END-USER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT

END USER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

A COMPETITIVE EDGE FOR ASPS

CORADIANT™

INTRODUCTION

Organizations choose to outsource key business functions to application service providers because it makes good operational and economic sense. Operating web-based applications with mission-critical performance and dependability is demanding work.

Even though these organizations appreciate the many challenges involved, they can be quite demanding as customers. They expect high uptime. They expect few problems, and when problems do occur, they want them fixed immediately. And, of course, they expect to not lose any customers or business from poor performance or web transaction errors.

Unfortunately, the very nature of the web makes it all too easy for your customers to take their business elsewhere when these high expectations go unmet. Fortunately, there is now a tool that can help.

An increasing number of ASP and SaaS providers are discovering that End-User Experience Management provides a strong competitive advantage, with powerful capabilities for proactively finding and fixing web problems, and managing service level agreements. By monitoring every transaction in every session for every user in real-time, End-User Experience Management provides immediate insight into errors and other factors that affect performance levels—which impact user satisfaction. This document provides a brief introduction to End-User Experience Management and how ASPs can utilize this innovative tool to gain a real competitive advantage.

End-User Experience Management is a new class of application session monitoring. By logging and time-stamping all pertinent transactions and error conditions in every user's session, End-User Experience Management gives immediate notice of a problem, and provides the forensic analysis tools necessary to isolate its source. The best systems include the ability to detect early warning signs of problems as a preemptive measure, and also evaluate overall performance against a service level agreement. These and other capabilities are not only useful in production networks, they can have a vital role to play during the entire application life cycle, including application development, deployment testing and change management, as well as trend analysis and capacity planning.

SATISFY YOUR CUSTOMER PROACTIVELY AND PREEMPTIVELY

Problems that affect performance can be caused by a number of factors, including the application, the network, user actions and hardware devices in the data center.

The many interactions among systems, software and networks (both internal and external) can make it difficult to pinpoint the source of performance problems. End-User Experience Management overcomes these traditional difficulties by constantly assessing the performance being experienced by all actual users, and comparing the results with established service level goals and standards. The result is immediate awareness of any degradation in performance and the data necessary to find and fix any problems.

A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR MONITORING PERFORMANCE

A comprehensive monitoring strategy requires a blended approach, including device and element management, synthetic testing and End-User Experience Management.

Some organizations may believe that a site-wide element management system (EMS) strategy is sufficient. But experience shows that would be a mistake. According to Forrester Research, "It is a prevailing myth in system management that if all infrastructure components are working correctly, then the performance of a system—as perceived by the end user—must be at an acceptable level. Real-life experience contradicts this system management logic."

Synthetic testing also has its place. The only condition where End-User Experience Management is unable to detect a problem is when users simply don't exist because they are unable to reach the site. For this reason, synthetic testing should be used to gauge site availability. Synthetic testing, invoked from various locations around the globe, runs scripts that seek to imitate the actions of a typical user, and determine whether or not an application or site and its various resources are accessible.

Some organizations, however, employ synthetic testing for something it was not designed to do: assess service levels and user satisfaction of individual transactions. Synthetic tests are costly and even the best scripts fail to uncover many of the problems that can occur from the complex interactions

encountered with real users. After all, the problems that are the most difficult to isolate are those that cannot be anticipated.

With End-User Experience Management you are able to observe and track pertinent details of every session on your site: every transaction, every page and every object accessed, and every problem encountered by every user every day. You can then cull through and drill-down deeply into this wealth of data with point-and-click ease to evaluate performance levels, correlate common errors and isolate any bottlenecks to their source. For the best results, performance levels are available in more meaningful percentiles.

The accompanying screen shots show Coradiant TrueSight IM in action. The top illustration shows overall performance compliance for thousands of users on a site. The bottom illustration shows the detail available for a single object within a single user's transaction.
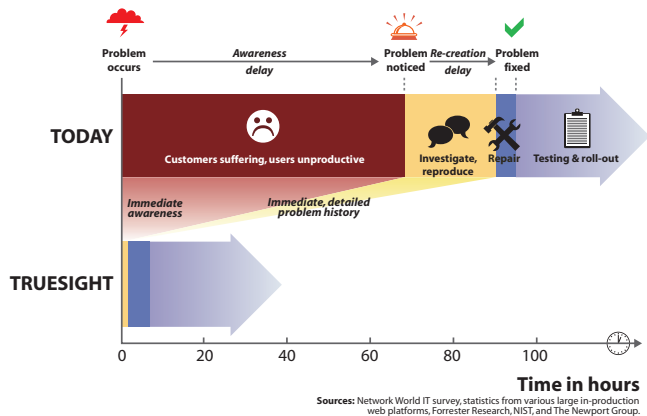
CUT REPAIR TIME BY ISOLATING PROBLEMS QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY

IT professionals understand that reducing the mean time-to-repair (MTTR) for web applications is both a desirable goal and a constant struggle. Every application has flaws, and fixing or repairing those flaws takes time. Sometimes a significant amount of time. And time is money.

