

Automic “Continuous Everything” Launch Aimed at Redefining Role of Business Automation in Digital Transformation

Abstract

On November 3, 2015, Automic announced new releases of its flagship products, Automic Release Automation (ARA), Automic Workload Automation (AWA), and Automic Service Orchestration (ASO), all fully integrated as part of the Automic ONE platform. The new features and functions announced as part of Automic’s *Continuous Everything* launch are, per Kaj Wierda, Automic Sr. Director of Product Management, specifically geared towards simplifying access, improving usability, and streamlining deployment and installation.

A significant redesign and consolidation of user interfaces across multiple products, new process “wizards”, videos, web interfaces, and online documentation are designed to enable seasoned users to become more productive and new users to “come up to speed” more quickly.

Announced at the Automic World conference in Scottsdale AZ, the new capabilities are additional steps completed in a product roadmap designed to build additional integration across the product line and to reduce the learning curve and maintenance overhead customarily associated with enterprise management toolsets.

This Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) Impact Brief details the specifics of the announcements in the context of the overall functions, features, and value proposition of the Automic portfolio.

Background and Context

Automic’s ONE Platform (see Figure 1) consists of a common core supporting Release Automation, Workload Automation, and Service Orchestration. This “single point of truth” acts as a dynamic repository of configurations, actions, audit trails and other metadata describing the past, present, and future characteristics of an organization’s operational ecosystem.

Workload Automation, Release Automation, and Service Orchestration functions leverage this core to dynamically access and maintain “approved” configurations and process maps, analyze cross-application interdependencies, update histories based on completed actions, and notify IT specialists of the success or failure of automated actions.

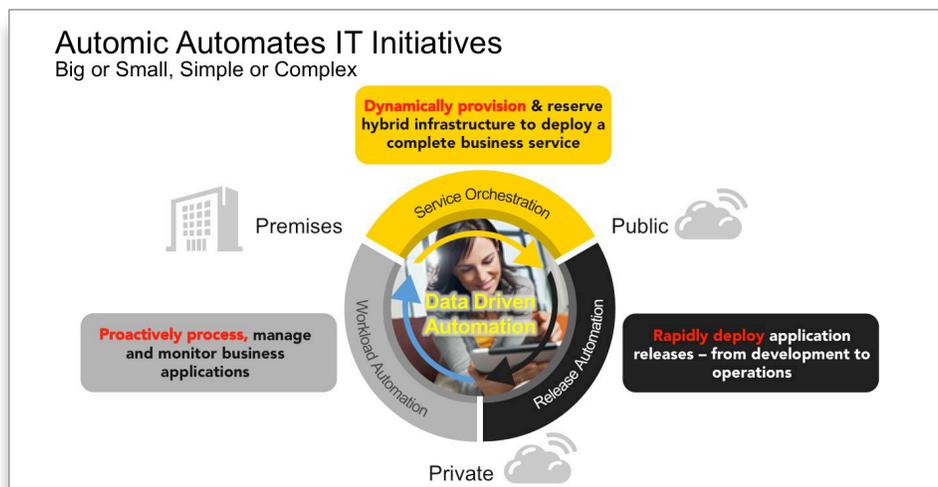


Figure 1: Automic ONE Automation Platform

Automic's dynamic repository supports deployment and operations-related processes and tasks, as well as Continuous Delivery of application code. It does so by enabling IT organizations to provision, deploy, run, and monitor applications and services from a single platform. Automic's "living model" of the application and operational ecosystems provides a level of visibility to changes and current states that enables Dev and Ops teams to manage their environments based on factual knowledge versus guesswork and/or tribal knowledge.

The Automic ONE platform is designed to automate the data center. The new enhancements to ARA, AWA, and ASO focus on delivering an improved customer experience, and consolidating and simplifying the User Interface (UI). In addition, new plugins allow the Automic suite to integrate with additional third-party solutions, supporting a vendor agnostic approach to application delivery.

