

## OPINION PIECE

### Your monitoring tool has super powers...

by Romain Le Merlus, Co-Founder & CEO - Centreon

*If the origins of IT monitoring are the same as those of IT itself, its use has only really grown over the past 20 years alongside the generalized deployment of IT in business. For a long time it was restricted to technical monitoring, production and infrastructure teams. The inevitable correlation of business and IT has led to its scope being extended to application and business monitoring. Coupled to and interfaced with reporting, viewing and mapping tools, or with BAM, monitoring has matured and has become the essential IT department tool to communicate with business. Here is a glimpse of the IT monitoring super powers for business performance.*

#### **Super power n°1: use technical monitoring to have an overall and accurate view**

20 years ago, IT departments and other computer professionals were forced to automate a high number of their processes to meet their users' increasing needs and face up to a lack of resources. This led to new practices such as ITIL, the purpose of which was to industrialize some of the processes to provide internal clients better services.

Therefore, to begin with, monitoring was a tool to check infrastructure elements. Its main purpose was to monitor hardware to identify server, modem or printer availability. Monitoring tools collected data to quickly identify incidents and remedy them as fast as possible. With the help of technology, monitoring tools were then used to anticipate, or even predict, failures. And thereby avoid them.

Monitoring no longer stands by to watch, it also makes it possible to lower the number of incidents, thereby increasing IT productivity and performance, impacting all company activities which have become dependent on IT. This was made possible by the systematic automation of data collection which led to an increase in the amount of collected data. The widening of the scope of monitoring to all company hardware made it possible to centralize monitoring, giving a single and overall view of the business's information system health. An overall view all the more important that the future of IT will probably be in the cloud, or in hybrid models, and the Cloud, just like other infrastructure, will also need to be controlled (and therefore steered) by the company. "Big Brother is watching you" but for the benefit of everyone!

#### **Super power n°2: accurately fulfilling IT department user demands using application monitoring**

Everything could have been for the best in the best possible world if new uses and the digital revolution hadn't arrived, putting business and IT in the same boat. As a result, monitoring was forced to step outside its box in order to be able to collect and process an increasing volume of application data, but also to adapt its pitch to share this data and speak the same language as users. Currently, applications are monitored and this involves most monitoring teams being capable of sending indicators that have been reformatted to be understandable by less technical users. Data analysis has stepped up a notch. The visual and graphic display of the collected data has become the standard for easy communication with business. Screen displays, push mail, dashboards customized per user

profile.... By communicating data about the status of their applications to users in real time (the CRM is running, the email server is undergoing maintenance, etc.), the IT department encourages IT and business to work together, with quickly measurable advantages as a result:

- A significant drop in the number of calls to the helpdesk: the teams relieve technical support of needless calls so that they can focus on remedying incidents faster.
- The users have more autonomy: in a configuration in which the IS includes remote sites without an IT expert present (hotels, profit centers), monitoring makes it easy to identify incidents on all sites and to display them to users in a user-friendly way. Simple operations such as rebooting a router, for example, can be carried out by a user, thereby reducing incident solving times.
- As business is informed of incidents in real time, it can then be more effective by organizing its time accordingly and optimally without involving the IT teams.
- Shared objectives: the relationship between IT and business grows around the shared objectives of overall performance and quality of service.

### **Super power n°3: getting in line with business stakes using business monitoring**

Beyond applications, monitoring has had its own little revolution by refocusing on business and monitoring quality of service. It is no longer just about monitoring the server or the bandwidth quality on an e-commerce site, but about the real time monitoring of user activity - and even the user experience throughout the process - in order to anticipate longer site response times which could cause shopping carts to be abandoned, for example.

Technology such as AI and Big Data will quickly make it possible for monitoring's predictive role to go even further, as well as its interaction and intertwining with business. Using the new methodologies such as DevOps which tend to promote the pizza team model (reduced, multi-skilled teams working on a given service as opposed to lots of teams working in silos), Production and Infrastructure teams will at last be able to come out of their "reserved area" to open to business. Thanks to who? Thanks to monitoring, which has become everyone's business!

### **Super power n°4: communicating better using monitoring as a tool to promote the IT department**

What if monitoring was more than just a technical tool? What if it was also a great communicating tool to promote the IT department and its members to the business teams. You have all already heard this: "They know where to find us when things go wrong, but when it's all running smoothly no one comes to say thank you!" Using the data collected by monitoring and its use from a business perspective, the IT department will be able to communicate about facts and data that have been reprocessed and correlated so that everyone can understand. Displayed intuitively and visually, the data becomes an arm of massive communication for IT departments which can thus:

- Defend their budget and HR options with the finance and HR departments,
- Communicate with Senior management on IT performance,
- Develop an IT department brand image with users,
- Strengthen the IT department's legitimacy on choices that are as strategic and complex as the cloud, business applications or the IoT.

Monitoring has become both an essential tool to guarantee and increase IT performances, but also a formidable communications tool to create a common language with internal users, to bring IT strategy closer to business stakes and strengthen the legitimacy of the IT department within the enterprise. It would be a shame to limit its use and the access to it.

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## About Romain Le Merlus – Co-founder & CEO



In 2005, as a new graduate from Epitech - where he met Julien Mathis, his future partner, Romain Le Merlus created and developed the first version of Centreon, the open source IT monitoring tool.

A pioneer in open source technology, he then founded Merethis, a start-up which rapidly became a major player in software integration and publishing in the IT infrastructure monitoring sector to become Centreon in 2014, the eponymous name of the solution. Driven by his passion for an always intact open source, he manages the company's growth and continues to get involved in managing client projects, a true source of inspiration to invent the future of IT monitoring.