

# EXECUTIVE VIEWPOINT



## Paul Barrett

CTO FOR ENTERPRISE  
NETSCOUT SYSTEMS INC.

Paul Barrett has 25 years of IT experience and has been actively involved in international standardization. His previous roles at NETSCOUT were Chief Product Officer for Voice and Video, and Chief Architect for R&D.

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[www.netscout.com](http://www.netscout.com)



## Embracing Modern UC&C: A Holistic Approach

Modern unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) management is changing drastically, as large enterprises embrace new, more complex technology and services. NETSCOUT's CTO for Enterprise Paul Barrett offers advice to CIOs on how to prepare for modern UC&C management challenges to ensure success.

### How does modern UC&C technology management and optimization differ from traditional VoIP management?

Traditional VoIP systems were independent of other IT systems even though they shared the same network infrastructure. UC&C systems are now more complex with voice, video, video conferencing and instant messaging, and are more tightly coupled with other IT systems such as email, calendar, authentication and DNS systems. Failures in today's sophisticated UC&C deployments are often related to issues within the broader environment that supports the UC&C systems. As a result, you need a holistic view of the complex UC&C environment to identify the root cause of problems that impact VoIP, telepresence or collaboration services. This view reveals the complex interdependencies between the service delivery components and helps you effectively manage the environment.

### How do you define "holistic"?

For us, it means you can see across all of your IT systems to obtain the critical information to form a complete picture. This allows you to rapidly determine the root cause of UC&C issues and significantly reduce the MTTR, or mean time to repair. Our ability to see end-to-end across a multivendor environment for large, complex UC&C systems is what sets us apart from pure-play UC monitoring vendors.

### How are UC&C management tools utilized today?

There are many component management tools provided by UC&C vendors and others that can be useful when performing very

detailed troubleshooting within that specific component. It's really frustrating when a mission-critical UC&C service is impaired and you don't know which component is causing a problem. Rapid and effective problem triage requires a service assurance solution that works in any environment that can also look at both the UC&C components and the support services. Many of our customers now recognize the true value of this comprehensive view and are opting for our top-down approach to rapidly identify the true root cause of problems. As a result, they are relying less upon point management tools.

### What about contact centers?

For many organizations, the contact center provides one of the primary points of interaction between the business and their customer base, making it a strategic priority. We see it in the financial services industry for wealth management, in government with first responder contact centers, and in the retail and consumer product industry where customer satisfaction fosters loyalty and repeat business. Many of the technologies, such as IM and video, are becoming common in UC&C deployments and contact centers. Hence, our advanced UC&C service assurance solutions are highly relevant to next-generation contact centers.

### How can CIOs prepare for and support future UC&C technologies?

CIOs must enable the next generation of IT transformation for UC&C technologies. The first step is building holistic service assurance capabilities that work in multivendor environments into new UC&C deployments at the start of a transformation project. This way you can establish a benchmark of your current offering, understand current usage patterns, use the data to determine the resource impact, rapidly troubleshoot trial rollouts, and proactively monitor the operational system from day one to ensure you meet your SLAs and get the most ROI from your UC&C solution. ■