Web-based applications have become enormously complex; finding and fixing the underlying problems normally involves a sequence of at least five time-consuming tasks:

- recognizing that a problem has occurred;
- verifying its existence and severity;
- isolating the precise cause—or causes;
- resolving the problem… in the code, the content, the configuration, etc., and;
- rolling out the fix—first in a quality assurance test, and then into full production.

And all too often the effort falls short, and the repair becomes an exercise in "trial and error." A recent survey of nearly 350 IT professionals by King Research (sponsored by Coradiant) revealed that a full 98% of respondents still learn about a significant number of problems from end-users. Something better is needed.

Sources: Network World IT survey, statistics from various large in-production web platforms, Forrester Research, NIST, and The Newport Group.

End-User Experience Management complements the diagnostic capabilities of existing web management tools in some significant ways. Although End-User Experience Management shortens the time involved in all five tasks cited above, its role is particularly valuable in the first three. By detecting all errors in real-time, IT personnel are alerted immediately whenever a problem occurs. The staff can then drill down through the session's details to quickly determine its cause(s), then confirm the diagnosis by determining if and how other users are being affected. The correlation of seemingly unrelated errors and events occurring concurrently is especially powerful when attempting to diagnose brownout conditions. In effect, End-User Experience Management combines three previously

lengthy steps into one that recognizes, verifies and isolates the cause. Actually, with End-User Experience Management, the need to reproduce a problem can normally be eliminated. End-User Experience Management has already recorded salient information about the actual problem as it occurred. Armed with such a complete set of details, any attempt to reproduce the problem using a synthetic tester or by other means is, at best, a waste of time.

GAIN A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN YOUR MARKET SEGMENT

The adoption of End-User Experience Management has already been remarkably successful at many world-class SaaS and ASP sites, including SalesForce.com, ADP, Authoria and Kenexea. These early adopters report experiencing significant benefits, including greater customer satisfaction from enhanced performance and uptime, improved staff productivity leading to reduced operating costs, superior planning and site optimization capabilities, and more.

End-User Experience Management achieves these benefits with little or no risks as an appliance that installs easily and operates transparently, without requiring changes to any existing infrastructure. Meaningful results are usually realized the very first day.

The inherent complexity of a multitiered web environment makes it nearly impossible to effectively monitor sites with traditional, piecemeal management tools. Knowing every page and object accessed and every error encountered during actual sessions takes the "trial and error" out of the diagnostic process by pinpointing the real source of the problem. And by blending incident and performance management in a single tool, End-User Experience Management simultaneously answers the two most commonly-asked questions: "What just happened?" and "Who else was affected?"

With all its power, the bottom line of End-User Experience Management is simply… a better bottom line. To learn more about how your organization can benefit from real-user monitoring, visit Coradiant on the web at www.coradiant.com.

AWARD-WINNING TRUESIGHT END-USER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT EQUIPMENT

Coradiant's TrueSight delivers accurate information on the performance and integrity of business applications in real-time. TrueSight shows problems as they occur, and provides the detailed transaction data needed to find and fix problems quickly. TrueSight's unique collection engine sees every part of all transactions, detecting problems at the network, session, application and content levels. TrueSight combines high-level views of application performance with full transaction history, per-request drill-down, and rich network forensics.

ABOUT CORADIANT

Coradiant is the leading provider of equipment used to manage, optimize and troubleshoot web applications. Coradiant's award-winning TrueSight™ products use customer metrics gathered from each web user visit as their primary data source for IT management. Coradiant products are deployed in hundreds of leading Fortune 500 companies including software as a service (SaaS), e-commerce, entertainment, finance, insurance, healthcare, and education. Coradiant is headquartered in San Diego.

For more information, please visit http://www.coradiant.com or call 1-877-731-7277.

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