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CRM News:

End-user experience management drives Siebel CRM success at BT

By Barney Beal, News Director
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With more than 7,000 installations of Siebel CRM software, BT, the British telecommunications giant, decided it needed a better understanding of how this massive investment was performing.

The best view, according to Philip McBurney, director of the CMP Program at BT Design, was from the desktop. Six months ago, BT deployed end-user performance monitoring software from N.Y.-based Knoa Software Inc.

"The main driver for taking on Knoa was to get an end-user view of the application performance," McBurney said. "We had various other mechanisms before that gave us a gauge of how the application was performing at the caller interface, but Knoa was the first time we used live data from desktops, the first time we saw the real performance."

That gave BT insight into not just the server side but the application side, with its pilot program of roughly 1,500 users. Since then, BT has expanded the program to more than 7,000 Siebel installations and is now looking at user behavior -- to see where there may be a need for more training, for example.

End-user performance monitoring is gaining traction in enterprise companies as well as smaller organizations, according to J. P. Garbani, research vice president with Cambridge, Mass.-based Forrester Research.

"It has been slow taking off over the past 10 years," Garbani said. "People were more preoccupied with managing servers and networks. Now we're getting into an era of service management. IT services is a very strong differentiator now that should logically promote this sort of technology. All the forecasts we have done have shown a steep adoption curve in the next three to five years."

While a company with only 10 desktops may not see the advantages of end-user performance monitoring, it's not for large enterprises only.

"It's for any company that is interested in understanding several things -- what is the performance the end user is getting; what is the quality of the application; and the usability of the application, the use of resources at the desktop level," Garbani said.

BT is running Knoa across contact centers for multiple product lines. OneView, its business and consumer division, runs Siebel on 20,000 seats. Its Siebel1 operation runs large contact centers with heavy volumes of calls across the globe, including a number of [outsourced centers in India](#). The BT Local Business division allows third-party vendors to sell BT products as if they were BT and also runs Siebel and Knoa. BT runs multiple Siebel instances on versions 7.3, 7.5 and 7.8.

"We don't have it on every desktop," McBurney said. "There's about a 20% coverage across most of our major call centers. We do have a pretty good feel for how the app is performing."

One thing the system made possible was better insight into reported problems that had previously been just hearsay, McBurney noted. It's helped BT assess issues such as things that look fine on the server side but go wrong on the client side. Typically, it's something the call center agent is doing.

"It all runs in browsers, so what can happen is, if machines aren't up to spec or [are] running another app like Facebook, that can affect performance or the perceived performance of Siebel," he said. "It's obvious when you have workflows coming out. We also interface. Siebel is not the only system on the desktop. Ideally, it would be, but they still need to use other systems."

On other occasions, they've found the agent's machine itself may be what's slow. With the workflows coming from Knoa, BT's engineers have a better sense of where to look for problems, McBurney said.

In another example, end-user experience monitoring allows BT to track problems with its computer telephony integration (CTI). The integration between the phone call and the agent desktop happens in Siebel and presents a progress bar in a Siebel window, but in certain cases the interaction doesn't complete correctly. In that case, agents have a procedure to follow or else the CTI progress bar doesn't launch correctly. Knoa allows BT to see this in real time.

With the user experience monitoring, BT also tracks agents' navigation through Siebel and can help determine the best path.

"When agents go off track, that can be picked up and we can take that as a model to certain product [lines]," McBurney said. "We mount those ideal journeys and compare those with what live agents are doing and put that to agents or coaches where they are."

At the moment, Knoa is the leader in the market for end-user performance monitoring, according to Garbani, though Citrix, IBM and CA all have the technology in some form.

"One of the advantages of these solutions is you can use it on any kind of application -- standard applications, custom or even mainframes," Garbani said. "If we look at the products in the

market today, especially network products that are listening to capture rational time, those products are limited to certain kinds of protocols. At the desktop level, anything can be monitored, so it can be generic, which is an advantage."