

Customer Case Study: Ironstream Ensures SLAs Are Met Real-Time Data Access without Taxing the Mainframe Staff

Challenge

What does a company do when a key mainframe expert on staff, the only one who knows how to keep the most vital business applications running smoothly, goes off into the sunset? Or just takes a vacation?

It was the retirement dilemma that faced this North American insurance firm that caters to both individual and business clients. Eventually, the company's z/OS expert responsible for a critical piece of mainframe business analytics was going to retire — but there were always more pressing IT issues to worry about. So when that big-iron staffer actually made his departure plans clear, a decision on what to do suddenly became critical.

But, it wasn't the only urgent matter at hand. The z/OS expert had been using REXX programs to extract SMF and RMF data from the mainframe to produce reports on CPU utilization and transaction response times. This information was used for monitoring customer service and other business applications — and the reports, which were produced as Excel files, showed results on the previous day's activities but not the same day's. That was fast becoming a day too late in an ultra-competitive sector where customer service ranking is a critical success factor. The question was how to fix it without further taxing scarce z/OS resources.

Solution

The IT department's first action was to embrace Splunk Enterprise, the popular operational intelligence platform that centralizes and indexes machine data on IT systems operations across an organization's entire IT environment. Splunk's dashboards, visualizations, and support for analytics were exactly what the company needed.

But, it soon became clear there was a missing piece in the solution: The all-important z/OS data was not being captured. That information was not available to be correlated with the open systems operational data because the Splunk platform could not ingest native z/OS data formats.

That's when Precisely, a Splunk business partner, was brought in for its combination of mainframe and big data expertise. Precisely demonstrated how its Ironstream for Splunk® software

could access and transform z/OS data into the common open systems format and transmit it in real-time to the Splunk platform, with no mainframe expertise required. There, it could be analyzed along with the open systems data, with correlations and other results pulled up into the Splunk dashboards and made available immediately. Ironstream for Splunk would address the z/OS skills shortage, while it would also allow users of the data to focus on IT operations, analytics, and meeting the all-important customer-related SLAs. The company had found the complete solution.

Results

With Ironstream for Splunk, the company:

- Mitigated the risk of losing mainframe skills and the impact to its business operations
- Eliminated a number of resource-intensive procedures needed to extract data and generate Excel reports
- Enabled automated reporting in real-time versus the next day
- Strengthened its ability to meet SLAs and to get ahead of competitors with better customer service

To learn more about Ironstream,
visit: www.precisely.com