



ProvisionSoft's *DynamicIT* Provides Relief

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Management Summary

An enterprise data center and its rows of rack-mounted hardware look a lot like New York City – towering stuff, blinking lights, and often a 24 x 7 environment. But, like New York City, it is really a clutter of smaller environments – villages, if you will - each focused on an application. With SANs and grids, these villages often physically overlap. Each application has its own daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly rhythms of workloads, as well as characteristic habits of data growth. It may also be critical to the function of the enterprise – or it may be ancillary. It is no longer enough to manage the data center as a whole. You must support the applications – the villages – as well.

In the past year, many of the bigger applications used by larger enterprises have been split apart into modules, both to get more extensibility of function and to enable a lower price of entry. Both are valid initiatives beneficial to the enterprise, but they multiply the number of usage patterns to manage. **Managing to the application must involve both storage and server administrative zones.** These complications have resulted in compelling reasons to overprovision both servers and storage for key applications, so that the convergence of patterns does not produce an outage. When times were good, an excess of bountifulness was tolerable; now it is not. **The cure is automated provisioning – not just of storage or of servers but of both, based on the requirements of the applications involved.**

Many products claim to “manage processes,” when in fact they just monitor the increasing number of hierarchies and things that can be monitored, and turn appropriate icons yellow or red. Some also report, and perhaps even analyze. This work is essential but doesn't solve the problem. This is like having assistants who say (far too often) “Just tell me what to do.” You don't want to tell them what to do. **You want to set the policy and have it done. That is what separates management from training, and true solutions from palliatives.**

ProvisionSoft's *DynamicIT* proactive resource management software takes that step to complete the automation of provisioning servers (initially *Windows 2000*, *Windows NT* and *Solaris*) and storage (initially EMC's *Symmetrix* and HPQ's *StorageWorks*). **With *DynamicIT* you can monitor and override at first, and later move on to prediction-based automated provisioning when you are comfortable.** Riding on top of the capabilities of storage, server, and application management software monitoring and reporting capabilities, and flying under the aegis of network management frameworks, **ProvisionSoft takes away the carpal tunnel syndrome of provisioning and lets administrators get on with setting policy.** For more details, read on.

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What is Provisioning?

Long a feature of telecommunications networks, provisioning is the allocation of equipment for specific needs. It follows, but is not part of, procurement. It allows the enterprise to get the optimal return from its equipment, both new and older equipment. Storage provisioning – a hot topic these days - assigns space to an application, **but a more broad view of provisioning, such as ProvisionSoft's *DynamicIT* affords, allows the entire equipment needs of an application to be provisioned, optimizing the business process it supports.** Provisioning software allows the enterprise to assign its high performance servers where they are needed, when they are needed and it facilitates the tiering of storage¹.

Why Passive Management Isn't Enough

When data center environments were equipment (and technology) centric, passive provisioning on a box-by-box basis was a reasonable approach. Now that the data center is switching to a dynamic, application-centric focus, **the fluctuating resource needs of applications are only met by static allocations if you routinely assign too much. Budgets can no longer allow that.**

Enterprise environments are becoming better connected to the extemporaneous needs of mobile workers. Business analysis applications are gearing up to provide real-time functionality. Both will increase an enterprise's sudden spot requirements for computation and data access. **Only automated provisioning can meet these. Reporting and trending without action are already becoming an inadequate solution.**

DynamicIT

ProvisionSoft's first release² of *DynamicIT* targets traditional core elements of the data center, with more to come. It manages Solaris, Windows 2000 and Windows NT servers, with

¹ See **The Clipper Group Explorer** entitled *Tiered Storage Classes Save Money – Getting the Most Out of Your Storage Infrastructure*, August 29, 2002, at <http://www.clipper.com/publications.htm>.

² On August 1, 2002.

Linux in the offing and other flavors of UNIX farther down the road. The storage arrays it handles are EMC *Symmetrix* and HPQ *StorageWorks* arrays, with Hitachi Data Systems arrays, IBM's *ESS Shark* and EMC's *CLARiiON* under evaluation for future inclusion. *DynamicIT* can manage Brocade switches as well as common host bus adapters, and ProvisionSoft is working on support for McData's switches and EMC's *Connectrix*.

Pricing is a flat six-figure fee per instance, so data centers can add more devices to be managed without upping their costs.

What *DynamicIT* Does

The customer manages the original configuration of the hardware, as well as alert levels for utilization thresholds, using the tools that come with *DynamicIT*. The customer then sets policies for the priority and needs of applications, such as throughput and response time from storage arrays. *DynamicIT* then monitors the environment, and uses its predictive algorithms to optimize the hardware an application runs on. At its basic functionality it can alert administrators who can then do the reallocation, but its business value comes as it takes over these mundane tasks from both storage and server administrators to provide a unified responsiveness to changes in application needs.

As enterprises move to embed their business processes in their computer systems for better availability and response time, the bottleneck shifts back to the responsiveness of the system and network administrators in handling any non-automated management processes.

DynamicIT is like a cook who looks at the kitchen shelves and blends the ingredients into a nutritious, enjoyable meal. The over-provisioning alternative is like a diet of fast and convenience foods. You pay more and your resulting physique is usually less than optimum.

Conclusion

Separate storage and data center management products don't delivery the broader functionality of *DynamicIT*. You need to cover both sides of the aisle. Check it out.



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Ms. MacFarland specializes in strategic business solutions offered by enterprise systems, software, and storage vendors, in trends in enterprise systems and networks, and in explaining these trends and the underlying technologies in simple business terms. She joined The Clipper Group after a long career in library systems, business archives, consulting, research, and freelance writing. Ms. MacFarland earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell University, where she was a College Scholar, and a Masters of Library Science from Southern Connecticut State University.

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