Q&A

WITH VIJAY KURKAL, CEO, RESOLVE

AIOps – what's all the fuss about? In other words, what is it and why does it matter?

AIOps – AI for IT Operations – helps streamline the management of complex, hybrid IT environments. These technologies help IT teams quickly fix issues with fewer resources, improve application and infrastructure performance, and highlight areas for optimisation and cost reduction – ultimately serving as the backbone for an effective data-driven IT operations strategy that offers significant improvements in efficiency and agility. Hence, the fuss.

To accomplish all of these great things, AIOps harnesses AI, machine learning and advanced analytics to aggregate, analyse and contextualise immense volumes of data collected from a wide variety of sources across IT infrastructure. Doing so enables AIOps tools to quickly identify existing or potential performance issues, spot anomalies and pinpoint the root cause of problems. Through machine learning and advanced pattern matching, AIOps can even predict future issues so that IT teams can automate proactive fixes before the business is impacted.

These tools also provide advanced correlation capabilities that determine how alarms relate to each other, clustering them into smaller groups of events that are all fundamentally related to the same problem. By reducing alarm noise, IT teams can focus their attention on what matters and accelerate incident response to get critical systems back online. An example would be a spike in CPU utilisation, leading to a slowing database, which ultimately presents in e-commerce transactions slowing to a crawl. By understanding that the e-commerce performance issues are related to the CPU problem, IT teams can quickly get things up and running again, rather than manually sorting through a laundry list of possibilities ranging from the network to the application itself. AIOps also ensures they don't miss the alarm that the

e-commerce system is down amidst all of the other alerts coming through.

Some AIOps solutions (Resolve included) can also automatically discover applications and infrastructure, generate rich topology maps, and identify dependencies between business-critical applications and underlying infrastructure. Understanding these relationships makes troubleshooting easier and facilitates overall management, offering a single pane of glass into complex, cross-domain environments. This data can be automatically pushed to the CMDB in near real-time, ensuring accurate inventory information and creating a strong ITSM foundation.

AIOps – does it replace existing technologies and approaches used to monitor and manage IT, or is it more of an add-on to what an organisation is already doing? In other words, are we talking evolution or revolution?

Typically, AIOps is first implemented as a complimentary technology; we find that our customers are deploying it alongside existing tools to evolve their management and monitoring strategy. AIOps is very flexible in that sense, and it's one reason that we recommend choosing AIOps vendors with robust third-party integrations that can help maximise the value of existing investments.

Over time, as customers realise the value of AIOps, it often replaces standalone tools for discovery, dependency mapping, event management, noise reduction, and performance monitoring – to name a few. This makes it a great option for organisations who ultimately want to consolidate tool sets.

A recent study by EMA found that almost 25 percent of large enterprises have eight or more network performance monitoring tools, with some having as many as 25. The costs of those tools add up over time, not to mention the "swivel-chair effect" requiring IT pros to manually sort through data from multiple tools when troubleshooting and effectively adding noise to an already noisy environment. Ultimately, AIOps can eliminate some of these monitoring tools and provide a single pane of glass into the remaining ones by aggregating and analysing the data in one place and providing meaningful insights to streamline operations.

Additionally, AIOps can deliver even more value when combined with IT automation. With both of these technologies in place, AIOps and intelligent automation can work together to enable autonomous actions to be carried out in response to AI-driven insights. This valuable pairing can ensure preventative steps are taken before issues impact the business, ultimately improving performance and agility. Additionally, it can minimise the human impact required in these processes. AIOps effectively can deliver a closed-loop system of discovery, analysis,

detection, prediction, and automation, which is a game changer for teams struggling to manage complex, multi-cloud, hybrid environments.

Bearing this in mind, how much is AIOps about the new breed of monitoring and management technology solutions and how much is it about an organisation's mindset and willingness to change?

Like most transformative technologies, in order for businesses to fully benefit from AIOps and automation the workforce has to embrace it. The most successful organisations cultivate a culture that inspires excitement about what people can achieve with this new technology on their side. If the IT professionals expected to deploy and adopt transformative technologies don't understand the value or fear that their jobs will be displaced by machines, AIOps and automation will struggle to get off the ground. There must be a detailed strategy to secure buy-in from the boardroom down to the technicians on the floor.

