

Indicative Takes On Big 4 in IT Service Management

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The company challenges much larger rivals like IBM and HP with its Indicative performance monitoring and troubleshooting tool.

Indicative Software on April 10 continued to nip at the heels of the Big Four enterprise management providers when it launched the latest release of its Indicative performance monitoring and troubleshooting tool for distributed applications and infrastructure.

Boasting a 100 percent renewal rate with existing customers and a 75 percent win rate once it reaches the proof-of-concept stage with prospective customers, the Fort Collins, Colo., company deepened its bite into IBM/Tivoli, BMC Software, CA and Hewlett-Packard's OpenView with Version 8.0 of the Indicative software, originally developed at Agilent, according to company officials.

Key among the new features is a Real User Monitoring option integrated with the core product that measures the actual user experience. The core Indicative product combines passive monitoring of the elements that make up a service with synthetic testing for end user response times.

The RUM option comes in an appliance that sits on a network switch mirror port to gather service performance metrics. Key performance indicators processed in the appliance allow customers to troubleshoot problems such as lengthening response times.

While that capability is not unique in the industry, it is a necessary

component for service management, said Lisa Erickson-Harris, industry analyst with Enterprise Management Associates.

The Indicative software takes a top-down approach to monitoring, rather than starting at the bottom with monitoring for all events. It includes a library of templates or knowledge modules that pre-package discovery mechanisms, best-practice tests and measurements used to create a service model for a given service or application. The library includes 2,000 measurements covering a range of technologies.

"We start with the service. We can get end user metrics right away and discover relationships - of elements that make up a given service - along the way. We can see how many orders are going through the inventory system or how many concurrent users are on a service," said Angela Tucci, vice president of marketing, in Fort Collins.

"The good thing about that service-centric model is that the person managing can understand the priority of the service and know, 'Is it something I need to deal with now or can it be dealt with later?'" said Evelyn Hubbert, senior analyst with Forrester Research.

Indicative 8.0 also adds support for monitoring services based on Microsoft's .Net. It provides end-to-end troubleshooting for .Net services, including the ability to drill down to the level of method and SQL statements. New service modeling templates for .Net automatically discover .Net applications and the infrastructure components that deliver .Net services.

The release also adds the ability to create custom templates using a GUI to extend coverage to technologies not covered by the template library.

Despite its small size (only 63 employees), the privately held company is inching forward against much larger companies such as IBM, HP, CA

and BMC Software, according to Joseph Broderick, executive vice president for Indicative.

"We just won a - deal with - a major MSP in Europe with 35 data centers over IBM and HP," he said.

Although analysts have not verified such wins, EMA's Erickson-Harris said she is not surprised. "They take a more integrated approach and cover everything from the network to systems and applications and they have service management. They are very much like the big players, but they have consolidated their technology in a better way," she said.

Current user Matt Cody at Jostens, in Bloomington, Minn., likes the ability to design tests that can test for "all the possible failure points for an application, so you know right away what the problem is," he said. Although Jostens uses Indicative along with HP's OpenView Operations, Cody is not a big fan. "My experience with that has not been very good. I'd rather replace - OVO - with Indicative some day," said Cody, a senior systems engineer.

Indicative 8.0 is available now, and entry-level installations start at about \$100,000.

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