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Business Impact Management

Measuring the financial and business impact from process to packet

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The need to understand how the performance and problems within the technical infrastructure impacts the capabilities of the business is massive. However, the majority of companies can only measure application and specific asset performance, whereas many issues within the infrastructure lie at the transport level, where packet switching presents both great opportunities and major issues.

MAIN POINTS

- **The business depends on the performance of the infrastructure**
  The technological environment for most businesses now means that companies are completely dependent on it. Should there be problems in this environment, the business will be immediately impacted – with associated business costs.
- **Stopping at the network asset level is not good enough**
  Network performance, and therefore the impact on the business, is dependent on how well the underlying transport is performing. Measuring data packet performance provides the foundation for a complete understanding of the business impact of technology.
- **Technology and business reporting systems must be linked**
  Using drill down and drill up techniques, it must be possible for the business and the technologists to share and hand over information in the easiest way possible. A business person must be able to drill down through the information presented to them until they reach a point where they can no longer understand what is being presented – at this point, the technologist should be able to take over directly.
- **Understanding the infrastructure requires certain tools to be available**
  Companies must be in a position to know what technical assets they are dealing with, what the interdependencies are between these assets, and what business impact there will be on the failure or sub-standard performance of any asset. The interaction of these assets – i.e. the packet performance – must also be measured and reported on.
- **Different data types and different applications need different management**
  Just taking an application optimisation view of the network will not solve today's issues of dealing with data, voice and video. The actual data traffic must be inspected and managed to ensure that quality of service requirements are met, and that security is maintained.
- **Moving to a business impact management solution has to be inclusive**
  The majority of organisations will already have tooling in place to provide reporting against technical issues. Where possible, these investments must be safeguarded, and the new tooling brought in to provide business impact management must be able to work and integrate with what is already present – including existing physical resources and human skills.

REPORT NOTE:
This report has been written independently by Quocirca Ltd to address certain issues found in today's organisations. The report draws on Quocirca's extensive knowledge of the technology and business arenas, and provides advice on the approach that organisations should take to create a more effective and efficient environment for future growth.

CONCLUSION

Today's companies are dependent on their technical infrastructure, yet few have the capability to fully assess the impact that issues in the infrastructure have on the business itself. With the majority of IT groups having to continually fight fires, the time has come for businesses to have better visibility of how technical issues are constraining the business – and so to prioritise and expedite technical fixes and changes that will help to keep them at the forefront of their markets.

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1 Introduction

- **The move to multi-data, global networks drives a need for an all-inclusive, process-to-packets systems management approach**
- **Packet-based data streams have inherent issues that means that business impact management is predicated on a full understanding of the packet performance**
- **IT must move from technical fire fighting and point solutions to business support and enablement**

Historically, we have had two main types of network – a circuit-switched one, where each connection was essentially dedicated, and packet-based, where information is cut into small chunks (packets) and make their way around the network on a "best efforts" basis. We are now moving to an overwhelmingly packet-based environment – and "best efforts" is increasingly not good enough.

In the past, managing network data was relatively easy – the main transactions were carried out within siloed applications, with the main network traffic being the exchange of information between the client device and the application. Networks were constrained, with little, if any, information being exchanged beyond the confines of the organisation itself. With the advent of the internet and the breakdown of applications towards more service-based constructs, we have been left with a far more complex environment, where massive volumes of packets are being carried within corporate networks and across private and public inter-organisational networks.

All of this can have severe impacts on an organisation. The main problem with a packet based network is that the packets can travel by different routes with associated latency issues, and can also suffer from packet collisions and bottlenecks, making the delivery of complete data streams pretty much a hit and miss affair. With systems that have low time dependency, as with the majority of simple applications, this is not often seen as a major issue. However, even at this level, the impact of an increasingly slow network is felt by all users, and eventually, some form of remedial action will be required. For time-critical systems, the performance of the network becomes critical. This has been known for many years within the financial markets, where sub-second issues can mean the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful major deal. Now, as we move towards the use of voice over IP (VoIP) and real-time IP video, the problem is increasingly being encountered by organisations of all types and sizes.

