

Heroix Announces Product Enhancements In Longitude V3

Abstract

On April 24, 2006, Heroix, a leading provider of application management software, announced the release of Longitude V3. Longitude V3 is the flagship product for the company and provides OS and application monitoring capabilities. Heroix functionality extends to Windows, Linux and Unix as well as data base, web server, J2EE, messaging, and infrastructure monitoring capabilities. V3 adds the ability to perform automatic actions, including sending SNMP traps to a management station, workload thresholding, configurable event correlation, and real-time SLA reporting to Longitude's already robust product capabilities. In addition, the upgrade extends monitoring functionality to Cisco, HP Systems Insight Manager, Dell OpenManage and generic network devices. The upgrade announcement reflects input from Heroix customers and adds beneficial functionality to a value-priced product.

Event

On April 24, 2006, Heroix announced a significant enhancement to Longitude, its flagship enterprise management product. Heroix is a company with a long tradition of customer centrality, and has been marketing management software since the 1980's. Initially written to monitor the OpenVMS Operating System (OS) and later extending functionality to Unix and NT, during the 1990's Heroix expanded its reach to application management as well. Since 2000, Heroix has expanded its solution set to distributed applications, Service Level Management (SLM) and management console functionality.

The Longitude V1 product was first introduced less than a year ago, in May of 2005. Longitude was a totally new, agentless product built over a Java-based architecture and designed from scratch to monitor both Operating Systems and the applications running on them. Agentless monitoring was provided for technology that included Windows, Unix and Linux Operating Systems, SQL Server and Oracle Data Bases, and IIS and Apache Web Servers. In addition, application monitors included Exchange, WebLogic, WebSphere and JBoss execution platforms. Longitude V2, introduced in November, 2005, extended functionality to trending, SLA monitoring and reporting, and additional applications. V3, the most recent update, extends coverage to network devices and enhances real-time SLA reporting as well as configurable notification and actions. Heroix has been exceptionally interactive with customers in determining enhancement priorities, and has

obviously made significant strides in product functionality coverage in less than a year.

Longitude is uniquely positioned as a cost-effective alternative to expensive, high end monitoring solutions. Heroix has priced the product extremely competitively by building it over an easily extensible, object-oriented architecture and by leveraging Open Source software to a remarkable degree. The Longitude execution platform, internal database, reporting, graphics and email packages are all built over Open Source products. This has enabled Heroix to provide a robust, stable platform at a very reasonable price point.

Context

Today's systems and application management platforms tend to fall into two categories: freeware that provides only basic functionality, and expensive platform-based products that offer extensive functionality but which can take many months to deploy and configure. Heroix perceived this gap and took advantage of the opportunity to introduce a mid-level solution with targeted functionality. Longitude V3 is agentless, simple to deploy and includes a "monitoring system in a box," everything that is required for the Longitude software to begin to provide business value almost immediately. The Longitude V3 server solution, a software-based module that can be installed on a moderately sized Intel-based server, includes all of the "pieces" required to:

- Collect, store and correlate data
- Record, notify and report service levels in real-time
- Configure notifications based on user-configurable roles
- Monitor and manage applications

What differentiates Longitude V3 from the rest of the pack is that these pieces are based on Open Source products. Longitude leverages XML for messaging, Apache Tomcat as its Web User Interface platform, MaxDB as its database, Jasper as its reporting tool, JFreeChart as its graphics product, and Aspirin as its mail delivery system. The core processing components that drive Longitude are written using the Java development platform. Although the Longitude designers extended some of these products to provide production-grade execution capabilities, the use of Open Source products considerably reduces pricing to very attractive levels. While the Longitude V3 Server software is free, OS Monitors are \$299

per box regardless of number of CPUs, and a server monitor plus an application monitor runs \$599. When combined with agentless technology, ease of deployment, and hefty functionality, this package is hard to beat.

