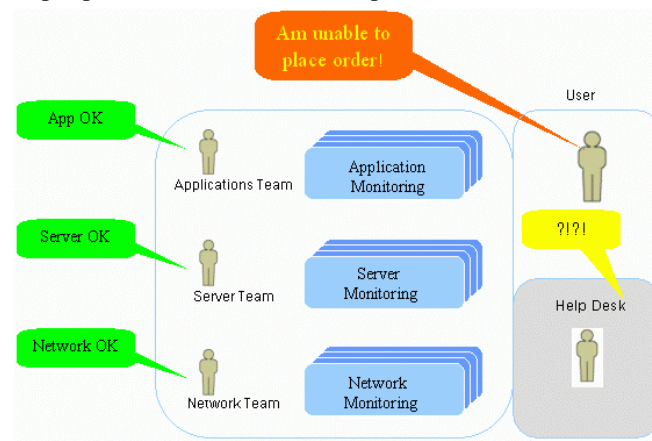

Fig1: Network monitoring without an integrated approach
would result in unproductive IT environment.

The Solution: Integrated Approach to Network, Systems, and Applications Management

Integrated approach here refers to the ability to gain real-time visibility in to the performance of your Network, Servers and Applications, and pin point the root cause of failure, when it occurs. An integrated enterprise infrastructure management solution would assign higher importance to the server which runs the application and would escalate the disc space utilization issue through appropriate alarms and notifications.
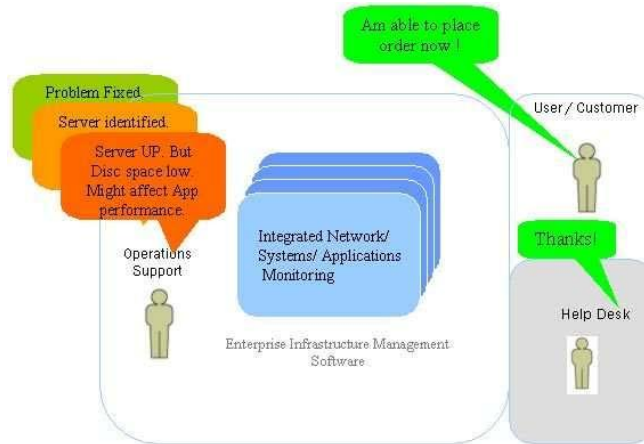
Fig2: Implementing integrated management solution
results in productive IT environment.

ManageEngine Suite: Cost Effective Integrated Network, Systems, and Application
Management Tools for SMEs

For SMEs who cannot afford traditional infrastructure management solutions such as HP
Openview, CA Unicenter, IBM Tivoli, and BMC Patrol, ManageEngine offers an affordable range
of products that offer the integrated management experience when clubbed with centralized
trouble ticketing software.

Tools for WAN Visualization and Monitoring: For the Network Team

OpManager helps network teams to visualize their WAN links running
across the branch offices. Individual link performance, statistics on
bandwidth usage, rout er latency issues etc., can be identified using
NetFlow Analyzer.

Tools for Server Monitoring: For the Server Team

OpManager monitors key health parameters of your servers such as CPU,
Memory and Disk Utilization and proactively alerts you on low disk space, high
CPU utilization etc.

Tools for Applications Management: For The Applications Team

Applications Manager helps in-depth application and database monitoring.
Application support teams would benefit using this tool in terms of knowing the
exact response time under various usage scenarios.

Integrated Console for IT Troubleshooting

ManageEngine ServiceDesk Plus helps in providing a single console for IT troubleshooting. Alarms generated in OpManager, Applications Manager, and NetFlow can be automatically converted into tickets in ServiceDesk Plus. In the case discussed above, two tickets would be automatically generated for the same server. One from OpManager for low disc space and other from Applications Manager for poor response time. These tickets will give the totality of the problem and help in getting the unified view. Moreover the administrator can merge these two tickets into a single problem and work on resolving the issue.
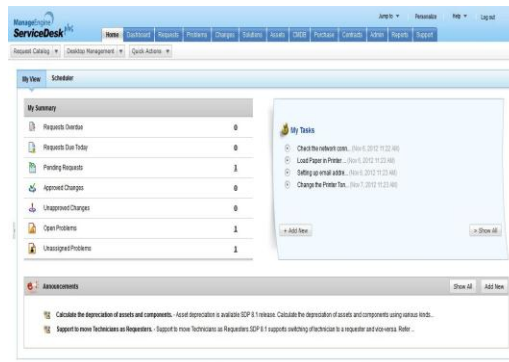
The single console for IT maintenance will help in knowledge sharing and developing a knowledgebase over a period of time. ServiceDesk Plus offers a web based knowledge base portal which accumulates the notes added so far and serves as a ready reckoner for fresher.
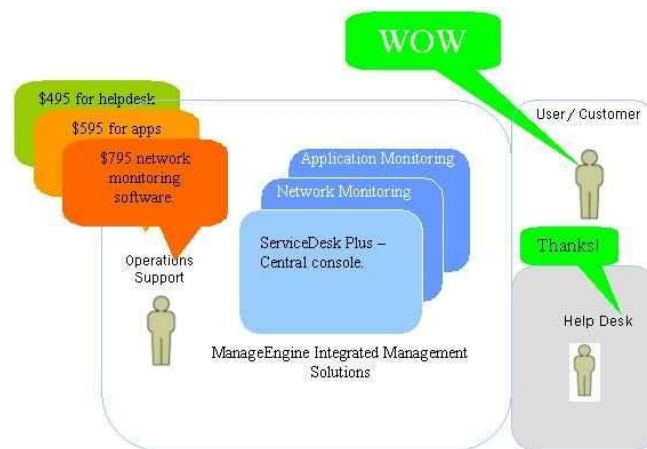

Fig3: ManageEngine Enterprise Infrastructure management
solutions offer value for money.

For more details on ManageEngine solutions and how they can help you manage your application, systems, and network seamlessly, please contact sales@manageengine.com. For comments on this article contact opmanager- marketing@mangeengine.com