CA World 2010 Mainframe Announcements: Customer-Driven Innovation Shapes the Future of Mainframe Management

Abstract
This report centers around key announcements at CA World 2010 in the application management space. Although there were multiple announcements related to virtualization, Cloud, and mainframe, this report centers on the mainframe. It is still the platform of choice for the majority of applications running in today’s mid- to enterprise-sized companies, and sorely in need of modernized management products.

Today’s companies are well-aware that many mainframe specialists are nearing retirement. The new generation of IT specialists largely lacks mainframe skills, putting a host of critical applications at risk as baby boomers retire from the workforce. CA’s mainframe-related announcements address this problem with a collaborative workspace, an installation/maintenance platform that reduces cost of ownership by streamlining tools administration, and a modernized Graphical User Interface (GUI).

ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES® (EMA™) analysts see CA’s investments in the mainframe space as being clear differentiators against competitors who have not invested in updating mainframe toolsets. Discussions with customers indicate the new products are generating significant interest within the mainframe community.

CA World News
CA World 2010 was held May 16 through May 20 in Las Vegas, Nevada. With over 7,000 attendees, the event is billed as “the largest global gathering of CA customers, executives, business partners and IT leaders” in the world. From the application management perspective, CA’s Cloud- and mainframe-related announcements are among the most compelling.

Cloud-related announcements include a new “Cloud Commons” online community designed to help IT professionals share experiences and expertise related to Cloud-delivered services. CA also announced a new Cloud management strategy centered on the “IT Supply Chain,” the internal and external resources required to deliver Cloud-related services. CA is focused on developing products and methodologies to manage and secure Cloud resources, a move that can help elevate IT operational maturity around Cloud-based applications. The announcements in this space also tally with EMA analysts’ conclusions in recent research related to The Responsible Cloud.

In terms of mainframe news, CA has invested heavily in mainframe management over the past several years. CA Mainframe Software Manager (MSM) was introduced to the marketplace in 2008 in response to customer concerns over a growing talent gap among the ranks of skilled mainframe professionals. CA MSM is the product supporting both Mainframe 2.0 (announced in May of 2009) and CA Mainframe Chorus, introduced on May 18, 2010.

CA Mainframe Software Manager is described by CA as “InstallShield® and Windows Update for the Mainframe.” It is a key differentiator for CA because it promotes ease of use, installation, and tools administration for the CA mainframe toolset. It is intended to reduce the time required for mainframe administration tasks, as well as potential for operator error. It also makes it easier for less-skilled mainframe personnel to come up to speed more rapidly than they can with traditional, mainframe-based


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toolsets. CA benchmarks are impressive, showing up to an 87% improvement in times required for initial product installation and 93% for product maintenance.

CA Mainframe 2.0 introduced a standardized, unified lifecycle/delivery mechanism for CA and partner products. By the end of 2009, CA had released seventy-five Mainframe 2.0-enabled products. The May 2010 update supports 120 CA and partner products, and CA continues to prioritize investments toward the most active products in the core portfolio.

CA Mainframe Chorus builds on Mainframe 2.0 with a role-based collaboration platform that forms the foundation for collaborative, efficient mainframe management. DB2 database management is the first role to be introduced on Chorus, which will eventually feature “plug ins” for each mainframe product. Together, these solutions address customers’ expressed need for better integration of the solution set, which in turn enables collaboration and better efficiency in managing mainframe applications.

### Background and Industry Positioning

The most recent EMA research finds that mainframe applications are the most common type of application running today (see Figure 1). Distributed applications that utilize the mainframe as a tier are the second most common type, followed by “traditional” distributed applications. Because mainframe applications aren’t the “squeaky wheel” – they tend to be far more stable than distributed applications – the central role the mainframe plays tends to be overlooked in many transaction management discussions. Nevertheless, industry professionals are concerned that the “graying of the workforce” will have an adverse impact on these workhorse applications as older workers retire and younger ones lack the skills to take their place.

The IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) and other best-practice frameworks discuss “breaking down technology silos,” since collaboration is the key to enabling groups with diverse skills to work together to solve complex application-related problems. EMA believes that “bridging technology silos” is a more realistic option, since supporting today’s complex applications requires technology teams with deep and specialized skill sets. Enterprise management products provide this bridge.

With its role-based interaction model, CA Mainframe Chorus delivers a collaboration platform with a common view of mainframe services from each stakeholder’s technology perspective. In developing the product, CA worked with both an industrial design firm and CA customers. As part of the process, CA performed multiple “immersion” studies in which they observed customers to document how they interacted with CA tools, which tools they used, and collaboration patterns across diverse support teams.

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**Figure 1: Which of the above do you host on-premise (companies of 5,000 or more)?**

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Highlights and Differentiators

- **Collaborative:** CA Mainframe Chorus provides a role-based interaction model that leverages CA products as a single, cross-functional workspace. This facilitates team problem solving and knowledge transfer.

- **Simplifies tools installation and maintenance, both of which are viewed by IT teams as administrative overhead:** CA's Mainframe 2.0 makes IT personnel more efficient in installing and maintaining the CA toolset.

- **Bridges Skills Gaps:** Visual representation of management data makes mainframe operations tasks more understandable to less skilled workers.

- **Workflow and recovery task capture promote reuse:** Capture wizards enable experienced staff to capture and record workflows, which can then be reused to perform a task or resolve a problem.

- **Familiar, “Windows-like” GUI:** A modern interface makes mainframe administration less onerous, as well as less daunting to younger users accustomed to rich graphical interfaces.

- **Continued innovation and product investment in the mainframe line:** Many competitors essentially abandon new development on the mainframe, yet continue to “milk” support revenue.

EMA Perspective

With CA MSM and the recent announcements that build on it, CA has addressed an unmet niche. These innovations can help younger workers entering the workforce become more excited about working on “big iron.” This, in turn, opens up opportunities that many may not have considered, and the statistics on mainframe applications show that such opportunities do exist.

However, newbies aren’t the only ones reaping the advantages of CA’s work. CA benchmarks show that even mainframe experts are seeing 4X to 18X reductions in the time required to perform installations, a significant improvement that will likely be welcomed by IT executives as well as Operations staff. The proof is in the numbers, with 240 companies already using CA MSM functionality, and new customers in the pipeline.

EMA sees these announcements as a better idea and a differentiator for CA. With this initiative, CA has embraced its role as a leading Independent Software Provider (ISP) in the mainframe management space, and stepped up to the plate to take better advantage of this position. The result paves the way for a new generation to administer the mainframe, while bringing current mainframe experts into the 21st century in terms of toolsets.

EMA would like to see a stronger focus on distributed applications, as they are clearly one of the areas with which IT organizations are struggling. For example, the Wily/SYSVIEW integration announced in 2009 has not been highlighted as a focus area for CA Chorus, and this is one of the critical areas where a collaborative workspace is most needed. Likewise, these announcements will be put into better perspective when CA provides additional detail around how the CA MSM announcements fit architecturally with the CA Configuration Management Database (CMDB) and the Catalyst integration bus.

CA’s Mainframe 2.0 mainframe management strategy is still a work in progress, but CA is delivering on its promises. CA and non-CA customers alike will benefit from a demo or proof of concept, as these announcements show potential to significantly reduce the complexity and “hands on” requirements of managing and maintaining mainframe applications.

About EMA

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst firm that specializes in going “beyond the surface” to provide deep insight across the full spectrum of IT management technologies. EMA analysts leverage a unique combination of practical experience, insight into industry best practices, and in-depth knowledge of current and planned vendor solutions to help its clients achieve their goals. Learn more about EMA research, analysis, and consulting services for enterprise IT professionals and IT vendors at www.enterprisemanagement.com or follow EMA on Twitter (http://twitter.com/ema_research).