Plugins, or integration connectors, are essential to Continuous Delivery of application code, since software must be continually moved across execution environments, from dev to test, test to staging, staging to production, etc. Each environment has its own tools and process automation requires the ability to automate functions such as software testing as part of software builds and migrations. In addition, automating the movement of software artifacts across lifecycle stages requires connectors capable of passing information from one tool to the next as the software progresses through the lifecycle.

In short, integrations to application code repositories, lifecycle management tools, testing tools, for example, are critical to orchestrating and automating the lifecycle. From this perspective, plugins are important elements supporting production-grade deployment and execution.

What Automic is Announcing

The announcements are part of the Continuous Everything launch announced by Automic. The company sees the role of business automation in today's agile world as being composed of three foundational areas shaping virtually every aspect of modern Development and Operations lifecycles:

- *Continuous Operations:* Data center and workload automation solutions are key time savers for companies of any size. Automic solutions streamline the processing of complex workloads spanning a wide range of enterprise applications and on-premise, private and public cloud systems. Automic solutions also manage operational dependencies and monitor operational environments to help ensure business deadlines and IT SLAs are met.
- *Continuous Delivery:* This is a buzzword in modern IT, however it is one with a significant amount of "meat" surrounding it. Per EMA Research, Continuous Delivery is "an iterative and ongoing cycle of development, testing, and delivery of software to a targeted destination". Solutions such as Automic are fundamental enablers for accelerating Continuous Delivery processes, and this acceleration has business as well as technical implications. EMA surveys indicate, for example, that companies which increased the frequency of their software delivery by 10% or more in a given year were approximately 35% more likely to see double digit revenue growth the following year than those whose delivery frequency grew by less than 10%. Supporting Continuous Delivery is a core capability for Automic Release Automation and one which can have a very significant value proposition.
- *Continuous Service:* Technology has become an essential element supporting day-to-day business as well as the daily lives of most consumers. Cloud adoption, Internet-of-Things, Big Data and other technology innovations put extra pressure on IT to leverage the new technologies to deliver new applications and services. Automic's orchestration, request management, and self-service provisioning capabilities enable companies to move towards a "self service" delivery pipeline, encompassing delivery of business services through provisioning the data center to support those services.

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Wierda indicates that the primary message in Automic's latest announcements surround ease of use. They include:

- Simplified deployment:
 - A new product installer simplifies the installation experience and reduces installation time from hours to minutes
 - A post-installation checklist dashboard widget ensures the system is ready to use.
- A new UI provides access to self-help documentation and “point and click” access to workflow setup (see Figure 2). It includes:
 - A “Getting Started” dashboard instruction widget and ARA introduction video
 - An architectural toolkit
 - A ready to deploy sample application with associated online tutorials
 - A “Quick Links” dashboard widget provides quick and easy access to common Automic and ARA- specific resources
 - Definitions and context for ARA object models.
- Usability improvements
 - Simplified access to dashboards and task panels
 - A new Application Wizard that guides users through the steps needed to create a basic application model. This sequences steps in the correct order and context and provides faster onboarding of new applications
- User Interface consolidation
 - Former Deployment Manager UI is now integrated with the Enterprise Control Center
 - Consistent web-based experience for all Automic products.
- Web-enabled Enterprise Control Center (with additional web-based UIs coming soon) replaces Java-based client
 - Customizable to address the needs of a variety of users
 - Global search capability
 - Far easier to deploy and maintain than desktop client.

Automic is also delivering content-related enhancements as part of the announcement:

- Plugins and other content
 - Actions delivered as separate, individual packages
 - New Package Manager tool simplifies deployment and updates of new packages
 - Continuous Delivery for Siebel, a new solution supporting granular modification and deployment of Siebel code
- New Action Packs for HP Quality Center (QC), Docker, and Azure
- Automic Marketplace extends Automic's support for third party applications and infrastructure.

