



METRON AND ATHENE DELIVERING QUALITY OF SERVICE

This issue of Athenæum focuses on Quality of Service issues regardless of whether the service is being provided to external customers or within a single organization – and highlights the benefits which Athene and Metron can deliver. For an increasing number of organizations, Athene is proving to be a key component in any service management toolset.

Our innovative project with ntl:home is a world first. Here Athene is being used, amongst other objectives, to provide quality of service metrics on the set-top boxes sited within homes which enable ntl:home customers to receive digital television and interactive services.

Cap Gemini Ernst Young UK plc (CGE&Y), a giant in the world of consulting and outsourcing services, is using Athene as its preferred performance management and capacity planning tool within the company's blue-chip client base.

NTL

Quality of service measurements for set-top boxes

In an unusual twist on the traditional role of capacity planning, Metron is working with ntl:home, the UK's leading provider of consumer cable services, on the development of an innovative system which will automatically monitor, measure and report on the quality of service delivered by ntl's Digital TV platform to all the company's interactive TV users.

Andrew Wolffsohn, Capacity Planning Manager at ntl:home said: "Typically capacity planning has focused on monitoring the performance of servers. My vision was to turn this on its head and use the power of capacity planning to monitor customer services at individual set top box level".

The traditional capacity planning approach is to install a dedicated PC on the network to collect data from the designated servers. However, given the 'sealed' environment of ntl's set top boxes with their integrated cable modem, it was impossible to collect data from the network using this approach. It became evident that the only common view of both 'ends' of the NTL network was provided by the company's thirty-one proxy servers located at five server farm locations throughout the UK. The proxy servers are the conduit through which every set-top box must pass in



requesting a page, and the route by which pages are requested from the network.

The Athene-based solution, designed and implemented by Metron, collects data from the proxy servers on the metrics specified by NTL on a 24 x 7 basis. Graphical and tabular reports are produced automatically, which are published to ntl's intranet or made available as hard copy.

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NTL *continued*



"The responsiveness of Metron has been a major contributor to the success of the system. I very much doubt whether other companies could have been as flexible in their approach and as fast in their development and delivery as Metron has been. I believe that once the second phase of the project is completed in November, we will have a unique and extremely effective solution for measuring levels of customer service and experience in a live, interactive environment." ☐

Fast and Furious

Performance Tips

Don't forget to register for your copy of our free Performance Tips e-mail newsletter. Containing hints and tips from Metron and from our customers, the newsletter is designed to help you – and your customers – get the best out of your systems.

UKCMG 2004

Metron Presentations

This year's event comprised of a conference, speakers and a small exhibition. The main themes were Storage, Service management, ITIL, Web Services, Mainframe and Capacity Planning. The papers presented were 'Who is watching who is watching Big Brother' by NTL's Andrew Wolffsohn and Metron's Keith Digby. 'Slam dunk - SLAs' by Adam Grummit. And 'Introduction to ITIL. It's not big and it's not clever' by Andrew Smith and Keith Digby.

Cap Gemini Ernst & Young



On 1 September 2002, following a rigorous evaluation process, Metron's Athene performance management and capacity planning software was selected by Cap Gemini Ernst & Young UK plc as the tool of choice for their Outsourcing Division.

Nick Varley, Performance and Capacity Specialist at Cap Gemini Ernst & Young UK plc was responsible for preparing the business case that resulted in the selection of Athene. He joined the UK Outsourcing operation in 1998 with more than twenty years experience of systems programming in a mainframe environment. "Having worked with IBM mainframes for so many years, I was very familiar with the role which capacity planning and performance management tools can play. I was keen to introduce this capability for Unix and Windows-based systems."

The need to find a performance management and capacity planning

tool that covered as many platforms as possible, at a reasonable cost and requiring realistic levels of effort to maintain it, was vital to Cap Gemini Ernst & Young."

After reviewing a number of products in the market against requirements a short-list of vendors was drawn up. Following on from discussions with the vendors, products were evaluated and analyzed for costs, whenever possible drawing upon practical experience of the use of the tools. In the case of Metron a small pilot system was set up to demonstrate Athene. The product received a positive response from people within Cap Gemini Ernst & Young on Athene. It was easy to install, easy to use, had an

uncomplicated architecture and was succinctly packaged.

Following a period of intense analysis and evaluation, it was determined that Athene was the most appropriate solution for CGE&Y.

Nick Varley: "Using Athene, we are already seeing significant cost savings and these savings will continue as we automate more of the process of performance management."

[Read more about how Athene is being used 'in the field' for CGE&Y's customers at www.metron.co.uk] ☐