

On the Radar: Ipswitch

Delivering IT operational visibility into the public cloud environment



Summary

Catalyst

The cloud has introduced a great deal of agility and flexibility to how organizations can conduct business. The cloud's rise in part is due to how it effectively democratizes IT in the enterprise, allowing line of business to bypass normal IT controls and process. However, one of the hidden challenges with increased un-coordinated cloud use is that it creates silo'ed and fragmented islands of expertise, hidden from others users who are unaware of its existence, and when things go wrong IT find it difficult to help. Ipswitch provide a cross-platform monitoring capability for the multi-cloud environment, enabling organizations to gain deeper insights in to the usage and performance of these environments.

Key messages

- Ipswitch provides a comprehensive network monitoring solution that includes layer 2/3 discovery and mapping.
- Ipswitch has dedicated out of the box application monitoring support for the most popular business applications such as Outlook365, Microsoft Exchange, SQL, SharePoint, and Active Directory.
- Ipswitch extends the monitoring beyond the corporate data center to the public cloud instances used by organizations with support for AWS and Microsoft Azure.

Ovum view

The challenge of managing the corporate environment in a cloudy world is stretching enterprise IT management, governance and security procedures. The workloads are typically stored and executed in silo's and may have un-sanctioned data sharing used to move data between corporate and personal devices. The challenge for IT departments is not to impose draconian rules that would destroy the agility and flexibility of using cloud computing, rather to secure and make discoverable all the environments and workloads so it does not represent a threat to the organization. To achieve this balancing act requires a capability to identify all the corporate assets, apply policies, and enable sharing so that the cloud is as frictionless as possible.

Recommendations for enterprises

Why put Ipswitch on your radar?

The challenge for many in IT operations is how to deliver the required level of visibility, availability, reliability, and security of cloud environments irrespective of where these resources are located. Many of the leading multi cloud management vendors provide some of this capability, but do so for a limited number of different environments, and only provide basic monitoring services. Ipswitch takes the view that data is a source of knowledge if it can be used. So Ipswitch with WhatsUp® Gold provides a comprehensive monitoring solution that covers cloud providers as well as some of the most popular SaaS solutions.

Highlights

The operational environments that IT departments must support are a complex mixture of cloud, SaaS solutions and on-premises technologies. The challenge facing many CIOs is how to access the data that is generated from these environments in a way that does not lock them in to a single vendor. Ipswitch has developed its network monitoring product WhatsUp Gold so that it can access and integrate these different data sources so that deeper insights can be obtained.

Background

Ipswitch has over 1 million users from tens of thousands of companies, and it manages more than 150,000 networks in 192 countries. Ipswitch designs and develops software that enables the easy delivery of 24/7 performance and security across cloud, virtual and on-premise environments. Ipswitch delivers solutions that optimize and secure business transactions, applications and infrastructure. Its most well-known solutions include Ipswitch MOVEit® - secure file transfer -, Ipswitch WhatsUp® Gold - network monitoring - and Ipswitch WS_FTP® - providing a secure approach to upload and download files . Ipswitch sells directly or through strategic alliances with leading IT vendors and the company's global partner ecosystem. Ipswitch's wide portfolio improves application and network performance, monitors diverse IT environments and ensures secure exchange of data that meets PCI, HIPAA, GDPR and other industry and government data security and regulatory requirements. The company has offices throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia and Latin America.

Current position

WhatsUp Gold is a comprehensive monitoring solution that covers nine different aspects of operational management and monitoring.

Network monitoring and alerting

Ipswitch was a network monitoring solution that has expanded to become a more comprehensive monitoring solution. However, at its core is a sophisticated network monitoring capability that includes active, performance and passive techniques. The active monitoring polls out to discover if devices can respond, indicating if the device is available. Just because a device shows up does not mean it is operational. Polling makes sure it can respond therefore providing more confidence that it is operational. Performance monitoring uses the typical protocols including simple network management protocol (SNMP), secure shell (SSH), and Windows management instrumentation (WMI) to collect performance information about the network devices being monitored. This performance information is used to proactively address network troubleshoots and for predictive analysis. Passive monitors allow for WhatsUp Gold to receive unsolicited events and act on the accordingly.

Ipswitch also provides a distributed monitoring feature, which extends the capabilities of WhatsUp Gold to multiple remote networks. The central site installation coordinates data feeds from remote site installations and the network data collected from remote sites can be viewed in WhatsUp Gold reports on the central site. This enables IT administrators to have visibility from one location in to multiple networks.

Discovery and mapping

Ipswitch has very good UI that displays the network and devices in a unique interactive map format that makes drilling down simple and easy. Ovum particularly likes the approach to showing on this UI

the devices or network links that have problems and need remediation. Ipswitch performs layer 2/3 network discover by individual IP addresses, seed scan, IP address ranges, or subnets.

Dashboards

The value of a monitoring solution is two-fold, one for IT administrators to ensure the environment is performing and there are no technical issues, secondly, to inform at-a-glance management with at-a-glance updates on the overall status of the environments. This second aspect Ipswitch performs particularly well as the dashboard are clear and configurable. The IT team can see one view, while line of business managers can see a different view.

Network traffic analysis

Ipswitch supports a variety of different flow protocols including Netflow, NetFlow Secure Event Logging (NSEL), sampled flow (sFlow), jFlow, and Internet Protocol Flow Information Export (IPFIX). These flow records are directed to port 9999 on the WhatsUp Gold server, where a centralized record of network traffic is collected and reported.

Application monitoring

The extension of WhatsUp Gold to cover specific applications demonstrates that these applications are becoming more critical and require careful management. While all web type applications can be monitored, Ovum likes the re-built monitoring for some of the most common applications such as Microsoft Exchange, SQL, SharePoint, and Active Directory **and even SaaS applications such as Outlook 365.**

Configuration management

The ability to ensure configuration details are compliant is often overlooked when IT administrator's think about the features needed in any management tool. Ipswitch provides support for different compliance requirements such as HIPAA, SOX, FISMA and PCI DSS and other regulations. Ipswitch will alert IT administrator's when a configuration is changed, and audit reports identify when configuration settings go out of compliance.

Virtual environment monitoring

The ability to gather detailed information on both the host environment as well as any guest VMs in virtualized deployments is table stakes for a monitoring solution. However, Ipswitch provides this for both Microsoft Hyper-V and VMware ESXi environments.

Disaster recovery

Ipswitch provides an automatic failover of the primary monitoring server to a secondary server. This failover capability is an important because monitoring provides IT with visibility of the entire environment, and should it fail the IT operations team would be effectively 'blind' and not able to make operational decisions with any degree of confidence.

Cloud monitoring

Ipswitch provides the ability to extend the monitoring beyond the data center to those public cloud environments used by the organization. Ipswitch currently supports the leading two global public cloud platforms AWS and Microsoft Azure.

Data sheet

Key facts

Table 1: Data sheet: Ipswitch

Product name	WhatsUp Gold	Product classification	Multi-cloud monitoring
Version number	2018	Release date	March 2018
Industries covered	All	Geographies covered	All
Relevant company sizes	All	Licensing options	Subscription based
URL	www.ipswitch.com	Routes to market	Mixed
HQ	Burlington	Number of employees	250

Source: Ovum

Appendix

On the Radar

On the Radar is a series of research notes about vendors bringing innovative ideas, products, or business models to their markets. Although On the Radar vendors may not be ready for prime time, they bear watching for their potential impact on markets and could be suitable for certain enterprise and public sector IT organizations.

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