Intelligent Application and Service Monitoring and the Future of AIOps

Featuring Key Insights From The Forrester Wave™: Intelligent Application and Service Monitoring, Q2 2019

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During our recent webinar, Intelligent Application and Service Monitoring and the Future of AIOps, Rich Lane, senior Forrester analyst serving infrastructure and operations professionals, shared his insights into the rapidly evolving world of IT monitoring and analytics, including trends around artificial intelligence and machine learning contributing to more efficient root-cause analysis and predictive guidance. Rich discussed how digital-first companies are requiring new IT monitoring approaches for IT Ops and DevOps teams in dynamic, large-scale environments. Here are some of Rich's key insights from the Q&A portion of the webinar.

Will there ever be a point where artificial intelligence will automate all problem resolution and actually preclude the need for people?

There won't be an army of cyborgs sitting in a data center. That day's just not going to come, and the reason for that is really simple. The repeatable tasks are easy to automate. The problem is with the higher-level things. We've made environments so complex with this quest for resiliency, for performance, and with the distributed nature of applications now, that it is extremely difficult to find a lot of incidents that happen in the IT environment — and that's where the people come in. We will always need human brains to examine the data for solving complex issues — especially new issues. It is next to impossible to automate those things. You can also have six incidents present themselves as exactly the same incident and have six different remediation processes. So, there will always be a place for the humans. The future will just have them working on the high-level tasks instead of fighting fires that can be addressed by machines.

AIOps employs pattern matching. Many times, service issues don't have the same patterns. Does this break AIOps?

I don't see this breaking it. The patterns they see are going to be to the data. So, we can see that in the data, and the algorithms are going to see patterns and recognize that something is normal activity or not normal activity. They can recognize that some spike in utilization, for example, isn't an anomaly — it's just at 9 a.m. when everyone is logging in. However, when something unexpected does happen, the AIOps tools can know from history that something unusual happened. In many cases, this is when a human should be notified. But I don't believe it breaks it.

What are common traits of successful AIOps projects? How do you ensure your project is successful?

I think any time you're bringing in a new tool set, you should find the best use case where you can get the most bang for your buck. It may be starting with systems or applications that are underserved now from a visibility standpoint. So, the idea is to layer AIOps on the systems, and then — boom — start getting insight into what's going on with it right away. That really helps you build a success story to sell to other teams. Because, let's face it, as IT pros, we tend to resist change. You know, we're often our own worst enemies in that department. But I think that's really a key part of the approach — get a quick win, get confidence in the system, and then people will generally come down to your office and start asking you questions about it at that point.

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Is AIOps a tool for DevOps?

It is definitely a tool that can be leveraged by DevOps teams. DevOps is no longer just for the Silicon Valley 20-person startup. Fortune 500 companies are doing it pervasively. They all realize that they need to bring products to market faster. They need to bring core features to their customers faster, and the DevOps approach is a great way to do that. The great thing about AIOps is the flexibility. It can help provide business outcomes for any person in a company. You can have marketing and sales people looking at data. Now, you can build a dashboard for them. You can have compliance people looking at the data. You can build a dashboard for them. So, it will speak to any persona — not just an IT Ops or DevOps person.

Summary

As complexity grows, infrastructure and operations teams struggle to obtain full visibility into their environments and isolate issues when they arise. IT Ops and DevOps leaders increasingly need improved monitoring approaches that can provide a unified view of all components of a service — from application code to infrastructure. Modern IT monitoring tools are increasingly expanding data collection capabilities to include broader types of data and are also incorporating machine learning to analyze that data for the purpose of accelerating problem resolution and predictive analytics. As a result of these monitoring providers expanding horizontally, there is likely to be a declining demand for stand-alone AIOps tools.

Watch the full webinar to learn more about the impact of modern monitoring technologies that incorporate AIOps capabilities.

About Zenoss

Zenoss works with the world's largest organizations to ensure their IT services and applications are always on. As the leader in software-defined IT operations, Zenoss uniquely collects all types of machine data to build real-time IT service models, that train machine learning algorithms to deliver robust AIOps analytics capabilities for all data types including metrics, dependency data, events and streaming data. This enables IT Ops teams to predict and eliminate outages in hybrid IT environments, dramatically reducing downtime and IT spend. Zenoss is recognized as a Leader in The Forrester Wave™: Intelligent Application and Service Monitoring, Q2 2019. For more information about Zenoss, please visit https://www.zenoss.com.

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