The historical approach to managing an organisation's total technical infrastructure has been via systems management tools. These systems tend to create an asset view of a network, and the aim was to ensure uptime of the assets through monitoring system events. This was to be managed through the automated fixing of any faults within the assets, or through the use of automated failover to "warm" systems (those available in stand-by mode) in the event of asset failure. An open standard, the Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) has grown up to enable alerts to be broadcast by assets when specific events occur, and for these alerts to be easily monitored by systems management tools.

However, the majority of these tools neglect the importance of the critical flows of data packets, and so cannot provide a fully optimised network that provides full support for the organisation. System performance is calculated based on trending historical data at a gross level, rather than correlating data at a dynamic level to provide more realistic predictions of future performance, even where the underlying technology (network or service) is being changed. The overall health of a system is apparent from how the packets of data are acting – a healthy application can be hampered by a poor network configuration, or the failure of a component on the network. The network itself can be impacted through the misbehaviour of a single service which is needlessly broadcasting packets across the network. Without an understanding of the whole environment – from the data packets, through the infrastructural

assets, to the application and the business processes, it is difficult to ensure that business metrics are met, that immediate business needs can be handled, and that unplanned downtime is minimised. With a full knowledge of the technical environment, rules can be constructed that can ensure that we have full IT service assurance, and that we can more closely match business processes with technical capabilities, and can bridge the gap between business and technical reporting, enabling technical staff to demonstrate better support for the day-to-day dynamic needs of the organisation.

This report looks at the need for an all-inclusive approach to systems management, bringing together issues around packet behaviour from the base levels of technology upwards, and how this needs to be matched with the needs of the business and how problems at the technical level impact the financial health of an organisation from the top. This will need an approach to the identification and decomposition of business processes to enable the easy mapping of business need to technical capability, along with a full knowledge of how the network reacts under different data loads and process flows. For the majority of companies, some extra tooling will be required – this should not be at the expense of existing systems management solutions, but should be possible through the addition of discrete, best of breed plug ins.

2 Business Challenges – Flexibility, competition, compliance and process

- **The pace of change within the commercial space is getting faster – speed of response is key**
- **Business processes are all important – technology cannot be a constraint to business flexibility**
- **Compliance is a bottom-line cost – but it must be covered**

Overall, infrastructural flexibility has to be the strategic aim for any organisation today. The markets are changing faster than ever, and today's market number one can rapidly become an also ran by backing the wrong business and/or IT strategy. The need to create an environment where IT facilitates the business processes, and can adapt to the required changes in these, is great. The need is also there to be able to rapidly see at a technical level what is constraining a business process – and for action to be taken against these bottlenecks as rapidly as possible.

Through the use of the internet, even the smallest companies can now act as global players, and can operate in the markets as peers with the largest multinationals. When we look at companies such as Amazon.com, Google and others, we see organisations that started as highly virtualised companies that then figured out how to leverage the reach of the technologies available to them, and are now seen as dominant in their areas. Counting solely on brand loyalty and existing customers is no longer an option.

As part of ensuring that an organisation is more flexible, businesses are more aware than ever that process is important. An organisation has a "business imperative" – generally around creating shareholder value or overall profitability. This imperative is supported by the various business processes within the organisation, which can be decomposed into sets of business tasks. These business tasks need to be facilitated through human or technological interventions. At the technological level, we are looking at how technology services can be brought together in order to facilitate the tasks in the most effective and efficient manner, with as little human intervention as possible.

As well as "standard" business processes aimed at maximising revenues and margin, there are bottom line cost process issues that also need to be considered. One of the largest costs to an organisation is likely to become compliance – not particularly at the "big noise" level of Sarbanes Oxley, Basel II and so on, but at the perceptionally more mundane level of data

protection, freedom of information, quality and security provenance and so on. Compliance needs a thorough knowledge of what is happening at the asset and the data transport levels to be easily managed – and to create a "Compliance Oriented Architecture", an infrastructure that can support any compliance needs, rather than taking a silo-based approach to dealing with each compliance issue separately.

3 Business Impact Management and Analysis

- **A small change in the performance of a technology asset can have massive impact on a business**
- **Quantifying business impact needs an understanding of the business processes**
- **Mapping the business processes to the technical assets, their interdependencies and the underlying packet performance provides a platform for business impact analysis and management**

With the gap that currently exists between the business' understanding of what the problems are with its processes, and the technologists' perception of what can be done at the technical level, there is a need for a solution that can enable this gap to be bridged, and for greater information to be made available to ensure that full root cause is easily identified for any issue – and that the issue can then be dealt with.

