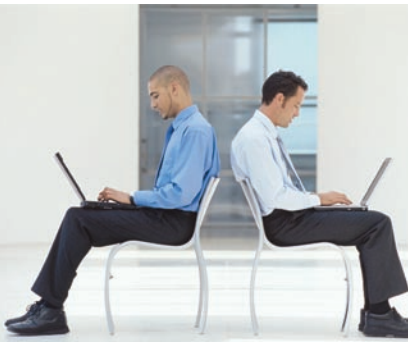


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Managing Application Performance Over the Network: An Assessment of IT Issues and Priorities

by Dennis Drogseth, Vice President

The November 2006 Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) Research Report “Managing Application Performance Over the Network: An Assessment of IT Issues and Priorities” is unique in its breadth and focus, and distinctive in its history. It is, in a sense, the third report of a series begun in 2000 by EMA and then updated in 2003 – both reports entitled “Networking for Application Delivery.” However, this current assessment expands on its predecessors to include a wide range of new technology issues, management challenge perspectives, and organizational and process concerns that the prior reports did not include.

For this study, more than 100 individuals were interviewed over the course of September and October 2006. Participants were asked an extensive set of questions regarding IT issues and priorities in managing applications over the network. Requirements for participation included both responsibility and toolset selection for managing applications over a networked infrastructure. The research was primarily directed at large enterprises, although there were some mid-tier and smaller businesses and service providers included as well. The participants were fairly evenly divided between NOC-specific personnel and other personnel ranging from applications managers and data center experts to IT operations professionals more broadly.

Significant Findings

Among some of the more critical findings from this research are:

- **Organizational Transformation:** Fully 64% of the respondents claim that their IT organizations have made organizational changes deliberately targeting superior collaboration between network and application management teams.
- **The Rise of Configuration Management:** Findings support a growing trend to recognize that visibility and control of configuration changes – in both network and systems components – can have a profound positive effect on ensuring application service performance.
- **The Perceived Imminence of SOA:** SOA is substantially on the minds of those in IT responsible for managing applications over the network. Only 12% said they weren't interested in SOA, and 43% believed there were plans for SOA deployment within a year.
- **Product Stability is Number One:** In a question directed at feature priorities for choosing solutions to manage applications over a network, product stability and technical support came in first and second. This is a striking indictment of management toolset providers too eager to embroider advanced functionality before stabilizing product.



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