



Integrien Moves Automated Intelligence Forward

PNA believes IT management tools must continue to push the boundaries of automated analysis for IT staff to effectively resolve problems with the complex and dynamic infrastructure supporting business services. Analysis techniques such as dynamic thresholds dramatically reduce the number of alerts requiring IT action because alerts only occur when metrics are outside their normal range.

Analytical management solutions also dramatically reduce real-time problem resolution efforts, as abnormal infrastructure behavior is often a good indicator of the root-causes of broad service performance problems. This eliminates the majority of finger-pointing, time-wasting bridge calls. Integrien launched its Alive solution in 2001 to deliver this type of automated intelligence. The latest release enhances its analysis capabilities and improves its scalability and integration.

Enhanced analysis

Integrien enhanced the algorithms powering Alive's automated analysis to improve the range of analysis available and accuracy of its predictive capabilities. Anomaly detection was expanded to improve analysis of data where the statistical distribution changes over time. This both improves prediction of irregular events and reduces false-positive or false-negative alerts in situations where system usage changes frequently. Alive's analysis also includes more types of IT data. For example, dynamic threshold analysis typically assumes a continuous stream of data and therefore cannot analyze the behavior of on-off data types. Alive 6.0 now includes the ability to determine the normal states of on-off metrics based on time of day.

Integrien continues to drive down the number of problem alerts that IT staff must manage, for example, Alive's new Alarm Correlator capabilities link together all alarms related to a single issue. This allows users to determine when new alarms are related to a known issue.

Additionally, Integrien's new Data Correlator allows users to detect connections between system metrics. Whenever anomalous behavior in a metric is observed, the Data Correlator determines whether it is associated with anomalous behavior in other metrics. If the metrics are connected, then Alive only sends a single alert.

Alive's updated Fingerprinting capability is better able to leverage these new analytics to predict and alert users to potential problems, but also suggest the root causes of the problem.



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PNA believes Integrien's ability to identify and model patterns of abnormal behavior with little manual effort sets it apart from many other dynamic thresholding solutions. Whenever a SLA problem occurs, such as a transaction slowdown, Alive automatically reviews all the abnormal metric behaviors leading up to the problem, looking for patterns and correlations, and creates a statistical model to predict problem reoccurrence. With every additional reoccurrence, the model is improved. Alive's new dashboards display matched problem precursors in real-time, which allows IT managers to understand how the analysis engine "thinks" without becoming a mathematical or algorithmic expert. PNA believes this increased understanding will build IT manager's trust in the solution's predictive value.

IT organizations need as much predictive value as they can get if they are to boost the productivity of their problem resolution processes. IT best practices always call for a review of past problems to identify those that occur frequently, a forensic analysis to determine the key leading indicators that the problem will reoccur, and automation creation to speed future identification. Since these are manual, time consuming activities, few companies have the additional resources to dedicate to this effort, which leaves IT organizations limping along and simply reacting to an ever increasing number of service and infrastructure problems. Integrien Alive replaces that manual forensic analysis with automated model building and trades staff problem review meetings for automated model updates every time an event reoccurs. Thus IT organizations can snap this best practice into place to boost their productivity, without dedicating additional resources.

Improved scalability and integration

Greater scalability was a key priority for this release. Alive's analysis engine and data collection capabilities were rearchitected to achieve this goal. According to Steve Henning, vice president of products at Integrien, a single Alive server can now process over four million metrics every five minutes without problems.

These metrics can flow into Alive from existing monitoring solutions from the likes of IBM, HP or Hyperic. Integrien also provides an agentless monitoring capability to any fill gaps in a customer's existing monitoring infrastructure and an adapter toolkit to import information from unique data sources. Customizable dashboards allow IT organizations to deliver Integrien's analysis according to various roles, such as streamlined event lists for operations staff, summary charts for business users, or behavior graphs for technology experts.

PNA believes most enterprises will view Integrien's new scalability and integration as an opportunity to reduce the effort required to add analytic intelligence for new applications and virtual systems, rather than as a replacement for existing correlation rules built with their event management system. SOA and virtualization technologies will only increase service ,

and most IT organizations are aware that manually maintained event correlation rules will be impractical in that environment.

The Final Word

There is no question that more automated intelligence must be embedded into IT's problem resolution processes. Integrien's analytical and scalability enhancements extend the accuracy of automated intelligence and its applicability to larger, more complex environments. Yet most IT experts are unwilling to give up familiar monitoring solutions and workflows, despite growing evidence that analytical tools deliver the most value when they are leveraged by a wide cross-section of IT and business users. Therefore PNA sees Integrien's new integration and role-based presentation capabilities as the precursors to enterprise-wide adoption, because staff can leverage familiar tools while receiving better, more actionable information in familiar formats.

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About the Author

Jasmine Noel has 10 years experience helping clients understand how adoption of new technologies affects IT management. Noel served previously as director of systems and applications management at Hurwitz Group, where she formulated and managed the company's research agenda. She was also a senior analyst at D.H. Brown Associates, where her responsibilities included technology trend analysis in the network and systems management space. Noel is regularly quoted in publications such as CIO Magazine, eWeek, InformationWeek, InfoWorld, and NetworkWorld. She also has contributed articles to several leading publications on various IT management topics. Noel holds a bachelor of science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master of science from the University of Southern California.

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