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Workload Automation Services and IT Process Automation: A Match Made for the Data Center

By Jim Anderson

In the future, the entire background IT processes of an enterprise will be automated to the extent that they can be monitored from a single console and fixed, in case of emergency, with the push of a single button. The reality of that dynamic autonomic management is closer than you may imagine.

Operating in concert, CA's Workload Automation (WA) solutions and CA IT Process Manager (CA ITPM) can integrate batch processes with operational-level IT processes to streamline IT management. Together, they can revolutionize the workload of your data center.

CA ITPM is an orchestration package that automates workflow on a process level through various system management tools. It integrates consistent delivery across lines of service from a single console, allowing users to coordinate and monitor work equipped with both real-time and historical logs of issues as they are encountered.

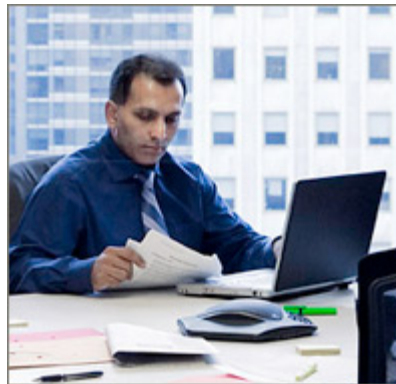
The CA workload automation solution, on the other hand, is an essential service in most data centers that enables administrators to define critical batch workload processes, configure software to start jobs automatically and monitor their progress and completion across the entire life cycle. Traditionally, workload automation tools required that batch jobs be defined with dates and times.

The familiar illustration is that of payroll processing, which would run batch jobs overnight when resources are most available. Over time, the volume of batch workloads and their dependencies increased just as IT infrastructures expanded in size and complexity. In response, CA's Workload Automation products have to evolve to be more flexible and reactive to the changing demands.

One critical development is that jobs can now be dynamically triggered to run whenever resources are available, in better balance with background IT activities. However, this often means that processes around automated jobs can be very manual in nature. Administrators need to personally calculate pre- or post-processing requirements, juggle multiple requests or be ready to respond to inline processing conditions and exceptions.

This is where integration with CA ITPM picks up the ball. By automating IT processes to respond to those conditions, CA ITPM can reduce or eliminate that manual requirement.

For example, it's not uncommon that a batch job will need certain resources and services to be available in order to run successfully. Processes defined through the CA ITPM solution can be integrated directly within that workload to take predefined actions confirming those requirements are met prior to triggering the job. The automation reliably provides the necessary prerequisites while freeing up the technician's time for other tasks.



This synchronicity continues throughout the life cycle of each batch job. After checking the environment in the pre-process, CA ITPM delivers the tools to provide proactive workload requirements as well as auditing and notification processes during execution and closedown. Once a job is initiated, CA ITPM integrates with popular network, system and resource management products to track resource utilization, availability and faults that could impact critical batch processes. Audit processes can be defined to assess these conditions against parameters, dynamically calculating the threat against the success of the job. This data can then be used to initiate notification protocols and even remediation measures.

In a big stride towards data centers developing full self-healing abilities, CA ITPM can be configured to proactively address recurrent issues. With CA Workload Automation, for instance, a restore and restart can be automated as a response to needed resources going offline. In the past, that situation would stop critical batch processes, creating a notification and demanding subsequent technician attention. Now, CA ITPM processes can be designed to circumvent the failure. In other words, common problems can be prompted to essentially fix themselves.

The benefits of partnering CA ITPM and Workload Automation run both ways. Workflows that manage standard operational activities like incident management and server provisioning can take advantage of the flexibility of CA Workload Automation to trigger jobs as needed, rather than having to wait for batch windows. Instead of sitting in a queue for several days until the next usual job run, a business requirement could initiate its needed batch job on demand.

For example, many IT incidents that occur during the normal business day may have lower priority and cannot be addressed during normal business hours due to factors such as resource availability and concerns about performance of more critical business systems due to overhead created by the remediation routines. With CA ITPM and Workload Automation working together, lower priority remediation processes stored in CA ITPM can be scheduled to run during off-peak business hours while

larger batch windows and more system resources are available. Since the remediation routines are pre-defined in CA ITPM, they are easily queued up and executed according to normal batch processing priorities in an automatic fashion without the need for operator intervention. All the while, the routines are tracked, allowing for later review and audit requirements.

CA ITPM and CA Workload Automation are the ideal complimentary solutions: CA ITPM integrates critical business workloads with standard data center processes. The resulting automation capabilities can help data centers run nearly lights out.

Jim Anderson is Sr. Director of Product Management at CA with primary responsibility for Workload Automation Solutions and IT Process Automation Solutions. He is responsible for managing the Product Management team while focusing on the product vision and strategy, business and product planning, business development and partnerships. Jim has been with CA since 2000 working in various capacities including business development, pre-sales support, product marketing and product management. He has more than 20 years of experience in the information technology field, including software development and data center management. Jim has held various senior management positions prior to joining CA, most recently Director of Technology for a large business services firm in North America.

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