Curo Financial Technologies

Benefits

- Greater infrastructure visibility enables problem avoidance and implementation of best practices

- War-room level escalations are largely avoided

- Overall troubleshooting times are significantly reduced, taking what might take days down to hours

- Transition IT team from reactive to proactive.

"VirtualWisdom was selected as our monitoring platform in large part because it provided a real- time solution other products could not come close to."

Randall Neth
Senior Vice President Global Infrastructure, Curo Financial

"Tracing VM problems with all the vMotion going on has been a nightmare, and VirtualWisdom does a way better job than the native tools."

"Virtana service and support teams have been phenomenal. Having direct access to such deep storage and infrastructure expertise gives us peace of mind."

Mitch Roberson
Director of Architecture, Curo Financial

VirtualWisdom offers deep, real- time visibility to help prevent infrastructure problems before application users are affected

Company Background

Based in Wichita Kansas, Curo Financial Technologies helps consumers who are in a tough spot financially. Customers are hard- working people who find themselves in need of a short-term loan - critical funds they may not be able to easily borrow from traditional banks. The consumer-facing Speedy Cash business unit offers a variety of convenient, easily-accessible financial services in the US, Canada, and the UK. This includes payday loans, title loans, installment loans, lines of credit, check cashing, and prepaid debit cards.

Environment Overview

Curo runs dozens of applications across their two primary data centers, such as Point of Sale and Call Center. Their Cisco UCS hosts support approximately 1,200 VMware virtual machines. They have a 120-port fibre channel SAN network, connected mostly to Dell EMC storage (VNX, Unity, XtremIO) supported by storage virtualization.

Mitch Roberson, who oversees virtual machines, storage and storage networks, plus apps like MS Exchange reports that "Prior to bringing in Virtana, we had an unacceptable level of outages and slowdowns. There were a lot of issues in our environment we could not see. VirtualWisdom gave us deep visibility to quickly pin down causes of problems and intermittent issues." Randall Neth, the SVP who oversees global infrastructure at Curo, says "We selected VirtualWisdom as the leading infrastructure monitoring platform and it has lived up to its reputation".

IT is considered a competitive advantage due in part to the ability to custom develop apps and quickly respond to new business initiatives. Providing flawless customer service, such as accurate and prompt financial transactions, is critical for supporting the core business. This means that applications must be always available and response times must meet SLAs.

Challenges

Over the past year, new business units were added, and Curo went public, which added to the complexity of the infrastructure and overall load on IT.

Prior to bringing in VirtualWisdom, it was difficult to acquire the necessary visibility into the health, utilization and performance of IT infrastructure from the VM to the LUN — and guarantee overall performance and availability to support mission-critical applications. For example, the VMware monitoring tools like VROps could not drill down deep enough to satisfy all needs. As another example, datacenter-to-datacenter communication is done synchronously, and it was nearly impossible to troubleshoot latency issues across the datacenter interconnects.

When issues arose, Mitch was constantly asking himself and his team "Why did we not see the problem first?" He wanted his team to find and fix problems before their support desk calls them. The lack of real-time infrastructure visibility was keeping the IT teams in reactive mode. They found that software monitoring tools that used sampling or just reported averages were missing key indicators and key events. Randall and Mitch had the mutual goal to transition the team from reactive to proactive and was looking for solutions that would enable this IT transformation.

Solution Evaluation and Implementation

The first step was an evaluation of the value of the VirtualWisdom infrastructure monitoring and analytics platform, which took place over four weeks. The Virtana Professional Services team was instrumental in setting up dashboards and reports, configuring alerts, and transferring knowledge to the IT team. Virtana pointed out several areas to improve performance and Curo got immediate value from the Proof of Value evaluation. The POV was compelling, and ultimately, VirtualWisdom was justified based on the improved end-user experience it would enable.

Once fully deployed, VirtualWisdom's ability to get better virtual machine and network data through more granular data collection was key in finding and ultimately eliminating

bottlenecks in the network. VirtualWisdom allowed the IT team to pull together all the pieces of the puzzle, and convincingly present analyses in an easily digested and conclusive manner. The team most appreciated having access to consolidated cross-domain views of the infrastructure via easy to use real-time application-specific dashboards. Providing customized views into the performance, health and utilization of the infrastructure for each application is critical to supporting the needs of the business.

They also noted that the Virtana service and support teams have been phenomenal. "Having access to the experts at VI when the tough problems arise gives us peace of mind that no other vendor could provide" stated Mitch.

Going Forward

As of this writing, Curo's Application Performance Management and Infrastructure Performance Management platforms are not integrated. Curo plans to utilize the AppDynamics APM integration of VirtualWisdom to provide complete end-to-end performance visibility. And with the latest release of VirtualWisdom, Curo plans to use its capacity planning capability to better balance infrastructure acquisition with business growth. Finally, with the enhancements of the new version, VirtualWisdom will streamline troubleshooting and save Curo significant budget dollars by allowing them to retire redundant legacy monitoring tools.

Virtana
2331 Zanker Road
San Jose, CA 95131
Phone: +1.408.579.4000