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## BMC tool helps resolve problems in Java and .NET applications

By Michelle Davidson

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Application diagnosis and resolution of .NET and Java EE applications has gotten easier thanks to a new release of Application Problem Resolution from **BMC Software**. Where once BMC provided two tools to diagnose and resolve bugs on the different platforms, it now condenses them into just one with release 7.0.

For test engineers it means they don't need to know how to use two very different consoles for the "black box" software, said Ran Gishri, director of worldwide marketing at BMC.

"For test engineers, it's a very simple tool bar. They just press a button and the logs are attached," he said. "Test engineers transparently control black boxes on these heterogeneous environments."

Julie Craig, a senior analyst at Enterprise Management Associates, said Java is still the most common application development language, but .NET is gaining ground.

"Many companies are taking a best of breed approach, leveraging J2EE on back-end servers and .NET for user interface development, for example. For these reasons, it is important that tools support both platforms," she said.

Originally called Identify Software's AppSight (BMC acquired Identify Software in 2006), Application Problem Resolution operates like an airplane's black box. It monitors application traffic and records application execution on both the server and the client side and captures a synchronized, real-time log of user actions, system events, performance metrics, configuration data and code execution flow. All of that information is synchronized and put into a log, and that information is communicated to the developers.

The tool allows developers to play back the problem or incident as it happened without having to recreate the incident or the environment, Gishri said.

"It's a very manual process to test, recreate and fix bugs," he said. "We're trying to automate the entire process throughout the SDLC. We're trying to increase the efficiency of the development organization."

### **Companies' poor problem solving**

Craig said research shows that IT organizations spend 60% to 80% of their budgets on administration and support. That's because software problems are not adequately identified and resolved during the development process, and once software gets to production, IT support specialists have no good way to track, trace and communicate software problems to development for resolution, she said.

"Application Problem Resolution addresses both of these problems and in doing so can help IT organizations improve their overall efficiency," Craig said.

Application Problem Resolution 7.0 automates the problem resolution in heterogeneous environments with role-based views, architecture and deployment methods, Gishri added. "To our knowledge this is the first product that does that," he said.

Not only can the tool capture what's happening on the client side, but also it is able to replay the user experience and follow his footsteps to the server side and see how things are processed there.

"We put a lot of emphasis on heterogeneity -- on the capture side and on the analysis side," Gishri said.

Craig said many testing tools are available, such as products from IBM Rational and HP Mercury, but "not many cross the boundaries between development and production as Application Problem Resolution does."

In addition to being useful for developers and testers in the pre-deployment phases, Application Problem Resolution 7.0 can also be used once the application is deployed to production to record the conditions surrounding an application problem, she added.

"The resulting record creates a consistent, complete view of the application that makes it easier for IT support specialists to communicate a problem back to development so that it can be fixed," Craig said. "This consistency helps IT personnel improve software quality and, in doing so, provide a higher level of service to end users."

Other enhancements in Application Problem Resolution 7.0 include the following:

- Support for recording of Microsoft Windows Vista, Internet Explorer 7.0, and Microsoft .NET Framework 3.0, and integration with Microsoft Visual Studio Team System, which will streamline use and provide further efficiency gains, with additional connectors becoming available at a later date.
- Enhancement of BMC Black Box recording technologies and analysis views to provide further acceleration of the application problem resolution process.
- Ability to record and troubleshoot applications running on the Apache Tomcat application server.

