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Experience monitoring boosts IT systems productivity

How do IT leaders really know if enterprise software is being used effectively? Some experts think rather than tapping into traditional systems management solutions, the answer lies in a relatively new class of software.

"Systems management tools ensure that systems and the network infrastructure are up and running, but what they are missing are measurements of the end user's actual experience," says Lori Wizdo, VP of marketing with **Knoa Software**, a vendor of IT end-



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user experience-monitoring solutions. Knoa's solution uses passive agent technology that sits on each user PC and collects dimensions of the end-user experience for ERP, CRM, and trade promotion management systems.

"We focus not only on [the user experience], but also on the performance achieved: how well users are executing an application, whether they are making errors by entering incorrect information into fields, or executing things in the wrong order," explains Wizdo.

User-experience metrics may be used by IT staff to augment other systems-monitoring data, but also are commonly used by application engineering and training specialists to study ways to fine-tune user interfaces and screen sequences.

Cambridge, Mass.-based **Forrester Research** pegs the IT end-user experience management market to grow 20 percent this year, from \$115 million in 2006 to \$138 million in 2007. Currently there is no dominant vendor in this market, though bigger systems management vendors such as **Hewlett-Packard** and **CA** have made acquisitions in the space. For now, numerous small vendors continue to grow as they deliver diverse technology, including desktop versus server-based products, and passive-agent versus active-agent approaches.

Dallas-based **Kimberly-Clark** used Knoa's solution to pinpoint frequent errors stemming from complexity in the values on a drop-down menu. Rather than changing the software, users were given laminated cards that explained the values—a simple training aid that improved performance by 25 percent. ■