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Infrastructure Monitoring Best Practices

When it comes to monitoring your infrastructure, it's essential that all your bases are covered to ensure that none of your critical business services are impacted. Within Waterstons we use a tool called LogicMonitor which is very powerful and has enabled us to offer more and provides us the potential to further develop custom monitoring.



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Best practices for successful monitoring

1. Up to date asset list

One of the key points to ensuring your monitoring is successful is having an up to date asset list. This ensures that every device within your infrastructure is monitored, therefore you'll have no consequential surprises when you find out an outage was caused by something you didn't know existed!

2. Regular inventory reports

Running inventory reports within your monitoring tool can allow you to keep an up to date list of assets, and depending on your tool you could also pull through valuable information such as system model, serial numbers (important for warranties) and even information such as software version. These can prove especially useful in scenarios such as security vulnerability checks as you're able to pull a list in 10 minutes rather than logging onto each device and recording it which could take hours.

3. Cyber security checks

Another key factor is thinking about your security within monitoring. If an attacker was able to access your network, you wouldn't want your monitoring tool to act as an accelerant for them to target your key infrastructure. You may want to consider options such as SNMPv3 and not hardcoding any credentials against a device. This may mean you require a password management solution that integrates with your tool however you can rest in the fact that an attacker wouldn't be able to laterally move.

4. Implement alert tuning

Alert tuning also plays a pivotal role within monitoring. These are basically your warning signs that either something is going to happen, is close to happening or is happening. These can be broken down into,

- Warnings (Predictive)
- Errors (Proactive)
- Criticals (Reactive).

Ideally everyone would like their team to be a predictive desk however sometimes you will need to build your way up to it if you find you currently have a reactive desk. Tuning alerts grants you the ability to get the alerts when you need it and with the right criticality. This can mitigate system downtime by being proactive and predictive on the alerting so that the business can continue to function.

How monitoring systems improve business process efficiency

We are now seeing IT begin to move away from being seen as technical and more as a service monitoring piece.

For example, say if you have an on-premises payroll solution and you begin to monitor everything within that stack (servers/switches/routers etc.), viewing it as a service to monitor.

This allows you to create dashboards and live service pages which can accurately show if there is any service degradation within the chain. This is incredibly helpful as it gives your user base a platform they can view to see if there are any issues and will allow you to stem the flow of requests hitting the service desk.

This provides the ability to provide SLA's and metrics to those departments and to stakeholders that IT systems are running as expected. This can provide further insights as you can track this information and make business decisions on IT systems. As an example, if the payroll system had 90% uptime and the server itself was underperforming and causing the inefficiency, with the information polled together on the monitoring tool you can make a business case for the system to be updated in order to maximise the possible uptime and prevent any business delays.

Stay on top of your business monitoring systems

Overall, monitoring plays a pivotal role in ensuring your business continues to run optimally and should be considered an important key within the kingdom. If you're currently light on monitoring or have none at all, I would heavily suggest looking into a solution as this will provide you the greatest insight into how the infrastructure is helping support the business goals.

If you're looking for support when it come to implementing monitoring systems for your business, contact our Infrastructure and Network Team Lead Liam Potter at liam.potter@waterstons.com