S&P Global
Market Intelligence   **Business Impact Brief**

New Monitoring Needs Are Compounding Challenges Related to Tool Sprawl

The 451 Take

The industry is trending toward the concept of observability as organizations aim to aggregate an array of operational data from their IT environments to generate deeper insights to monitor and optimize applications and infrastructure. However, achieving holistic observability is possible when the strategy is underpinned by effective monitoring and management practices, which is being complicated by the ongoing challenge of tool sprawl. In 451 Research's Voice of the Enterprise (VotE) data[1], 54% of organizations cited having five or more monitoring and incident response tools in use; others said they have more than 30, and some enterprises are likely unaware of the total number of tools being used across their organizations as a wider range of personas leverage monitoring capabilities. This can lead to inefficiencies from a cost perspective, but also from an operational one because using more tools correlates to more time and expertise necessary to manage them.

One way that organizations are trying to counteract tool sprawl is to leverage existing vendors to help consolidate future tool choices. In data from the same VotE study, 83% of organizations indicated that they prefer to buy as many monitoring tools from a single vendor as possible. For many organizations, this preference is fueled by a desire to reduce complexity in their IT environment, meet emerging needs, take a monitoring approach focused on applications or services, and ultimately gain monitoring and incident response capabilities that are stronger than the sum of their parts or of equivalent siloed tooling.

Preference to Buy Monitoring Tools from a Single Vendor

- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Somewhat agree
- ■ Somewhat disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree
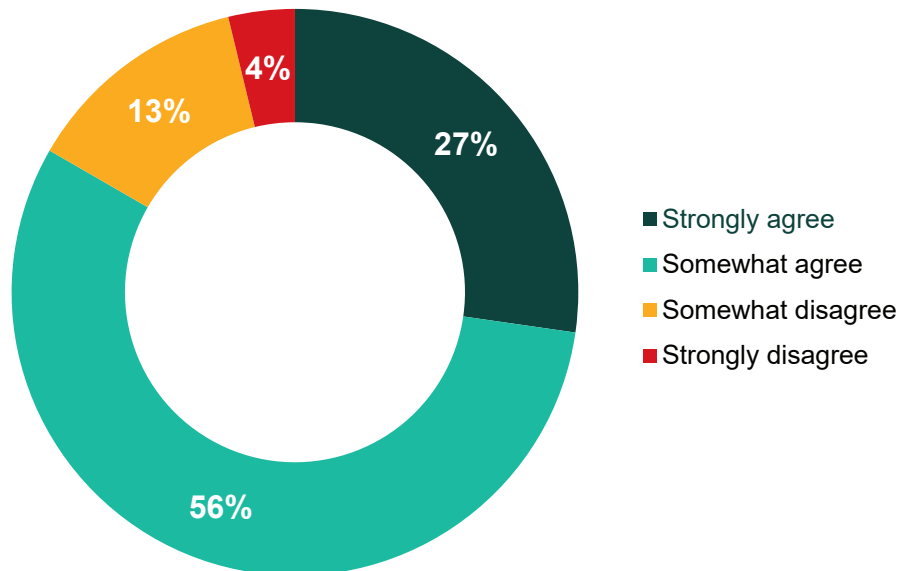
Q: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'We prefer to buy as many monitoring and incident response tools from a single vendor as possible in order to gain efficiencies and new capabilities.'

Base: All respondents, abbreviated fielding (n=264)

Source: 451 Research's Voice of the Enterprise: Storage, Transformation 2020

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1. 451 Research's Voice of the Enterprise: Storage, Transformation 2020

Business Impact

Silos are more prevalent than ever: Cloud adoption continues to grow, and the variety of workload execution venues continues to diversify. 451 data[2] shows that traditional on-premises and private cloud environments are the primary execution venues for 61% of organizations as of 2020. By 2022, these environments will be the primary choice for only 32% as SaaS and IaaS see significant growth. The ongoing shift to hybrid and multicloud environments can result in additional silos of monitoring tools, exacerbating the challenge of correlating operational data to efficiently perform root cause analysis.

Cloud native amplifies complexity: Adoption of cloud-native technologies and development practices has also contributed to the growing complexity of infrastructure and applications. Technologies such as serverless and Kubernetes have become significant contributors to sprawl because they present new monitoring needs. These needs are sometimes met by leveraging new monitoring tools or approaches as organizations try to keep pace with highly distributed applications and alleviate the burden on already-encumbered IT Ops and DevOps teams.

Tool consolidation is becoming a priority: Even prior to the mainstream adoption of cloud-native technologies, enterprises were employing high numbers of monitoring tools, and not all that are deployed last into production. Thirty-six percent of organizations said they have shelved recently purchased monitoring and management tools[3]. Cost, failure to deliver on promised value and inability to integrate with other tooling in use are the top reasons why organizations ultimately abandon monitoring and management tools.

Looking Ahead

Counteracting tool sprawl and consolidating monitoring investments may be top of mind for many companies, but accomplishing these goals is not a one-step process. Before organizations can identify redundant or inefficient tooling choices, it's imperative that they first take stock of the full breadth of tools being used across the IT environment; these tools will likely span a range of use cases and personas. Once organizations gain an accurate understanding of what tools have been deployed and the utility they offer various teams, they can shelve tools that are unnecessary or unused and consolidate the remaining tools to simplify management and gain stronger insights – thus, closing down silos.

There is a growing roster of personas outside of traditional IT Ops – site reliability engineers, DevOps engineers and even developers, for example – who use monitoring tools regularly, which further complicates efforts to reduce tool sprawl. While these various personas may ultimately leverage the same types of operational data for their own needs, ideally, organizations will be able to present this data in a manner that is most useful to a given persona without siloing it so they can maintain a unified contextual view of the IT landscape. Beyond presenting data to IT audiences to expedite root cause analysis, there is also growing interest in turning operational data into business insight so that line-of-business users and the C-suite can understand the positive or negative impacts that IT performance is having on the customers. However, the desire to unlock the full potential of observability should be balanced with the goal of resolving challenges such as tool sprawl.

2. 451 Research's Voice of the Enterprise: Cloud, Hosting and Managed Services, Workloads and Key Projects 2020
3. 451 Research's Voice of the Enterprise: Storage, Transformation 2020

Organizations should understand their complete monitoring environment, identify siloed, low-value tools, and unify monitoring to the extent possible. This will enable comprehensive, service-centric monitoring that can dramatically improve issue resolution and root cause analysis. Zenoss is recognized as a leader in AI-driven full-stack monitoring – click here to see how they enabled Guardian Life Insurance to reduce their licensing costs by 70% and enabled Huntington Bank to replace 37 monitoring tools while reducing MTTR by 85%.