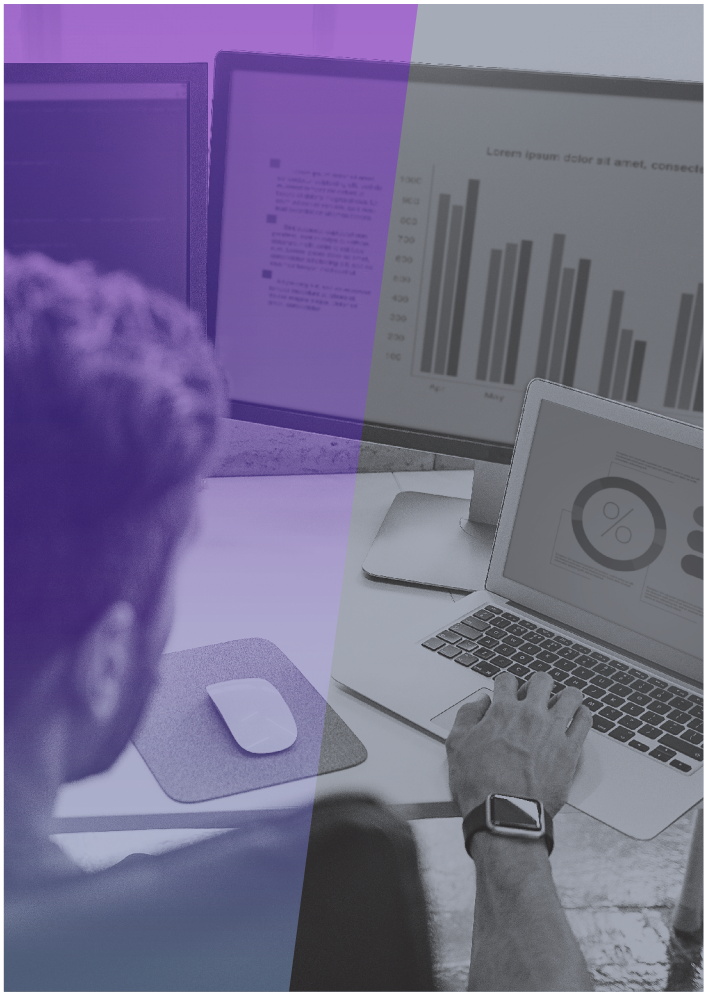
How the connected enterprise can reduce human error to drive growth

All over the world, organizations are striving to become digitally native and customer centric. These connected enterprises are laser-focused on the end user experience, and are using cloud, mobile, Internet of Things (IoT) and other emerging technologies to become more responsive to rapidly changing market demands. The challenge is that the fragmented IT infrastructure tasked with supporting these efforts is riven with complexity. A lack of effective IT insight into performance, combined with inevitable human error, can lead to major outages that impact the bottom line, corporate reputation and digital projects.



The key to eliminating human error and gaining that all-important visibility into performance is automated IT operations management (ITOM). Without a single, unified view of what's going on, displayed via a single pane of glass, IT teams will struggle to truly support the business goals of the connected enterprise and deliver value.

Driving global growth

Digital transformation is the new engine of growth for the connected enterprise. It holds the key to unlocking productivity gains, enhancing innovation in R&D and driving profits and loyalty through improved customer experiences. The CBI believes £100 billion could be added to the UK economy through adoption of such technologies and processes, whilst also reducing income inequality in society.

However, the mix of on-premises servers, storage systems, IoT endpoints, cloud platforms, software-defined datacenters and more on which this innovation must be built creates challenges for IT teams. Modern IT operations span multiple geographical locations, providers and standards, creating a complex environment with many moving parts. Nearly half (47%) of global businesses we spoke to recently for our 'State of the IT Nation' report say they are utilizing more than one public cloud region, for example.

Given this complexity, it's perhaps not surprising that IT administrators make mistakes — which in turn can have a major impact on the organization. One report from the Uptime Institute claims that as many as 70% of datacenter outages can be traced back to human error. When in 2017 an IT contractor at a BA facility accidentally switched the power supply off, the airline was forced to cancel 800 flights out of Heathrow and Gatwick, in an incident which was predicted to cost the firm over £50m in compensation pay-outs, not to mention the impact on brand reputation.

Apart from these obvious mistakes, human error can also be more insidious. Failing to spot an issue early on could lead to cascading faults which ultimately escalate into major incidents. With so much at stake, there must be a better way to mitigate these risks and support digital development more effectively.

Time to consolidate

The answer to many of the challenges discussed above is automated IT monitoring. However, in many organizations IT operations management is not given the importance it deserves — often because tools are used ineffectively. Our 'State of the Nation' report reveals that 80% of organizations are using between two and five monitoring tools, with some (7%) using more than 10. Over half (58%) admit to not being

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able to view the entire IT estate via a single pane of glass. This tool sprawl is the enemy of effective IT monitoring. It results in poor decision making, perpetuates IT siloes and fails to reap the potential of IT OPs. It will ultimately cost the company dear in outages, duplication of effort, and man hours spent investigating problems. Perhaps partly as a result of this tool sprawl, the vast majority (73%) of firms we spoke to claim not to be monitoring their whole IT infrastructure; opening them up to risk, complexity and confusion.

The beauty of automation

By consolidating IT monitoring onto one platform, organizations gain a single version of the truth to identify and fix any issues before they have a chance to escalate into bigger problems. Adding automation into the mix means these problems could be fixed without the need for human interaction, speeding MTTR and avoiding cascading failures. Other types of automated monitoring might kick in not when there's a specific IT failure, but merely to take the heat off stretched technical teams. Tasks could include registering new servers when they come online, initiating regular back-ups, and generating periodic reports.

Therefore, it's disappointing that over half of the organizations we spoke to are failing to automate IT monitoring, and even more (64%) say they're not integrating monitoring with time-saving tools like Puppet.

Automation also helps to drive improved performance at scale. Human error is more likely to occur in large enterprises where IT teams are forced to manage thousands of devices, servers and endpoints. The connected enterprise doesn't just reduce the risk of serious outages with unified IT operations management it also improves accountability through more regular audits, reduces operational costs, increases IT staff productivity, and frees up team members to focus on more high-value, strategic tasks.

The value of the latter is often overlooked, but could benefit the organization in the long-term if team members previously tasked with mundane repetitive work are unleashed to deliver innovative new services for customers. It also makes the enterprise a more attractive place to work — driving a virtuous cycle of talent-hiring and service improvement.

Most importantly, though, unified IT operations management provides connected enterprises with the peace-of-mind they need to build out digital transformation projects, accelerate time-to-market, and delight customers and shareholders alike.

FIND OUT MORE

USA: +1 866 662 4160

sales@opsview.com

EMEA: +44 1183 242 100