Establish Enterprise Visibility

To achieve true enterprise visibility, agencies must monitor all data from all sources

There's an old management axiom that says, "You can't manage what you can't measure." One possible addition to that bit of wisdom might be, "You can't measure what you can't see." For government agency IT managers, whose job it is to ensure system uptime, it is becoming increasingly difficult to track performance across the IT infrastructure and its various systems and applications.

Several factors contribute to this challenge. First and foremost, over the years agencies have developed or acquired a lot of systems that run in silos. More recently, these agencies have shifted to a hybrid environment, with some resources residing in the cloud and others in datacenters. The result? There is no single place to effectively collect, aggregate and correlate performance data to provide a consistent and legible view of the operational environment—in other words, to provide enterprise visibility.

That is not to say that data is lacking. Those individual systems often come with monitoring tools that track performance. That data might be insightful, as far as an individual system goes. But collecting data on the health of individual systems, while useful in some ways, reveals nothing about the health of the larger enterprise and the services that it supports.

In theory, an IT manager might cobble together an enterprise perspective by integrating the various data sources. But that is more difficult than it sounds. Typically, individual management systems create data in proprietary formats that require proprietary tools. The process of piecing together this data into an enterprise view can be lengthy, expensive and error prone, and the net result often less than useful.

More often than not, the IT manager ends up making do with multiple network and systems monitors, and hoping for the best.

DIVING DEEPER INTO DATA

Fortunately, a better approach is possible. Rather than relying on a hodge podge of secondary performance data, IT managers can tap into the wealth of data already on hand—what is known as machine data.

Machine data contains a definitive record of all the activity and behavior of customers, users, transactions, applications, servers, networks and mobile devices. It's more than just log entries. It includes configurations, data from APIs, message queues, change events, the output of diagnostic commands, call detail records and sensor data from industrial systems and more.

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Taken together, the machine data generated by these various resources has the potential to offer true end-to-end visibility into the enterprise. What is needed is an analytic platform to mine that data and convert it into Operational Intelligence.

That's where the Splunk Enterprise platform comes in. By providing information that is detailed, clear and contextually correlated, Splunk affords agencies the level of real-time enterprise visibility required to glean status at a glance and derive powerful insights to make confident decisions about IT operations.

Because Splunk does not dictate a rigid storage model or scheme when ingesting data, it offers the flexibility to search data without any bounds. This allows the analyst or the operator to ask any question, even ones they had not thought of and progressive drill down as patterns are discovered or becomes apparent

For example, the security operations center staff can match identity data, firewall logs, document attributes and network behaviors in their cybersecurity efforts, while the datacenter staff can conduct capacity planning, network optimization, network activity monitoring and workload management.

But Splunk can do much more than enable better Operational Intelligence. It can also improve the efficiency and performance of employees, strengthening their decision-making by providing more accurate and comprehensive data. For example, program managers can gain new insights into how citizens prefer to interact with their agencies, or identify financial risks that don't show up in monthly reports. Ultimately, the result is more reliable services and improved agency reputation.

The key is enterprise visibility. The solution is Splunk.