

Company Gains Total Visibility into Citrix Environment to Manage Performance and User Experience with eG Innovations

The Online Performance Challenge

Overview

Leading marketer of energy gas, fuel oil, and related products and services. Serving over a million residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural customers. Revenue over \$1.2 billion.

Challenge

- Performance issues with online ordering system impacts customer satisfaction. Extended Citrix platform suspected culprit.

Solution

- eG Innovations performance management solution provides performance visibility into extended Citrix environment
- Identified and resolved performance bottlenecks to restore positive user experience.

Results

- Positive customer experience
- Uninterrupted order process
- Fast, proactive resolution of performance issues

The company' online order system was frustrating energy customers. Online ordering and payment processing was slow, and buyers often abandoned the site before completing a purchase.

The company's challenge was to identify the true root cause of these end user performance problems and resolve them. And since all end user sessions are administered by an environment of over 100 physical and virtualized Citrix servers, the servers themselves were assumed to be the culprit. The company's IT staff knew better, but lacked a sophisticated performance management solution that provided sufficient insight into the broader IT environment to identify the root cause and resolve the issue. This situation is common to many Citrix shops. "It must be Citrix" is the knee-jerk conclusion of end users and, at first, IT staff alike when performance issues occur.

After all, end users connect to virtually all of their applications through Citrix servers, so Citrix tends to get the blame every time.

In reality, the business service involves multiple applications and tiers, such as Active Directory, web interface, virtualization platform, enterprise applications, networked resources, and more. So any of these tiers and layers could be the culprit – but how to find out for sure and fix the problem?

Fred Johnson, the energy company's IT supervisor, was determined to find a performance management platform that provides deep insight into every layer and every tier of the IT infrastructure to prove exactly what was causing the performance problems, and resolve it.

We are using presentation servers," Johnson says. "The previous Metaframe was supposed to be causing the problems, and they would go away when Presentation server migration took place. But that wasn't the case."

“ Every time there was some user issue, blame was always placed on Citrix.

eG Innovations lets us identify and drill down to the root cause so we can fix it. My phone doesn't ring as much anymore, and company executives no longer worry. I can focus on my priorities now instead of investigating performance issues.”

Fred Johnson
IT Supervisor

According to Johnson, the problems were slow response, system hangs, freezes and session drops/timeouts. “We have 105 Citrix servers, roughly half physical and half virtual, that run roughly 2,500 sessions, including Microsoft and Internet applications along with critical third-party retail application used at our stores”, he says.

The web portal problems were sufficiently frequent and severe that the situation got the attention of top management. It was absolutely business impacting, and it was my job to find the best Citrix monitoring solution available. We needed a central repository for all events involving the Citrix servers and terminal servers, and wanted everything correlated in a single database with dashboarding and reporting so we had insight into everything for rapid, seamless problem identification and resolution.

Solution

“The installation of eG Innovations on our initial server took about an hour, including the SQL database and we had the choice of agent-based or agentless deployment,” Johnson said. “Besides the speed of the install, eG allowed us to involve all 105 of our Citrix servers in the POC; most vendors limit you to no more than 20. Because we were concerned about scalability, we didn't want any surprises post POC if we didn't roll out the software to all of our servers. eG agreed and did the install, and their tech team was outstanding. We were proven right within a week that this was the right solution.”

The eG Innovations solution identified the issues that were causing user problems such as roaming profiles by application, servers, external connection issues, etc. “Citrix user profiles can get large through extensive Internet usage and Java applications that download onto the profiles,” he said. “In a larger Citrix shop, roaming profiles are widely used for user profile management. Profiles greater than 80 MB cause login performance problems, and that's what was happening here. We just had eG monitor this activity, and set a threshold at 10-15 MB. So when profiles pass that point, an admin is proactively notified and works with the user to reduce the size of the profile to proactively avoid any disruption to login.”

The performance of the customer Web front end is impressive, and customer feedback very positive. The company is so satisfied with eG Enterprise that the solution is now expanded to manage the performance of the company's SAP and Microsoft Exchange environment.

Benefits

- **Fast, accurate identification of the true root cause**
When issues such as latency or session drops/ends occur, Johnson can identify exactly what is causing the problems before they impact broader user experience. The company has discovered that Citrix servers, in fact, have never been the true cause of the problem.

NEXT STEPS

➔ Watch the Demo
www.eginnovations.com/demo

➔ Take the Free Trial
www.eginnovations.com/trial

- **Wide range of services & applications - all layers, all tiers**
There was nothing the company wanted to monitor that wasn't already covered out of the box with eG Enterprise. The company uses Citrix Presentation Server 4.5 now and is moving to XenApp 6.0 (64 bit). One or two Presentation servers will remain, but XenApp will be the workhorse. The mix will remain half virtual, half physical, and no changes to eG will be required to monitor any new XenApp servers. Impressed with the solution, the eG installation has since expanded to also include performance management for SAP and MS Exchange.
- **Single dashboard for complete business service chain**
Johnson regards this capability as indispensable, since he only has to look in one place for infrastructure status, and proactive monitoring makes performance management much easier.
- **Ease of use**
Johnson finds eG very easy to use which makes proactive detection and resolution of potential problems a breeze. Reporting is self explanatory.
- **Rapid time to value**
Instead of days or weeks to install and configure the software, Johnson was able to collect performance information within an hour of install.

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About eG Innovations

eG Innovations provides the world's leading enterprise-class performance management solution that enables organizations to reliably deliver mission-critical business services across complex cloud, virtual, and physical IT environments.

Where traditional monitoring tools often fail to provide insight into the performance drivers of business services and user experience, eG Innovations provides total performance visibility across every layer and every tier of the IT infrastructure that supports the business service chain. From desktops to applications, from servers to network and storage, eG Innovations helps companies proactively discover, instantly diagnose, and rapidly resolve even the most challenging performance and user experience issues.

eG Innovations' award-winning solutions are trusted by the world's most demanding companies to ensure end user productivity, deliver return on transformational IT investments, and keep business services up and running. Customers include JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup, Depository Trust and Clearing Corporation, CSC, Cathay Bank, Hospital Corp of America, AllScripts, Honeywell, Fidelity Investments, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Samsung, Xerox, Marathon Oil, US Department of State, The Government of Canada, McKesson, Aviva, AXA, and many more. To learn more visit <http://www.eginnovations.com>.