

Major Win for Indicative in the Travel Services Industry

Worldspan—The Leader in Travel Technology and Applications

Worldspan is the global leader in travel technology services for travel suppliers, travel agencies, e-commerce sites and corporations. The company provides mission-critical travel distribution, information technology and transaction processing services for customers in every sector of travel. Worldspan is recognized for its continual delivery of industry-first Web-based solutions. Globally, Worldspan is the largest transaction processor for online travel agencies, processing nearly two out of three flights purchased through travel Web sites. Worldspan uses some of the fastest, most flexible and efficient networks and computing technologies and links more than 800 travel suppliers with its worldwide customers. Worldspan's fine reputation as the technology backbone provider to the travel services industry is further evidenced by recently being named as the 'Best Technology Provider' at the annual British Travel Trade Awards as well as CIO Magazine's 2004 winner of the Enterprise Value Award.

IT as a Strategic Resource

Worldspan's IT systems handle more than seven billion transactions a month against a database of over 40 million customer records. Its customers operate under intense cost pressures, so Worldspan's IT professionals constantly monitor the availability and performance of their cost-saving and productivity enhancing travel services applications. To aid them in this effort, Worldspan purchased monitoring products from one of Indicative's competitors three years ago. It took three years of laborious programming to instrument Worldspan's transactions, requiring a large investment in both time and effort to deploy the overall solution.

Challenges Surface

Worldspan was pressed to invest more and more in the management solution, even after discovering several shortcomings and limited effectiveness. Producing scripts for synthetic transaction testing was tedious and time consuming (scripts written in C), and low-level programming meant scripts had to be re-written for every change to the tested transactions. Vendor support and license upgrade costs have grown over time and gaps in product function were becoming more evident—in fact the vendor's tools were hindering the necessary evolution of Worldspan's best-in-class solutions.

Facing escalating costs, as well as sticker shock from the vendor's latest quote for support and license upgrades, Worldspan decided to look for an alternative. Indicative was recommended to meet its needs.

Finding the Best Fit

Worldspan already knew the value of service management. They needed a solution that:

- monitors all key applications as well as, or better than the existing products
- is strongly supported by a stable company
- affords real cost savings to Worldspan
- can be deployed on schedule (fast!) and within budget

The Solution

Worldspan and Indicative came up with a fast-track Statement of Work that identified the application monitoring and testing requirements and listed 418 specific tests to be replaced by Indicative. The test harness was replaced by the Indicative operator console with 26 applications monitored for performance and availability. Monitoring included web (HTTP), file transfer (FTP), simple transaction, telnet, and data queries.

To optimize the experience of end-users, 24 complex test scripts were deployed to simulate user navigation through the various key Worldspan applications (reservations, pricing, booking, etc.) These tests took several months to develop using the legacy product, but only two weeks to configure with Indicative. The streamlined Indicative installation process enabled Worldspan to install the monitoring and management solution and to configure the basic service management model in less than four hours. All infrastructure tests were implemented within two weeks, as compared to over 7 months of scripting using the legacy product. Indicative's novel discovery

techniques helped automate provisioning of over 350 performance tests in total. Over another two day period, the metrics data were collected for the tests, which were deployed, activated and returning performance metrics on critical applications within just 30 minutes. The team developed sophisticated transaction monitoring scripts using Indicative's rapid "record and replay" scripting tools. Some scripts featured secure login, application navigation, content validation and e-mail notification.

The Results

Worldspan realized tangible benefits almost immediately. A review of the installation experience yielded the following observations.

- Application performance tests were easy to record and deploy
- The tests can easily accommodate frequent changes in transaction content, format
- Indicative service modeling accurately reflects the health of the IT environment
- Indicative's modeling capabilities match the requirements of Worldspan's critical application performance monitoring
- Indicative offers meaningful quantitative data of end-user experience
- Indicative's automatic baselining has dramatically reduced spurious application alerts and trouble-tickets, freeing up Worldspan IT staff to focus on the most critical inhibitors
- Indicative's solution costs less and will continue to yield savings in the long-term

The complete Worldspan application management solution was developed, deployed and successfully production tested in record time. Such exceptional time-to-value impressed Worldspan, especially when contrasted to legacy transaction monitoring tools that took more than two years to deploy. Not only was it much faster and easier to deploy, the Indicative solution also yielded more flexible and comprehensive monitoring and reporting of user experience of Worldspan's travel applications.

The Future

Worldspan has since extended the use of Indicative to include database availability tests for their mission critical applications and is considering expanding its use into other areas as well. Indicative has the ability to manage the performance of all of Worldspan's infrastructure components such as network devices, servers, load balancers and firewalls. They can combine these capabilities with the already implemented Indicative user experience and application performance metrics to deliver a true end-to-end performance solution. Worldspan recognizes the advantages of using one solution that is singly architected, easy to use and provides a complete view of their IT Services.

Additionally, a Worldspan IT manager has discovered that Indicative's network tests can maintain monitoring continuity of router interfaces even across re-starts. A competing solution gets confused when a router goes down or is re-started, because it uses simple indexing to link interfaces to their respective tests. The index will change with every re-start, breaking the test suite. Thus the Indicative solution is being considered to displace the existing product, saving Worldspan even more money and providing improved capability in the process.

Indicative's broad coverage, adaptability and ease of use will enable Worldspan to gain increasing value from the solution as their IT infrastructure and business challenges grow.

About Nimsoft

Nimsoft provides next generation performance and availability monitoring solutions for the complete physical and virtualized IT infrastructure. The Nimsoft solutions redefine the standards for ease of use and speed of deployment—providing outstanding return on investment and unparalleled customer satisfaction. Over 600 customers in 30 countries rely on Nimsoft solutions to monitor their IT based business applications and services. These customers include mid-market and global organizations, such as Barclays Capital, Amway Corporation, Archstone Smith Communities, Bay Area Rapid Transit, Ladbrokes, MTU Aero Engines, TriNet, TRW Automotive, and hundreds of leading managed service providers such as CDW Berbee, Easynet and Rackspace Managed Hosting. For more information, visit www.nimsoft.com.

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