

Best practices in choosing network monitoring software

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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Hawaii (HMSA) found itself with a rapidly expanding network and data center. Our network devices, servers, and software were all growing in complexity and we knew that we would have to leverage technology to gain better control of our IT systems and network. In the past, we confronted the same dilemma that systems administrators in all IT organizations face: weighing the value of simple monitoring solutions versus expensive, feature-rich enterprise solutions that require labor intensive maintenance. We attempted to implement a large-scale system and network monitoring package from a major vendor but found the product was never fully implemented or adopted by the users because of its overbearing complexity.

We then quickly implemented an inexpensive, low-end package that provided basic monitoring – but lacked much of the deeper functionality our organization required, such as performance and application monitoring. We knew we had to take a completely new approach. We decided to develop a set of best practices to ensure that new investments in system and network monitoring would be successful. At the core of these best practices are two themes – simplicity and cost-effectiveness HMSA's core best practices rest on five elements: – Data center monitoring technology should be Web-based. Web-based technology simplifies rolling out the system, because no client-side application must be installed and upgraded. In addition, administrators can work from any location.

Web-based user interfaces are also typically easy to learn, easing adoption and lowering training costs. – Monitoring technology should be standards-based. HMSA chose to adhere to industry standards such as Simple Network <https://assignbuster.com/best-practices-in-choosing-network-monitoring-software/>

Monitoring Protocol (SNMP) in order to simplify setup and installation and to avoid getting locked into one vendor's solution. Because SNMP is supported by almost all hardware and software vendors, monitoring a heterogeneous environment composed of many products is greatly simplified. – Monitoring technology should be automation driven rather than consulting or manpower intensive.

Expending costly and valuable IT resources on long-term enterprise software projects has proven risky and expensive – Data center operations should be viewed as a business process. IT departments tend to look at monitoring technology as something that displays trending graphs and sends alarms when there are network problems. – Monitoring technology with simple license terms is preferable to products with many add-on or hidden modules. To control the costs of a monitoring implementation, a company needs visibility of up to five or 10 years of ongoing maintenance costs. Many enterprise software vendors' products are composed of many modules and components that have separate pricing models and require different training and support.

HMSA believes that products with a number of components tend to be more expensive and complex to maintain over time. We evaluated more than 15 vendors against these best practices and found that CITTIO's WatchTower monitoring platform was the closest fit. Equipped with WatchTower and our strong best practice approach, we successfully deployed enterprise-class system and network monitoring on 500 servers and network devices in a timely and cost-effective manner. Moreover, we are gaining the complete

system control and network visibility our large, complex organization requires. For more informationCittio Inc3325 Folsom StSan FranciscoCA 94110T: 415. 218. 3714W: <http://www.cittio.com>