Given our roots in automation, we see AIOps going well beyond monitoring and management. The ability for AIOps insights to trigger autonomous actions is a new technology paradigm on the path to self-healing IT. Resolve is a bit different given that we are approaching the market from an automation perspective. Adding AIOps to the mix informs our automation ecosystem – so for us it's not just about being a better monitoring tool, it's about the ability to intelligently take action on monitoring data without human intervention.

AIOps – primarily, it seems to be about the optimisation of an organisation's likely hybrid IT operations through better monitoring and management, but it can also offer valuable business insights at a more strategic level?

Absolutely, AIOps can offer incredibly valuable business insights. AIOps tools can finally give business stakeholders much-needed insight into real-time performance, health, and transactional data through dashboards and reports. Additionally, by focusing on the business impact of application and infrastructure performance, IT teams can better prioritise issues, ensuring they are focused on those that impact revenue or customer experience versus those that might only impact a small number of internal users.

AIOps also offers tangential business benefits, like cost optimisation and capacity planning. Identifying anomalous groups of events is helpful not only in alerting teams to unplanned events, like a DDOS attack, but also to help organisations improve planning for expected events like Black Friday or a big sale. Capacity can be dynamically increased for the latter to ensure applications and infrastructure perform well during periods of high demand based on historical patterns, but dropped back down after the

fact to account for business-as-usual conditions. That ensures you aren't paying for infrastructure you don't need and makes your IT operations more agile.

Bearing in mind that we've established the value of AIOps, where does an organisation start in terms of introducing AIOps into the business? With previous technologies such as virtualisation and cloud, it was possible to start with a single application in a test environment, before going more mainstream. AIOps would appear to be a bit more 'all or nothing'?

We feel it's important to give our customers an easy onramp to AIOps (and automation), so it is not all or nothing. It's important to identify specific use cases that will not only benefit the business most but also offer quick wins. Employing a crawl-walk-run approach allows people to see clear benefits out of the gates so they can start visualising longer term potential. This offers a natural progression to more complex use cases – especially with automation, which is ultimately where the eye-popping ROI will emerge.

For example, Resolve's AIOps product provides out-of-the-box value in a matter of hours with our automated discovery and dependency mapping capabilities. We're able to generate complete infrastructure visualisations, detailed topology maps, application dependency maps, and comprehensive views of inventory on Day One. Being able to truly see what's going on in the environment (and trust the data about inventory, device relationships, configurations and more) delivers immediate value to overburdened IT teams. With these resources at their fingertips, they can streamline operations, fix issues faster, and make changes more confidently; compliance improves as well.

Over time machine learning enriches this data and produces deeper insights, including the ability to

predict issues; however, this does take time. Our customers respond well to the notion that they get value both today and tomorrow with our product, eliminating the need to wait for months to see results or concerns about AIOps being all or nothing.

Finally, are there one or two key pieces of advice you'd like to offer individuals and organisations who are approaching AIOps for the first time?

To summarise, we'd recommend:

- Start your AIOps journey with a quick win in the form of auto-discovery and dependency mapping. Your IT team will get immediate value from the comprehensive visibility into infrastructure and business-critical applications. Efficiency, incident response, change management and compliance will all improve just with this initial set of capabilities. Over time, they will become even more enamoured as advanced machine learning-driven capabilities like predictive analytics and noise reduction offer additional insights.
- Plan to pair your AIOps with automation for maximum value over the long term. EMA has published extensive research on the relationship between the two, determining that integrating AIOps with automation strongly correlates with successful, progressive adoption, and produces significantly better ROI.
- Choose vendor-agnostic AIOps solutions that offer flexibility in the surrounding tools you choose – you don't want to inadvertently limit your choices. Also look for AIOps solutions that ship with plenty of out-of-the-box integrations that make it easy to snap seamlessly into your existing ecosystem.
- Identify champions on your team who advocate for AIOps and automation. Give them a voice and the tools to spread the excitement to their teammates.