

Q&A Session for Smart Service Desk delivers Customer-Centric Service Assurance

Date: September 3, 2008

Question: *Is the Resource Manager based on Cramer ?*

Answer: Yes, however the inventory and CMDB systems include Amdocs (previously known as Cramer Inventory), as well as supporting other vendors inventory and CMDB (Configuration Management Database) systems.

We can support both multiple (federated) network inventory systems and CMDB systems through the Resource Manager and Unified Service Manager which provides an overarching 'umbrella' with a common interface to the Support Desk for service assurance. Please ask for more information about RM, USM and CMDB.

Question: *What is a 'typical' event rate for events coming from the fault mgmt system?*

Answer: It very much depends on the size of the network and the amount of filtering/de-duplication and effective root cause analysis at the FM system. After RCA it may be a few 10s per hour but for larger operators this may run to hundreds or even thousands of events per hour. The system would be scaled appropriately. The objective here is that we do not receive all alarms at the TT Desk, only consolidated northbound events with root cause information which would be used to automatically raise trouble tickets. There can also be human intervention at this stage to approve/accept the new infrastructure incident ticket.

Question: *Is the correlation of CRM-originated trouble tickets to network-originated events automatic?*

Answer: Yes, correlation of the CRM originated (customer incidents) with infrastructure incidents is automatic. This is what we call unified ticketing. The incidents are parsed and correlated using a set of business rules in the correlation engine

Question: *What is the relationship to or provision for any self healing - repair or work around - automatic processes?*

Answer: Currently self healing processes are not in scope within our solution as the selection of the trouble resolution process and execution of the repair task is carried out manually. However, we are only a step away from implementing some basic self-healing methods. For example, if we take our DSL scenario where the system has indicated to the support agent that the DSLAM card/port should be reset as the first resolution option, this could be implemented as a process step automatically (perhaps with a request to the agent approve this step as it would be service affecting). The system could then send out a reset command through the DSLAM NEM, wait for reset, then retest the service through the managed test facility and finally clearing down the ticket once the repair has been verified. We would be very interested to discuss this further with you.

Question: How much of the system is open to integrate with 2rd party inventories and/or SLA mgt tools and/or process manager?

Answer: The system is open to be integrated with other 3rd party inventory systems and SLA tools. For Inventory and CMDB we already provide interfaces through our 'federated' inventory approach (see Unified Service Manager) and we can also implement direct interworking to other vendors inventory systems using our professional services group.

For real-time customer SLA management we partner with other vendors and provide the adaptors to integrate with their SLA tools.

Question: Do you see a role for probe based systems?

Answer: Yes, definitely. There are two areas here, passive and active probes. With passive monitoring probes these can be deployed at strategic locations around the network and are used for monitoring services and key performance metrics. These probes feed their measurement results into the performance management system and the results can be aggregated together with other performance metrics to create KPIs and KQIs (key performance and quality Indicators) which can feed the support desk to enrich trouble tickets and raise network incidents to support pro-active service assurance.

With active probes, these can be used to measure the customer experience through emulating the customer activities from points of presence around the edge of the network. For example, this may involve testing a WAP or mobile internet service from a location in the mobile network or serving gateway. The probe emulates the mobile device and user by requesting a web page across the internet from the ISP and then tests its content against a reference page held in memory. The probe can inspect the quality of the service including response times and content integrity. (Also consider doing the same for an IPTV service using active probes which can drill down through the protocol stack to measure the video content and integrity of service).

Question: One of your slides showed a customer service ticket system, and a NOC ticket system. I presume these are GUIs onto the single Amdocs system. Does Amdocs supply GUIs for both type of applications, or do you supply only the back end?

Answer: We support the GUI and the back-end systems. There are several possibilities here. Since the GUI is based on our Smart Client Framework (ASCF) then the systems behind the GUI may be Amdocs or other 3rd party systems. Using the ASCF we can present specific information for those users. This can be configured to customize the users view in way that presents a common look and feel across the CRM, NOC TT and other systems. As for the CM and NOC ticketing functions, we use a common foundation platform for unified ticketing which support both CRM, NOC (or IT Support) or both from a common platform. The platform may be deployed on a single or dual server instance. We can also support other vendors CRM systems through our BSS/OSS API

Question: How much of the TT system is opened to integrate with 3rd party inventories and/or SLA mgt and/or process mgr and/or CRM and/or Fault Management

Answer: The system is open to be integrated with other 3rd party inventory systems and SLA tools. For Inventory and CMDB we already provide interfaces through our 'federated' inventory approach (see Unified Service Manager) and we can also implement direct interworking to other vendors inventory systems using our professional services group.

For real-time customer SLA management we partner with other vendors and provide the adaptors to integrate with their SLA tools.

Question: What if SLAs are not satisfied and discounts should be given to the customer? Is there any pre-build interface with Billing applications?

Answer: Yes, this can be supported. The SLA management system would indicate when an SLA violation has occurred where a penalty is associated with that contract and where there has been a breach of the service quality objective. Since Amdocs is also expert in billing systems we do have a billing function/interface within the CM components of the system. We can inter-work with 3rd party SLA systems and billing systems, as well as our Amdocs billing system.