Currently, Longitude provides a Web Browser interface that can be accessed from anywhere. Specific enhancements added in V3 include:

- *Configurable Event Correlation:* Configured via a web-based user interface, this allows organizations to specify how technical events are “translated” to business events that explain technical issues in “plain English” language. It also includes correlation algorithms that, using intelligent event evaluation, result in fewer, more meaningful alerts.
- *Workload thresholding:* This functionality collects and stores device data and utilizes AJAX technology to streamline the presentation of information to the user. It then spotlights actual usage patterns, helping to eliminate trial and error in threshold configuration. Thresholds are configurable by role, allowing an Oracle DBA, for example, to specify exactly what thresholds need to be met before notification is sent.
- *Scalable notifications:* This capability allows SNMP Traps, emails or commands to be executed when a given event takes place. The Oracle DBA, for example, after setting workload thresholds, can then specify notification methodology. By using command executions to paging systems, pages can be sent when incidents occur. This functionality can help an organization reach a “lights out management” level of monitoring and management capability.
- *Enhanced SLAs:* The product provides the capability to specify Service Level Agreements (SLAa), monitor them graphically in real-time, and send notifications when breaches occur.
- *Network devices and vendor provided OS monitoring systems:* This version adds coverage for Cisco, HP Systems Insight Manager, Dell OpenManager, and SNMP devices. This additional functionality pits Longitude V3 against many of the traditional network monitoring packages, many of which are much more complex, expensive and difficult to deploy than Longitude V3 is.

Key Ramifications

- *Cost-effective:* The fact that Longitude was a totally new product in 2005 and was written from the ground up using modern technology is a definite plus in a

market crammed with legacy solutions that can be a nightmare to deploy and upgrade. But one of the key pluses in this product is its reliance on Open Source for much of its functionality. This drastically reduces the cost of the product from both the vendor and the customer perspective. In addition, the agentless technology simplifies deployment and maintenance for the customer as well as development and support costs for the vendor.

- *Long history of customer centricity:* Heroix takes its cue for enhancements from customer feedback. Customer requirements and immediacy dictate the priority in which enhancements are completed.
- *Flexible and agile solution:* The fact that Heroix has released a new product and two major upgrades in the space of a year is a good indication of the agility with which it can respond to changing requirements.
- *Easy implementation and maintenance:* The Longitude V3 functionality is software-based and can be installed on a mid-sized Intel server. There are no agents to install, and licensing is controlled on the server side. This combination of characteristics provides for a very simple deployment and upgrade scenario. The web-based user interface provides role-based functionality customization, which means that centralized administrative tasks are minimal.
- *SNMP notification:* This new capability enables the product to easily integrate with HP OpenView or other network management platforms that may already be installed in the enterprise. This is a simple, easy way to send application and OS monitoring messages into an existing monitoring platform, with no muss, fuss or bother.

EMA's Perspective

Most vendors these days truly want to produce quality enterprise management solutions for their customers. The problem, however, is that they very often lose sight of the importance of price. Especially when aiming at small to medium sized customers, or larger customers that are budget conscious, the prospect of spending \$500,000 or more and multiple months for a management system is beyond reach. It's encouraging to see vendors such as Heroix designing products from the ground up to be quality products, while still keeping an eye on the economic realities of IT today.

Heroix made two decisions regarding the Longitude product that reflect the company's long-term view of its place in the market. First, it created a totally new solution, released in

2005, engineered from the ground up to reflect the lessons learned by the company over the previous 20+ years in the business. Second, the decision to use Open Source in the Longitude platform was a good move. This saves customers the “hidden” cost in most enterprise management solutions, where customers have to add database licenses and reporting tools to already hefty price tags.

The Longitude V3 product would be an excellent product for companies finding that freeware just doesn't pack the management punch they require for production monitoring. With the ability to monitor 1000+ servers from a single V3 server, small to mid-sized installations will be well served by a product of this nature as well. One limitation is that very large organizations with thousands of servers in a single domain would require multiple separate Longitude V3 servers, so very large enterprises would want to test the product carefully in their own environment to insure scalability to their particular situation.

All this being said, this is a very interesting product from multiple perspectives. It is obviously well-thought out, bargain priced in today's market, and produced by a company that strives to make its customers happy. Especially with the new notification capability, which enables communication with management platforms, email systems and paging servers, this product includes all the monitoring essentials. Especially for companies looking for a solution between free and enterprise-grade, Longitude V3 is definitely a product to add to the evaluation list.



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