

Emerging Trends With IT Monitoring Tools

Broader Collection of Data Types is Key to Pinpointing Issues

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During our recent webinar, Emerging Trends With IT Monitoring Tools, Nancy Gohring, senior application and infrastructure analyst at 451 Research, shared her insights into the rapidly evolving world of IT monitoring and analytics and discussed how digital-first companies are requiring new IT monitoring approaches for IT Ops and DevOps teams in dynamic, large-scale environments. Here are some of Nancy's key insights from the Q&A portion of the webinar.

As it relates to IT, do you have any specific data on what most companies are doing with artificial intelligence?

We have done a number of surveys on AI and machine learning. We asked a real general question: "What task is your organization interested in simplifying by adding machine learning and AI capabilities?" The top answer was security vulnerability checking — probably not all that surprising. It seems like security is a big driver for everything in IT. Second most popular answer, at 47%, was tuning and optimization — which I think is really interesting. I think you can interpret that in a few ways, but they're all related to monitoring tools. Shortly after that was automated provisioning and deployment — which I also think is pretty interesting that people are hoping to use AI and machine learning to drive that.

You said it's unlikely that organizations are going to consolidate to one monitoring tool. For a typical medium or large enterprise, what's a reasonable expectation for the number of tools in a well-architected monitoring approach?

This is one of those questions where there's not a single answer that's right for every organization. I think a lot of organizations can optimize on a handful of tools. I talk to enterprises that tell me they have 40 or 50 tools, and they probably need to whittle down to a handful — four or five. Really, the important thing is being able to bring together all the data you're collecting. Even if you have consolidated to four or five tools, the data that those tools are collecting could still be siloed within those tools.

Regardless of the number of tools, I'm seeing successful organizations designate one tool as a single source of truth. One client was really struggling with tool sprawl and had these very inefficient war rooms. Individuals were married to the data from the one tool they were using, and they couldn't reach agreement on the source

of problems that arose. They changed their approach. Rather than telling people they had to eliminate tools they loved, they designated one tool as the single source of truth. And they said: "When we're in a war room — when we're collaborating to try to figure out the source of a problem — you can only reference this one tool." That became their central platform that they used for their single source of truth.

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Nancy, you talked about the stand-alone monitoring tool versus monitoring platforms. What do you think will become of the stand-alone tool vendors?

I think there are probably too many stand-alone vendors right now to expect that they're all going to survive the long term. I think that there's going to be a role for some stand-alone tools to exist for a very long time — like granular database monitoring tools — as they can be easily integrated into whatever you establish as your single source of truth. I think that there is opportunity for some number of stand-alone tools to survive, provided that they are offering something that's really differentiated and really valuable, but there are probably too many.

Is it realistic to use one tool to monitor containers and traditional infrastructure?

I think there are plenty of monitoring tools out there that can monitor both modern environments, like container environments, as well as more traditional environments. In fact, I think that's probably what most people want. You may have a DevOps team that's using containers and then a different team that's responsible for another application that's not, and those two teams might be using different tools. But again, in most cases, as organizations try to whittle down the number of tools they want, this is a good opportunity. There are increasingly scenarios where individual applications rely on both traditional and modern, ephemeral infrastructure, and you're going to want a single tool to get visibility into everything that is used to create an application or a service. For that reason, you would want to have a single tool that gives you visibility into your container and your traditional environment.

Summary

Modern IT monitoring tools are increasingly expanding collection capabilities to include broader types of data. With that data, monitoring specialists are able to improve analytics that deliver root-cause analysis and other benefits. As a result of these monitoring providers expanding horizontally, there is likely to be a declining demand for stand-alone AIOps — event analytics and incident management — tools.

Watch the full webinar to discover which modern technologies are right for your environment and how you can leverage them to root cause issues and prevent disruptions while optimizing cost and performance.

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