

CA Announces Intent to Acquire NetQoS

CA expands its footprint in the network performance management arena with the planned acquisition of NetQoS. NetQoS was founded in 1999 to provide better ways of monitoring and improving the delivery of applications over the WAN by providing detailed analysis necessary for large organizations to efficiently manage service levels, troubleshoot application flow issues, and plan for change. This focus on application delivery put NetQoS in an excellent position to tackle application-driven network services such as video and voice over IP, virtualization of multi-tiered applications, cloud computing or multi-sourcing of enterprise applications and services.



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Ptak/Noel Perspective

This acquisition makes good sense for CA and NetQoS customers. Modern applications depend on a combination of virtualization, web services and SOA technologies. That combination is transforming IT's approach to answering age old questions of managing service quality, performance and resources. A transaction can use SOA to connect multiple web services hosted as VMs on a single physical box or across multiple service providers (internal, external, cloud, etc.). Understanding the end-to-end performance of that transaction still requires detailed analysis of network flow and response time data. Most IT network organizations are still struggling with an effective way to share network analysis results with IT staff that are not networking experts and lack the expertise to benefit from those results.

A year ago we interviewed both Steve Harriman at NetQoS and Jeff Cobb at CA Wily for an article on application performance management. It was clear even then that they were working toward the same goal but starting from two different areas of expertise. Steve Harriman noted a dramatic increase in the amount of communication and collaboration between his traditional network operations clients and their application support teams. He said, "We like to think that NetQoS was a catalyst because our solutions report network flow, response time, and anomalous performance behavior information in a format easy enough for non-network engineers to readily grasp the implications of the analysis."

Jeff Cobb said, "One of the most frequent requests we get from our customers is to determine how the application is wired together right now...What matters is how are the transactions actually flowing around the network right now..."

The acquisition provides CA the opportunity to combine deep application analysis with deep network flow analysis and then share that analysis across silos in an understandable way.

What about product overlap?

On the surface, it appears that CA now has two network performance management solutions, CA eHealth Performance Manager and the NetQoS solutions. However, we believe CA has specific targets for both solutions. CA eHealth technology targets infrastructure (network and systems) engineers who spend most of their time managing performance of the network and systems infrastructure -- the backbones and servers that form the basis of datacenters and the internet. CA NetQoS technology targets network engineers who focus on application delivery where the management of traffic flows is the primary task, rather than the management of thousands of network devices and systems. Only time will tell how successful CA will be at making this distinction clear enough to their existing customers and prospects.

Final Word

As business applications and services become more dynamic, flexible and accessible because of virtualization, web services, SOA and cloud computing, the delivery technologies becomes more complex because of virtualization, web services, SOA and cloud computing. Managing complexity requires solutions that can:

- Manage the health of delivery technologies,
- Visualize the links and relationships between the delivery technologies and the business applications and services,
- Understand the real-time application and service activity across those links and relationships, and
- Determine how technology capacity should be used and changed over time.

CA Spectrum Infrastructure Manager and CA eHealth Performance Manager have been focused on managing the health of the network delivery technologies and more recently, with enhanced virtualization support, the physical and virtual server environment. CA Wily and CA Spectrum Service Assurance Manager have been focused on the relationship visualization between business applications and services. The acquisition of NetQoS gives CA a faster route to understanding the application flow-related activity across those links particularly in virtualized datacenters where the server and network infrastructure are delivered as a single physical unit.

About the Author

Jasmine Noel has helped clients understand how the adoption of new technologies affects IT management for over 10 years. She is regularly quoted in and contributed content to NetworkWorld, eWeek, SearchDatacenter.com, SOA Institute on various IT management topics. Noel served previously as director of systems and applications management at Hurwitz Group, where she formulated and managed the company's research agenda. She was also a senior analyst at D.H. Brown Associates, where her responsibilities included technology trend analysis in the network and systems management space. Noel holds a bachelor of science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master of science from the University of Southern California.

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