

Agility or just Change?



Don MacVittie, 2008-02-09

Well, we're a good 20 years into "making IT more Agile", and I'm going to ask what we all want to know...

Are you more agile, or just different?

For most enterprises, I suspect the latter. While web technologies made it easier to develop application UIs, connecting those UIs to the back-end is generally more difficult and management (except for deployment) is without a doubt more complex. While XML is easy on the eyes, there's little indication that it's faster to develop for than a flat-out binary structure - more interoperable? Undoubtedly. Faster to develop for? Some claim so, I don't see it. And while today's websites are scalable to millions of users, it takes a whole lot of work to get there.

In short, the problems have shifted slightly, but are you truly more agile? For all of our advances, we're still using the basic mail servers we were using ten years ago, they're just a *lot* busier. Our networks are still IPv4 and we're still struggling with the correct VLAN configuration. New server admins still spend a ton of time figuring out how to get the drivers onto those big beefy servers and configured correctly, and we're still developing a lot of our enterprise apps, just the platform has changed. Meanwhile, other areas - like the language du jour and security - just keep getting more complex.

And across the board, users still seem frustrated. IT has been defined as a service organization, so sometimes users won't be pleased, but most of the time it should be possible, if we're making progress.

Our products can do much for you - [virtualization](#), web acceleration, load balancing, other [ADN](#) functionality, [NAS virtualization](#)... All of these things help you handle the increased volume - of users, of storage, of spambots... But it seems for every problem our industry solves three new technologies and a new design methodology surface. It is passingly difficult to adequately serve the needs of users when the "needs of users" is a moving target, let alone when the tools to meet their needs are changing also.

As I've said in other posts, focus is your best option. Use products like ours to free up your time, then prioritize based on organizational goals and breadth of applicability.

The automated data center is on its way - both from the many-to-one perspective as LTM manages (many servers, one IP), and the one-to-many direction as [VMWare](#) and competitors are answering (many operating system instances, one server). Between the two, all of your adaptability needs are covered, and just in case, you have the cloud to outsource non-critical or constantly-changing applications. Stay on top of these developments, as they will continue to free up your network and systems administration time, and allow developers to focus on the business problem while worrying less about the network.

Certainly your workload will continue to increase, and you're not likely to get more staff (have I said this before?), that means you will have to cut out work where possible, use technology to make your life bearable - and to make your data center truly more adaptable. Fast is good, fast and effective is far far better.

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