To do this, it is necessary to look at mapping the two areas on to each other, and for this, we need to start at the business processes. Business processes consist of a set of business tasks, generally assigned to named people, a functional role within the organisation, or to a specific function within a technical application. By decomposing the business processes down to the business tasks, what functionality already exists within the technical environment to support these tasks can be identified, and where there are holes within the capability. We also need to understand the data flows along the process, and to be able to predict the impact on the overall network of changes within the quantity and type of these data flows.

By mapping in this way, it also becomes possible to uncover the functional redundancy that there is within an organisation, as well as the interdependencies between the functional components. Such mapping can be termed as Business Impact Management (BIM).

A good example would be where a new marketing campaign is launched. The campaign may be very successful, driving lots of new people to the web site. However, the data flows between the web site and the back office systems may not be optimised, and this may cause severe bottlenecks to users attempting to access the web site itself. Or, it may be that one asset in the whole process chain is down, so halting all access. The end result to the business looks the same – customers cannot make a purchase – but the underlying problems are quite distinct. For the business to understand this difference is difficult – for the technologists to be able to identify the true root cause rapidly and effectively is of paramount importance.

Now let's look at an environment where we utilise BIM. The business is made aware automatically that a process is no longer working, as data flows are not happening as they should. An alert is sent to a business person, who can then see immediately what the impact of this problem is on the business. This person can therefore rapidly prioritise what the true financial impact of the problem is to the business. They can then drill down through the business process to the business tasks to identify where the problem lies at a greater level of granularity. At some point, the business person will reach a point where the information begins to no longer make complete sense to them – this may be either a relatively high abstraction level (e.g. a problem at the web site), or a lower level (e.g. format of data presented by web to back office application incorrect, response times for data transfers causing customers to close down sessions). At this point, they can hand off to a more

technical person – with the priority already set from a business perspective. The technical person can then drill further down to identify root cause and solve the problem.

Further, if a change is going to be carried out, then BIM can be utilised to identify all business processes that will be impacted by the change. With a knowledge of the impact such a change will have on the underlying infrastructure, we can ensure that the total environment is set up in the most effective manner to deal with the new business processes, right down to the changes in the data flows. Testing can therefore be far more focused, saving time and resources.

The bottom line is that with BIM, issues are dealt with more rapidly and in a proactive manner. The business remains in control throughout, and less time is spent on identifying errors, and in dealing with low-priority issues.

It is easy to see that a key part of BIM is in the analysis of the data involved – the basic asset data, the knowledge of the interdependencies and the event data created by the functional components and the flow of the data itself. Although this analysis is extremely complex, the resulting information has to be presented simply – and in the manner the viewer wants to see it. A business person may only want to see a simple dashboard view relating to those business processes for which they have responsibility, whereas a technical systems management person may want to see a range of data being plotted between the upper and lower extents of approved and agreed service level agreements (SLAs). A senior business person may want to see an aggregation of performance figures, maybe with trend analysis to identify where problems may occur in the future. Surrounding information must be in the terms that the viewer understands – terminology around the position in the business process for the business viewer, technical terminology for the systems management viewer. However, all these views should be through the same type of client, whether it be portal or client/server console. Also, for ease of use, the data involved must be capable of being easily passed up and down the chain as the viewer drills up and down the data views, and as they hand over to another person as necessary.

So, in summary, what we are looking for at this stage is:

- A means of identifying and describing business processes as a set of discrete business tasks, to which distinct business values can be attached
- A means of matching the business tasks with existing technical functions, and the introduction of new functions to fill in any gaps in capability
- A means of identifying all interdependencies between the technical functions, both at the functional and the transport levels
- A means of measuring the performance of the technical functions, and of measuring the dynamic impact of data transports between the functions under different load conditions
- A means of aggregating all such information
- A means of analysing the information and reporting the findings back to a mixed audience in a manner which is meaningful and provides distinct means of rapidly identifying the root cause of problems and so a rapid means of fixing them
- A capability to analyse data and utilise the findings to enable “what if” scenarios to be tried out, providing knowledge of how a new process is likely to perform under variable and varying network conditions

In the next section, we will see the problems that the IT department are generally up against, and will begin to see how BIM can be utilised to help the IT department move from a reactive technology group to a more proactive, business facilitation group. We will also look at the distinct needs for tooling at the technical level, and also how organisations should approach choice of tooling depending on their individual starting position.