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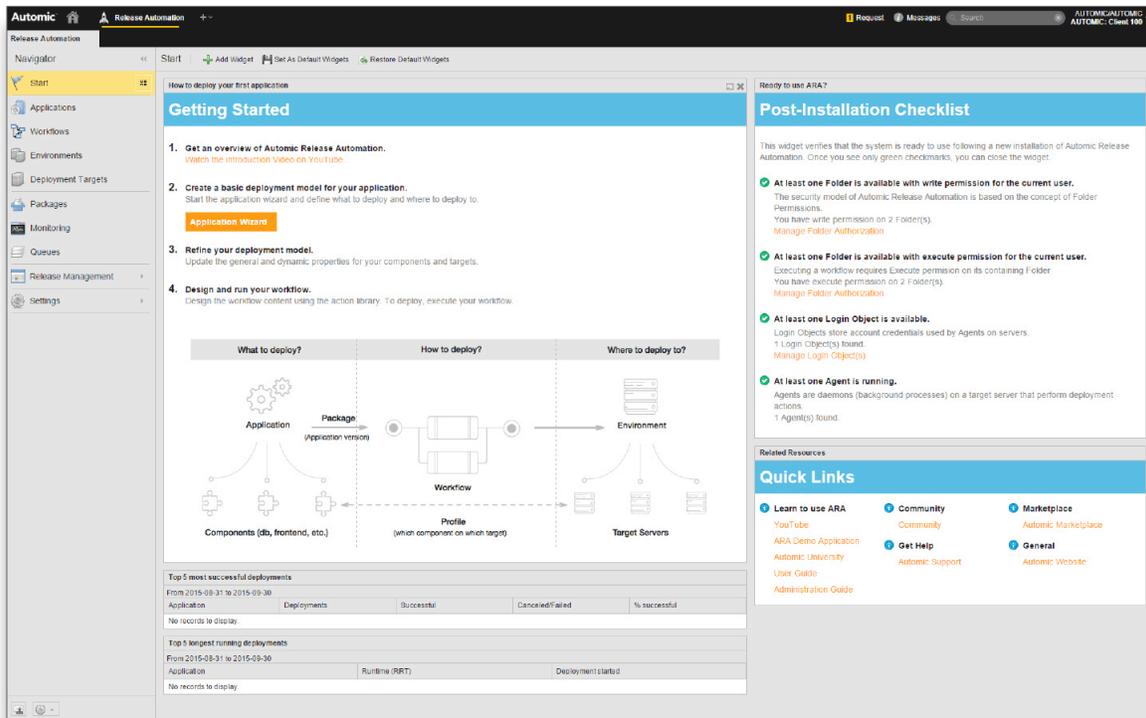


Figure 2: Online Dashboard Instructs and Guides Users through Common Tasks

EMA Perspective

In an era in which Continuous Delivery of software code is contributing to higher revenue returns, Release Automation solutions have become core assets versus “nice to have” enterprise management tools. And in conjunction with Release Automation, Automic’s Service Orchestration and Workload Automation capabilities are the proverbial “icing on the cake”.

From the Continuous Delivery perspective, combined Release Automation and Orchestration functions are extremely valuable for one simple reason: They automate complex, multi-step, multi-person and multi-component processes in a way that promotes the delivery of hardware and software at very high levels of precision and accuracy. Modern applications, deployed over multiple technologies and platforms, rely on complex interactions between numerous hardware and software components to execute successfully. A tiny configuration error can wreak havoc on production environments, and such errors are difficult to troubleshoot without a detailed audit trail to help pinpoint “what changed?” or “what went wrong?”

One caveat is that, while many elements of the Automic user interface are now web-enabled, others are on the “to be delivered” roadmap. That being said, it is clear that Automic has pulled out all the stops to improve usability and help customers see a faster return on investment.

Ease of use is becoming a hallmark of modern enterprise management solutions. Customers and prospects alike will appreciate the content and accessibility improvements delivered by these announcements, which add heft to Automic’s already substantial value proposition as a proven, stable automation platform.

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About EMA

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst firm that provides deep insight across the full spectrum of IT and data 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 EMA’s clients achieve their goals. Learn more about EMA research, analysis, and consulting services for enterprise line of business users, IT professionals and IT vendors at www.enterprisemanagement.com or blogs.enterprisemanagement.com. You can also follow EMA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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