

Heroix Offers User-Defined and Out-of-the-Box SLAs

Abstract

Heroix officially entered the SLA marketplace with its latest enhancements to Longitude, offering optional support for out-of-the-box Service Level Agreement (SLA) definitions and transaction monitoring capabilities. In addition to keeping track of application and system performance, Version 2 of Heroix Longitude alerts companies to SLA performance and enables them to view user-defined SLAs in context of the overall infrastructure. With Longitude's agentless technology, Heroix focuses on giving system administrators easy-to-use and easy-to-install software that delivers high-level and comprehensive reporting for executives and technicians. Although a newcomer to the SLA market, privately held Heroix has offered a range of systems and applications management solutions for about twenty years. Pricing for Heroix Longitude begins at \$299 per monitored server, with additional fees for SLA and transaction monitoring features, which are product options.

Heroix's Agentless Approach

First introduced in May 2005, Longitude was conceived as an automated monitoring solution that combined robust functionality with low cost delivery. Heroix bypassed the time-consuming, agent-based approach that underlies many systems management solutions. Instead, the product is designed to be installed within 15 minutes and implemented with immediate results, while still providing comprehensive monitoring of applications and operating systems. Heroix takes advantage of technology advances in data collection capabilities, such as with Windows Management Instrumentation (WMI) and Java Management Extensions, to provide highly functional, agentless software. Heroix considers the agentless approach a differentiator—which it may be, although Heroix is by no means the only vendor pursuing agentless technology. By reducing implementation time and ongoing support costs, Heroix hopes to reach a bigger market with what it touts as a relatively low cost solution.

SLA Dashboard

An SLA dashboard (depicted in Figure 1) enables users to view real-time performance and examine performance history. Longitude's predefined SLA functionality reports on individual operating system metrics, such as CPU, ping,

memory, and other system resources. Longitude also is capable of monitoring a range of applications, including Oracle, MySQL, and SQL databases, Apache and IIS web servers, J2EE, messaging systems, and Windows, Linux (RedHat and SuSE), and Unix operating systems. With Longitude V2, users define their own service levels and limits for what constitutes acceptable performance. Longitude SLAs may comprise single metrics as well as multiple metrics across individual servers and groups of servers. Combined metrics can be monitored as a single SLA. For example, users may define an SLA composed of a back-end database, an application server, and a web front-end. Once defined, the SLA data is automatically collected and archived in a database. If any of the elements of the SLA are disrupted, Longitude graphically reports the violation and administrators can then drill down to determine the details of the performance issue. Longitude SLAs can take redundancy into account. So, for example, if a critical application is distributed across five servers, and two of the servers are offline or experiencing performance degradation, Longitude may determine that the SLA is still in compliance according to the user-defined threshold; that is, as long as three servers are fully operational, no violation exists.

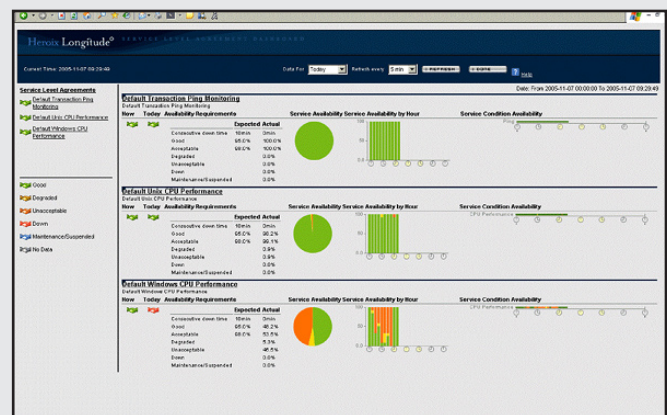


Figure 1: Heroix Longitude SLA Dashboard (Source: Heroix).

EMA's Perspective

Heroix is entering a crowded, but potentially lucrative market space. Although Longitude can serve any size market, we see the most likely fit to be among mid-market enterprises. Heroix considers its key competitors to include BMC (PATROL), Mercury (SiteScope), Microsoft

(Microsoft Operations Manager), Hewlett-Packard (HP OpenView), and other major players in the service level management and SLA space. While EMA acknowledges some functional overlap may exist, we would expect a more realistic set of competitors to include innovators in the mid-market, such as Empirix, Argent Software, or AmberPoint, among others.

Currently Heroix Longitude focuses on its own metrics, and a development effort is required to tap into data collected through other applications, such as HP OpenView or a similar product. Despite Heroix's longevity as a software vendor, SLAs represent a new area for Heroix and Longitude is a young product. Heroix maintains strategic relationships with Citrix, HP, IBM, Microsoft, and Sun Microsystems. Nurturing active partnerships with these vendors along with less well known, but innovative players will help Heroix gain traction in terms of mindshare as well as functional reach.

EMA sees strengths in reporting, particularly with the SLA dashboard, and in ease-of-use. Longitude's agentless technology enables companies to quickly install and implement automated performance monitoring. Heroix offers a 30-day free trial of Longitude V2. For companies concerned with SLA monitoring, and seeking rapid implementation, Longitude V2 is worth a test run.



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