4 IT challenges – Fire fighting, investment maximisation and managing new technologies

- **IT has to gain a breathing space – expenditure on maintenance cannot carry on at current rates**
- **"Rip and replace" is not an option – existing technology assets must be utilized wherever possible**
- **New technologies will continue to emerge – and IT must be able to absorb these into an existing environment where desirable, and without massive retro-testing and dependency testing**

Multiple research reports (including Quocirca's own) have shown that many organisations find that 70-80% of their IT budgets are spent purely on maintaining their existing technical environment. Although this is unsustainable in the long run, it is difficult for companies to solve the problem without a large impact on the day-to-day running of the business. Without a full knowledge of what existing assets are there, how these assets are interdependent on one another and how data flows would be impacted by any changes to the topology of the network itself, any change to one area just leads to other issues elsewhere – and resources haemorrhage as the fire fighting continues. Through the addition of BIM tooling, not only can the business see what impact any change will have, and therefore prioritise the change in business terms, but can also better manage the change itself. By mapping BIM onto existing or new IT Systems Management (ITSM) tooling, we can begin to move from a maintenance/fire fighting environment to a more business IT investment approach.

One of the major expenditure areas in both time and resource is in the mapping of the interdependencies between the new and existing solutions, and in the retro-testing of the new environment to ensure that any knock-on effects are effectively uncovered. Any tools that can help in this area will cut down on these types of costs, giving faster time to capability while freeing up resources and budget for other investments.

Integrating new technologies and architectures

Compounding the issues around existing assets is the evolution of new technical architectures and the emergence of new data types within the network.

Service Oriented Architectures (SOAs) are beginning to take hold in organisations, leading to a greater granularity in technical function than has previously been seen with the large enterprise application solutions. In many ways, this is good news – discrete technical functions are easier to map and change, but we also face the problem of increased complexity in the interdependencies between functional components (in this case, individual web services, or collections of web services creating a composite function). We also then run up against how these services maintain links with each other, advertise themselves as available and so on. An SOA needs very close monitoring to prevent network overload, as the services fire off information requests, responses and active "pings" (a means of seeing what else is out there). Again, at this level, data packet monitoring is a necessity to ensure full knowledge of the state of the network.

We also have to look at areas such as voice and video. Historically, voice ran across a separate network and any requirements for voice integration went through specific servers. Now, through Voice over IP (VoIP), we can see voice as being just another service, and as a service it can have just as many problems with interdependencies as any other technical service. Voice on a packet switch network has distinct requirements that are dependent on a solid knowledge of the packets themselves.

As we move forwards, we can see the same happening for video, and for the various interplays that we will see in the communication and collaboration spaces, as we see email, instant messaging, VoIP, video and web conferencing all needing to swap and change seamlessly.

Business Impact Management and IT Systems Management (ITSM)

The larger problem for an IT manager is that he or she is no longer in a position to easily replace existing systems. Systems must be kept running, as the business moves to more of a continuous, 24x7 operating mode, and existing technology investments must be optimised wherever possible. Most organisations will already have some tooling in place to manage areas of this, through the purchase of systems management solutions. However, for many, this existing tooling threatens to become a further part of the problem, due to the lack of capabilities within key areas.

The starting points for organisations will spread across a range of possibilities. The main options are as follows:

- **Already have an existing framework-style systems management capability**
  Some companies will be moving from an old-style, framework style systems management approach, and will need to decide if this provides the flexibility for them going forwards. For the best flexibility, the majority of companies will decide that a framework is too unwieldy and inflexible for future needs, and that vendor lock in is too much of a threat to them.

  With the majority of the big systems management vendors having moved away from frameworks towards integrated suites, it is likely that the decision will be to move to such an environment. The main suites will provide good levels of support for direct systems management, generally backed up with other technical solutions such as trouble ticketing, help desk and so on written with ITIL in mind. However, many of these suites start and finish at the technology layer – and even then, this tends to be at the gross asset level, covering only events that impact the independent asset itself, with little capability to monitor the real impact of data packets within the network. There is also little capability for the business to become involved, or for interdependencies to be mapped and followed both up and down within a business hierarchy.

