

CA acquires Oblicore, Inc. to aim at leadership in Cloud-based Service Level Management

CA's announcement of its purchase of privately-owned Oblicore, Inc. is a move sure to arouse interest among enterprise IT executives, particularly those considering Cloud-based Business Services. It also marks an advance toward addressing the challenges posed by Business Service Management (BSM).

We believe CA is looking to leverage Oblicore's established expertise in bridging the communications gap between service contract requirements and infrastructure performance requirements to complement CA's infrastructure monitoring and reporting capabilities being delivered through CA Spectrum Service Availability.

Oblicore defined and developed the market for a business contract-based view of service requirements, agreements and delivery. They created a nice niche for themselves with service providers using this view to map their delivery capabilities to contractual agreements and enterprise customers using this view to analyze and compare service delivery contracts from internal and external service providers. With IT executive roles becoming more business oriented every year, it is easy to see that contract-based service level analysis can become an important part of the IT decision making solution set. Customers get the most bang for their buck when Oblicore's technology is linked with infrastructure-based solutions that are proactively managing service availability and performance -- which is where CA comes into the picture.

Cloud computing is the other trend that makes Oblicore's technology interesting because we believe Cloud services without serious service level contracts are an enterprise disaster waiting to happen. Cloud service providers (be they public, private or hybrid) will need Service Level Management (SLM) solutions capable of delivering against business-oriented Service Level Agreements (SLA). Cloud service users will need solutions to help them make wise choices from a confusing array of options. (See the dialogue recently begun at bsmreview.com).

The problem is two-fold. First there is the process of defining the SLA – confusing enough in a proprietary, dedicated environment and now compounded by multiple, independent users, along with the dynamic creation and allocation of virtual assets. SLM must tie all this together to assess the cost and monitor service delivery performance. Traditional SLAs focus on the bottoms-up approach to implementation and track infrastructure performance. Cloud implementations transform monolithic IT service delivery into a dynamic supply-chain with volatile interdependencies, interactions and impacts between each link. SLAs will be required that can identify, track, measure and report on each segment of the chain. CA has been working on this aspect of the problem under the Spectrum Service Assurance moniker.



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For information on the announcement see the [press release](#).

Second, there is the translation of business-oriented Contract terms and requirements into meaningful and measureable metrics that apply in a Cloud-environment. Both the content and the structure of the contract are impacted. With the potential for a different vendor or sources for each link in the supply chain, it's not simply a vendor management problem. It will require a combination of creative modeling, impact analysis and metric identification and definition that relate business needs to infrastructure implementation. Oblicore has focused its efforts on this aspect of the problem.

If CA can integrate Oblicore's technology with its Service Assurance efforts with minimal fuss, then the result should be a very interesting solution to these Cloud services problems. This should be music to the ears of business managers and business-oriented IT executives who care little about the specifics of the Cloud implementation and everything about the delivery of the services that meet stringent performance requirements to serve fickle, demanding customers.

Final Word

We see CA as having made a very clever acquisition with Oblicore; one that puts them a step ahead of their competition. This acquisition occurs as the discussion of Business Service Management (BSM) issues associated with Cloud implementation begins to take shape. CA's description of the problems they intend to address with this acquisition help clarify a portion of the significant challenges to be faced. At the same time, it provides assurance to concerned users that vendors recognize the problems and are moving to resolve them. Kudos and congratulations go to CA as they enhance their competitive position with Oblicore's technology and capabilities.

Publication Date: January 2010

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