



Market Development

Nimsoft NimBUS for VMware makes VMs nimbler

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Event summary

IT performance and availability vendor Nimsoft can now trigger VMware's own Distributed Resource Scheduler (DRS) to move virtual machines around when their performance fails to meet service level agreements.

There's more. The NimBUS event log monitor can now automatically search for key criteria within the log files generated for ESX hosts, VM guests and VirtualCenter, as well as those generated for physical resources. That's a big time-saver.

Finally, NimBUS for VMware now automatically discovers ESX hosts, VM guests, clusters and resource pools. The combination of auto-discovery, event log monitoring and DRS integration is an unusual approach to virtual infrastructure uptime.

The 451 take

VMware ecosystem monitoring vendors would have you believe that monitoring VMs is an entirely new challenge, unlike anything that has gone before. Physical server monitoring vendors say VMs are exactly the same as physical servers and the same techniques apply. Both overgeneralizations are wrong. VMs do have unique features – the ability to move away from the physical hardware to which they were originally provisioned, for example – and monitors need to be able to pick those up. But an intelligently built probe should be able to feed into a central data-gathering hub to create a picture of datacenter performance in the round. This is exactly what Nimsoft has tried to do.

Details

Nimsoft was formed in 2004 when Norwegian service level management (SLM) vendor **Nimbus Software** merged with its US reseller, **Converse Software**. The company has 140 employees in Oslo and Redwood City, California, and claims over 500 customers in 26 countries, including 139 new customers in 2007. The NimBUS software product is now nine years old and in version 3.5. The company promotes it as an alternative to the big four enterprise systems management frameworks, more affordable to the midmarket, and because it was developed entirely in-house, without painful integration issues, far less reliant on professional services.

Tellingly, NimBUS for **VMware** sits beside Unix/Linux, Windows, NetWare and iSeries/AS400 in Nimsoft's Server Monitoring product family. (VMware denies that its software constitutes a datacenter operating system, but its partners tend to treat it as exactly that.) It's essentially a probe that reports back to the NimBUS Primary Hub, which

incorporates data from that probe into an end-to-end view encompassing the network, server, virtual machine, application, database, end-user and VoIP layers. VMware Probe 1.0 shipped in 2006 with basic features. Probe 2.0 in 2007 added Virtual Center and NimBUS dashboard support. Now the new release adds log file support and VMware environment automation through VMware DRS.

Competitive landscape

Competitors come in two broad classes. First are the pure VMware monitoring products. **ToutVirtual** VirtualIQ Pro is more of a virtual infrastructure management and capacity planning package. Veeam Monitor aims to give a bird's-eye view of key performance metrics within VMware, but obviously, like ToutVirtual, that view is confined to the virtual infrastructure, with no effort to integrate that insight into a larger picture of network-to-end-user service levels. The same can be said of **Virtugo Software's** virtualSuite Perform and **Vizioncore** vCharter.

Much closer to NimBUS in heritage and emphasis are Nimsoft's fellow physical server monitoring vendors that are also making the transition to monitoring virtualized servers. **Akorri**, for example, now supports VMware alongside Unix, Linux and Windows in its BalancePoint product for cross-domain datacenter management. **Integrion's** Alive is what we have described as an analytical overlay, handling not only monitoring but algorithms designed to help predict and prevent business service downtime. **Netuitive** SI for VMware makes similar claims and also aims to optimize resource pool allocation, as Nimsoft does.