  The majority of systems management vendors have dropped any thoughts of proprietary approaches – the level of adherence to standards that are found within the big systems management suites now makes the use of best of breed plug-ins an easy choice. Therefore, where it is necessary to build up a better BIM capability, BIM tooling from third party vendors can be relatively easily plugged in to the new suite.

- **Already have a suite-based set of systems management tools**
  For those already in a suite based environment, then the best of breed plug-in is already an option, and an easy retro fit to provide the additional functionality required.

- **Have a collection of point tools**
  For those who may have a more heterogeneous collection of disparate tools built up through years of point solutions and tools gained through corporate mergers and acquisitions, then the decision will probably be again to move towards a suite of technology tools from a major vendor. Again, once it is recognised that BIM tooling is not available, or is not a particular strength of the suite, a plug-in approach is the best answer.

- **No systems management tooling currently in place**
  Finally, for those who have no real tooling in place, then a similar decision process has to take place. The organisation will have to decide what gives the best underlying technical management solution, and also what extra functionality will be required to ensure that the business is fully supported, leading to a need for BIM tooling.

The basic conclusion is that BIM needs a strong underlying systems management capability sufficiently open to support the plugging in of functionality that builds on the technical capability to be more supportive of the business. Similarly, any BIM solution must be able to work seamlessly with existing tooling to maximise current skills and solution investments.

5 BIM Futures

- **The main areas where we will see changes in BIM tools are:**
  - **Predictive reporting**
  - **Automated problem resolution**
  - **Dynamic services management in SOA/utility environments**

The changes that we are seeing in the business' approach to technology, and in the technology itself, will lead to the need for advanced functionality in BIM tools as we move forwards. The main focus on this move will be in reporting on existing and predicted performance of the technology environment. Through the wealth of information that is collected through BIM and ITSM solutions, advanced analytics will be able to provide far more depth of knowledge and information on what *will* happen within an environment, rather than just what *has* happened. As the technology improves, tasks which have previously been carried out manually, or have been dependent on human intervention within the semi-automated functions, will be able to be fully automated – saving time and resource. This approach will further free up resources within the infrastructure to concentrate on real business IT investment – enabling an organisation to be far more competitive in the market.

The main areas that should be looked for include:

- **High usage of federated data sources**
  Increasingly, we have the need to store the event information generated by the IT assets, so that we can report on problems, and also so that we can pattern match to predict events dynamically. However, organisations cannot afford for each solution that requires access to such data to create its own database. Therefore, solutions must be able to utilise database federation, where data is shared amongst multiple solutions in a hierarchical manner, and must be able to act as a data feed to other solutions.

- **Predictive reporting**
  BIM tools, mapped onto ITSM tools, will be able to advise on trend analysis in areas such as resource utilisation and preventative maintenance. In the future, for example, rather than waiting for storage to become critically over-utilised, BIM can alert technologists and line of business people, and provide advice on the best way forwards, whether this be to re-deploy storage from other areas, or to order more storage if necessary. At the network transport level, advanced packet analysis and trend reporting will enable better network planning, the better use of virtual LANs (VLANS) and tunnelling technologies, and the use of the various types of priority of service that are available.

- **Automated break/fix**
  The capability to automatically resolve certain issues, such as standard file corruption (e.g. dynamic link libraries, java libraries and so on) can be managed through a knowledge of the existing state of files (e.g. via Cyclic Redundancy Checking (CRC) or file sizing). If a component is updated through formal change management means, then the BIM/ITSM environment will know that this has happened, and no events or alerts will need to be triggered. However, if corruption occurs (either inadvertently, or via viral activity), then the offending file can be automatically replaced with a copy of the original. Similarly, the capability to automatically re-route traffic based on an

enhanced knowledge of the packet performance of the various parts of the network, and of the defined needs of the type of transport (e.g. the need for low latency for voice streams) will help create a far more autonomous environment. This frees up the IT department for implementing new functions, rather than maintaining existing functions.

