



Outsourcing

some or all of an organization's IT systems to a specialist third party is a well-established procedure – and one which can often reap considerable economic and efficiency benefits to the client company. Taking outsourcing a step further is the concept of 'utility computing', which enables clients to pay a monthly fee to receive 'on-demand' access to IT services. A number of organizations are now beginning to offer 'fluctuating' fee rates (rather than a flat rate) which means that as the needs of the client company increase or decrease, so does the amount of money they pay for their IT systems.

Traditional outsourcing or the newer utility computing scenario – the need to understand the capacity of systems, the ability to forecast demand and guarantee the delivery of service level agreements – is a common, and fundamental, requirement.

The majority of the leading outsourcing companies in the world have agreements to use Metron's Athene software to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the services they provide. This newsletter provides examples of work being done with Metron in the UK by Oracle, Fujitsu and T-Systems, the latter being a recent entry into this marketplace.

Oracle

Capacity planning. Moving up the agenda

Oracle saw a growing realization amongst their client organizations of the need to proactively manage their IT infrastructures. The impact of e-business has reinforced the need to ensure that there are adequate resources to meet what may be highly volatile access and resource demands. In many instances they see that an inability to meet these demands can lead to significant losses to the business or even closure.



Oracle looked at ways of increasing the capacity planning services that it could offer to its clients. After studying tools from third parties and also those that were available internally within the organization, Oracle selected Metron's Athene product as the one able to offer the most significant benefits to the company. These included the quality of the product, its ease of use in a consulting environment and the level of training available. One of the key benefits of Athene in an Oracle environment is its low footprint in terms of processing requirements and its non-invasive data capture techniques. Thirty Oracle consultants from the UK, US, Japan and Europe were trained by Metron to enable services to be offered to Oracle clients.

Athene in the Oracle portfolio

Oracle offered a range of capacity planning and architecture services, branded as 'Oracle9i Architecture Services – Capacity, Scalability and Performance'. These services range from one off capacity/performance investigations to long term capacity monitoring and assessment.

For examples of specific projects for Oracle clients utilizing Athene, visit www.metron.co.uk. These include an upgrade to Oracle e-Business Suite and validation of a DR strategy.



Fujitsu

The Pathway Post Office Project

The Pathway Project as run by Fujitsu Services (formerly known as ICL) is the automation of the Post Office network throughout the UK. NT-based systems with touch screens and specific post office applications software were rolled out at the rate of 330 post offices each week to all 17,561 post offices; 37,996 individual systems and scanners were installed to serve each counter position. The Post Office network conducts about two billion transactions each year, with a turnover of £120 bn per annum.

All the individual post offices and sub-post offices are linked (via ISDN or satellite) to two fully disaster tolerant central data centres based on Sun and Sequent Unix systems, in Wigan and Bootle.

James Stinchcombe, Distinguished Engineer, Fujitsu Services commented: "We recognized right at the start of the project that given the complexity of the system, its business critical nature and level of transactions, that we needed to proactively monitor and manage its performance.

"We looked at products from a number of suppliers and selected Athene from Metron, primarily because of its flexibility and scalability.

Athene would allow us to collect performance data from a number of different systems, using different tools and in a range of different formats. We could then import all this disparate data into Athene in order to produce a single, consistent, comprehensive and integrated management and reporting system.

Athene is performing very well and provides an extremely rapid way of identifying problems. With a system of this magnitude and complexity, it is absolutely essential to have Athene to filter the data and provide trending information. Without Athene's capacity planning and performance management capabilities, the Pathway system would grind to a halt."

T-Systems

Convergence and Solutions

With 42,000 employees in over 20 countries and revenue of 13.8 billion euros in 2001, T-Systems – a division of the Deutsche Telekom Group – combines expertise in both information technology and telecommunications to deliver true e-business and convergent solutions. T-Systems is Europe's second-largest integrated systems provider and provides IT services to T-Mobile (UK) including the delivery and operation of the IS infrastructure.



T-Systems has a dedicated capacity planning team in place, headed up by Mark Newlands as the company's Capacity Manager. His group is currently responsible for managing the corporate systems at T-Mobile, but the workload will expand dramatically as external outsourcing clients hand over their IT requirements to T-Systems.

In common with T-Mobile, Mark's team is using the Athene capacity planning and performance management tool from Metron. Athene is being used to capture data, monitor, analyze and report on more than 1,000 Unix and NT servers located around the UK.

Corporate T-Mobile applications running on these systems include accounts, billing and data warehousing.

Mark Newlands "Athene has been used at T-Mobile since the late 1990s. The product is highly regarded and at T-Systems we saw absolutely no reason to look at any other tools. Given that we are responsible for a large number of widely dispersed systems, it is essential that we have a good, reliable automated data collection system – and Athene certainly fulfils this need. Athene is used to collect data twenty-four hours a day. The resultant information forms an extremely

important part of our everyday work."

T-Systems is making extensive use of the Automatic Performance Reporting (APR) module within Athene. Mark Newlands: "One of the great advantages of APR within T-Systems is that it enables us to distribute the reports more widely within the company. In this way, we can raise awareness and increase understanding of how systems are performing. Although reports are currently distributed on a monthly basis with the focus on trends, we plan to use APR to make them available daily so that they can also be used for short term monitoring and management."