

EVENT FLASH

Network Instruments and NetQoS Partner

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IN THIS EVENT FLASH

This IDC Event Flash examines the partnership announced between Network Instruments and NetQoS.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On December 13, 2006, Network Instruments and NetQoS announced a strategic partnership to deliver a unified solution for managing enterprise networks for application performance and quickly identifying the root cause of any network degradation through retrospective network analysis (RNA). Product integration will be completed in the first half of 2007. And effective immediately, NetQoS will sell Network Instruments' GigaStor through its direct sales organization worldwide.

The announcement builds on Network Instruments' RNA positioning and successes. NetQoS builds on the RNA information with its ability to identify the source of the application, server, and network performance problems and to automatically launch investigations that gather diagnostic information specific to the issue via its SuperAgent product.

Network Instruments and NetQoS are enterprise management players with growing visibility in the market. NetQoS has been a flashier player in terms of building its image in the marketplace, while Network Instruments as a boot-strapped company remains an anomaly among today's venture-funded network management players. Together, both the products and value propositions complement each other. For Network Instruments, the move to build partnerships with key and recognizable players is a relatively new initiative that signals that the company is ready to play at a more strategic level in the marketplace. For NetQoS, the agreement is poised to build credibility within the network management space to complement the company's application-driven positioning in the enterprise management market.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The partnership of Network Instruments and NetQoS is a natural fit that will effectively address growing challenges faced by IT staff. As network problems have evolved in complexity, so have IT departments. Different network engineers are tackling the same network issues from different ends of the IT spectrum. Bringing together the application performance monitoring strengths of NetQoS with the value of Network Instruments' retrospective network analysis solution not only reduces the number of tools required but breaks down IT silos, allowing engineers greater collaborative opportunities.

The technology advances in recent years make this partnership more compelling. Specifically, the RNA capabilities leverage the ability to take in data in real time. Through the GigaStor product line and the RNA technology, the Network Instruments offerings have been able to keep up with 10 Gigabit as well as 1 Gigabit Ethernet speed in enterprise networks. For the NetQoS SuperAgent, a compatible data source, particularly a real-time one, improves the quality of the management information it can deliver to users.

For Network Instruments, this partnership is a significant move. In the network management market, where vendor relationships, really their data flows, are a way to improve products as well as marketing opportunities, partnerships are important. The move may be taken as a signal to users and vendors alike that Network Instruments is ready to compete more seriously in the marketplace. For NetQoS, with established alliance partners, including Cisco, the move bulks up its solution by adding GigaStor as well as the data flows. The combined solution enables both Network Instruments and NetQoS to play an increasingly strategic role in solving IT infrastructure performance challenges.

Users need to understand that a partnership between a company known for network analysis solutions and a company known for application monitoring software in today's environment is about bidirectional information flows rather than a simple data source. The historical "back in time" (as Network Instruments refers to it) capabilities from the RNA technology along with the improved analytical capabilities in the generation of software interfaces such as SuperAgent represent significant changes from the days of static data sources and canned reports.

Users should consider that combining best-of-breed products, particularly if they are already invested in a Network Instruments or NetQoS solution, presents the advantage of a stronger solution. As the large vendors of enterprise management solutions stretch wider and wider with acquired products and technologies, focused expertise is more difficult to find. IDC sees that network management staff in enterprise IT consistently favors focused solutions with knowledge of the network domain. With approximately 50 shared customers, Network Instruments and NetQoS have a good starting point to build upon. Likewise as Network Instruments products are marketed and sold by NetQoS, the solution has the potential to reach new audiences who will perceive only a solution rather than separate pieces.

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