- **Dynamic services management**
  As we move towards SOA and increasingly utility environments such as Grid computing, the need to understand interdependencies between services, the underlying infrastructure and the role they play within the business process becomes paramount. With services being re-usable and multi-purpose, changes to a utility environment can have far reaching effects on the business, and BIM tooling will be the only way to understand the link between these discrete functional components and the business processes.

- **Forensic capabilities**
  With the wealth and depth of data that such solutions will bring to the organisation, the information and knowledge gained can be utilised to ensure that adherence to audit and governance requirements have been met at the technology level. Also, as event data is being captured on a continuous basis, should anything untoward happen, the data can be interrogated to identify not only what the root cause was, but also to identify the person or agent that caused the problem. Through these means, systems security is improved, and visibility of process weaknesses will lead to better overall process control. Further, by gaining better understanding of the patterns of the data packets on the network, we will be better positioned not only to more rapidly identify issues caused through attack or misuse, but will be better positioned to identify exactly what impact such activity has already had on a system, and so correct any problems caused.

Linking reporting with financial metrics will also be increasingly important – if a company knows that a failure or lack of performance of a web site costs so much per hour, then this can be reported through the portal. Although this can already be done at a simplistic level, trying to fully understand business processes, interdependencies and financial metrics may take some while to provide a fully effective solution.

6 What to look for from a BIM solution

When looking for a suitable BIM solution, the following are the main aspects that Quocirca recommends as areas to ask a vendor about:

- **Complete top-to-bottom capabilities**
  The top level business process is dependent on the performance of the data packets at the lowest level. It is not enough to have tools that just track the progress of a process, nor is it enough to have tools that advise on whether any point infrastructure asset is working or not. Point tools that provide insight into historically niche areas, such as network packet sniffers (such that individual data packets traversing the network are fully monitored), must be integrated into the overall stack. A monitoring platform with integrated capabilities or one that supports integration with a packet-based monitoring solution will provide a full view of the status of any process/task – and to enable the correct action to be taken to realign the process/infrastructure capabilities as the business requires.

- **Ease of Deployment**
  No matter how complex a system's capabilities are, the deployment of the system has to be simple. These days, there is no excuse for systems that require heavy pre-deployment work, large numbers of parameters to be set during deployment or excessive personalisation after deployment. The chosen solution should be capable of rapid deployment, and should be easy to update and maintain from there on.

- **Integration into existing environments**
  BIM solutions must be able to plug in to existing environments, and must support open standards to enable this to happen. The age of proprietary solutions is long gone, and any vendor that attempts a lock in to a specific set of tooling or closes down the opportunity to add other best of breed tooling should not be considered.

- **Modularity**
  As stated above, many organisations will already have some part of a solution in place. By choosing a solution that is modular, the opportunity to choose from best-of-breed is far more simple, and the solution can change as needs change.

- **Data Integrity and Accessibility**
  Technology assets are increasingly creating ever larger amounts of event data, and many organisations have chosen not to store information from many assets due to storage concerns. While event data or alerts are key to effective BIM solution, informational alerts and false alarms can damage the solution's integrity. With packet-based analysis, we are looking at massive numbers of events being triggered by the assets involved – firewalls, routers, end-devices – but much of this data is reporting that things are OK, and will have little importance when we look at the needs of the organisation in this space. Therefore, the chosen tooling must be able to differentiate between the events that can be safely discarded, and those events that need to be stored and analysed. A solution that can suppress downstream alarm floods when a higher level component fails is extremely useful. Without this feature, the solution will send false alarms that seriously undermine its reliability. The problem has been made worse in some areas by systems insisting on replicating data for their own needs – data that already exists and is of use to multiple systems. Therefore, a chosen solution should be able to perform concurrent database queries and parallel process the data for quick results. It should also allow IT to add and federate multiple data stores as the number of network devices and applications increases. This flexibility ensures that the monitoring solution can scale as network requirements evolve

- **Information Analysis and Reporting**
  Having lots of data underpinning a solution is fine – but not being able to analyse this data in meaningful ways and not being able to present the analysis to multiple different groups within an organisation will make the solution useless. The chosen solution should have a high focus on being able to carry out meaningful business and technology analysis – and then to present this graphically to the viewer, whether this is a business or technology person. It should provide flexible reporting features with the capability to generate complex reports on the fly without having to manually select or deselect tens or even hundreds of such devices.

