

## **The challenge of Information Latency and real time decision making**

### **Introducing BAM**

In the age of the internet, information overload is not new to any of us. As decision makers we get inundated with several sets of information, reports, intelligence, research, alerts etc throughout the day be it on the computer or mobile. We would usually not have the time to go into several systems and recover all of this information although every piece of information is available online. Additionally, most of the information that we get is out of date and not of significant value. We are however interested in monitoring our businesses throughout the day which could mean a small set of critical information.

With enhanced data portability, mobility and myriad access devices, it is possible to push out select data on a real time basis – a simple example is mobile alerts that we get on SMS. So if your decision making depends on information throughput generated by IT systems, read on...

### **What is Business Activity Monitoring?**

BAM was first defined by Gartner as the concept of providing real time access to critical business performance indicators to improve the speed and effectiveness of business operations. Simply put, BAM is the convergence of operational Business Intelligence and real time integration of applications aimed at meeting business goals in a proactive manner.

Features could include monitoring real time state of the business, real time control of business performance, monitoring of production deadlines, instant escalation management of customer issues, predictive monitoring of key information, real time root cause analysis etc. It is today being adopted by IT managers as an additional layer to BSM (Business Service Monitoring) and BPM (Business Process Management) products.

### **Who are the players?**

There are different players in the BAM space – some of the pure-play BAM vendors are Pacemetrics (PaceMonitor), Systar (Business Vision), Celequest, SmartStream, FYI, Silas Technologies, Wipro and HeraldLogic from India (IntelliRADAR) etc. BPM vendors such as TIBCO, Savvion and Pegasystems limit BAM functionality to monitoring workflows that are designed by the BPM systems.

BI (business intelligence) players also offer BAM solutions and some of these include Ascential, Informatica, Information Builders and SAS. These vendors will be challenged to support an environment that handles a process driven approach to performance management. DBMS vendors that offer BAM functionality include HP (ZLE and non stop SQL/MX), NCR Teradata (Active data warehouse). Last but not the least are EAI vendors such as IBM, Microsoft, BEA, TIBCO (Business works) etc. who focus on process driven event management.

### **Which industries can benefit?**

Most of the large industries can benefit since they use one or more of the above technologies. The Telecom industry is a visible example of an industry spec emerging for BAM where it has been integrated with network operations and back office systems to monitor various success factors in fulfillment, assurance and billing process of telecom OSS; service fulfillment/assurance in a VPN provisioning scenario (for details see Telemanagement Forum's NGOSS initiatives). Any industry that uses real time data for decision making can make use of BAM either by monitoring business process (any service industry), critical performance parameters (manufacturing) or predictive monitoring (utilities, healthcare etc).

### **What could be challenges?**

Today's business environment is complex and even something as sophisticated as BAM could have its limitations and challenges – e.g. distributed asynchronous data collation across geographically distributed databases (such as a bank, insurance company), outsourcing parts of business processes to another work location (systems cannot necessarily be broken up the same way as a physical process), the timeliness and accuracy of basic input data (the people dependency on transaction data collection)

### **The final word...**

BAM still has a great future as companies learn to truly leverage the power of enterprise IT and start using the data in earnest to take decisions near real time and quickly. Obviously, this will need a mainstream process for deployment, good quality consulting support and common standards for a wider adoption across enterprises which will emerge once process management, business intelligence and performance management capabilities merge into a single platform.

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