7 Conclusions

The gap between the needs of the business and its technology capabilities has never been wider, and the gap between the IT department and the business has, in many cases, been allowed to grow to a chasm.

It is unlikely that this chasm will be bridged through re-skilling the technology workforce to better understand the business's needs, or to re-skill the business workforce to better understand technology. What we need to look for is a means to an end – a way to bring the business and IT together without the need for the presence of a cumbersome separate human translation layer. Business Impact Management is the best way to do this – a way for the business to see at their level exactly what is happening to their processes, and to see the business and financial impact of any problem within the technology layer. Through the use of drill down technologies, business people can then hand off the issue to technical people, complete with business priorities, and the technology people can more easily identify the root cause, and therefore more rapidly solve the issue, using a combination of BIM and ITSM tooling.

A side effect of this is that business processes will also be better understood, and through this, process optimisation and reengineering becomes far more possible. That BIM then provides feedback on the technology impacts such re-engineering or optimisation will create, change can be better planned and managed within an organisation, leading to major savings in the maintenance of the technology environment.

The aim is to move from an essentially maintenance/fire fighting environment to a business/IT investment one – while maintaining existing services to the business and to maximise existing technology investments.

About Network General Corporation

Network General™ is a leading provider of IT management solutions designed to integrate and simplify troubleshooting and management across IT domains, assuring the delivery of IT services. The Network General portfolio consists of innovative software solutions and intelligent appliances that proactively monitor and manage all elements of IT infrastructure performance including network devices, applications, and servers, while simultaneously delivering a correlated view of the health of the business service.

Network General's solutions drive down the cost-per-managed network segment while providing IT professionals with a full range of complementary products that assure delivery of business-relevant IT services.

For more information on Network General solutions and services, visit our web site at www.networkgeneral.com, or call us at 1-800-SNIFFER. Within Europe please call us at +44 (0) 1628 509026

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About Quocirca

Quocirca is a primary research and analysis company specialising in the business impact of information technology and communications (ITC). With world-wide, native language reach, Quocirca provides in-depth insights into the views of buyers and influencers in large, mid-sized and small organisations. Its analyst team is made up of real-world practitioners with first hand experience of ITC delivery who continuously research and track the industry in the following key areas:

- Business process evolution and enablement
- Enterprise solutions and integration
- Business intelligence and reporting
- Communications, collaboration and mobility
- Infrastructure and IT systems management
- Systems security and end-point management
- Utility computing and delivery of IT as a service
- IT delivery channels and practices
- IT investment activity, behaviour and planning
- Public sector technology adoption and issues
- Integrated print management

Through researching perceptions, Quocirca uncovers the real hurdles to technology adoption – the personal and political aspects of an organisation's environment and the pressures of the need for demonstrable business value in any implementation. This capability to uncover and report back on the end-user perceptions in the market enables Quocirca to advise on the realities of technology adoption, not the promises.

Quocirca research is always pragmatic, business orientated and conducted in the context of the bigger picture. ITC has the ability to transform businesses and the processes that drive them, but often fails to do so. Quocirca's mission is to help organisations improve their success rate in process enablement through better levels of understanding and the adoption of the correct technologies at the correct time.

Quocirca has a pro-active primary research programme, regularly surveying users, purchasers and resellers of ITC products and services on emerging, evolving and maturing technologies. Over time, Quocirca has built a picture of long term investment trends, providing invaluable information for the whole of the ITC community.

Quocirca works with global and local providers of ITC products and services to help them deliver on the promise that ITC holds for business. Quocirca's clients include Oracle, Microsoft, IBM, Dell, T-Mobile, Vodafone, EMC, Symantec and Cisco, along with other large and medium sized vendors, service providers and more specialist firms.

Sponsorship of specific studies by such organisations allows much of Quocirca's research to be placed into the public domain at no cost. Quocirca's reach is great – through a network of media partners, Quocirca publishes its research to a possible audience measured in the millions.

Quocirca's independent culture and the real-world experience of Quocirca's analysts ensure that our research and analysis is always objective, accurate, actionable and challenging.

Quocirca reports are freely available to everyone and may be requested via www.quocirca.com.

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