Improving sluggish application performance

At the first sign of an application slowdown, an IT interdisciplinary team at the University of Virginia (UVA) Health Systems is ready to troubleshoot, knowing how vital it is to keep mission-critical systems running optimally.

"We are constantly chasing improved performance as the world continues to get used to higher speeds for everything," said Leigh Williams, administrator of business systems for the 600-bed, Charlottesville, Va.-based healthcare organization. "From turnaround times for consumer products or shopping online, everyone's now used to a quick, seamless experience, and they expect that at work as well."

Constant collaboration – and communication – between UVA's applications, infrastructure, security and analytics teams helps minimize bottlenecks that can slow access to medical records and other vital data. So is adopting tools that allow IT teams to best monitor network traffic for inappropriate access, volume or timing.

"Today, the data is all connected," Williams said. "Being mindful and knowing the footprint and managing it correctly is all-important."

IMPROVING THE OVERALL PATIENT EXPERIENCE

The rapid evolution of healthcare technology has transformed the network environment in which patient information and treatment services are delivered. Delivering visibility into the performance of an integrated service delivery environment now is critical to the overall patient experience.

"The best strategy for managing application performance has always been knowing enough to make the right decisions and NETSCOUT focuses on providing at-a-glance metrics and holistic status visibility of business services in Healthcare IT to that end," explained Robert Wright, a senior systems engineer at NETSCOUT.

Wright noted that today's healthcare organizations have access to technologies that greatly improve network visibility and reduce the time it takes to perform "service triage." These products, however, are best leveraged when everyone knows why they are needed, as they streamline overall network performance problem solving.

"When we start to address sluggish performance, we need to make sure we engage our audiences and articulate what this truly means to the caregiver," he said. "It can be easy to underestimate the power the IT practitioner has on the patient, every single day they do their job."

WHEN SECONDS COUNT

Williams agreed, noting, "Healthcare systems deliver their work in a matter of seconds, and seconds matter."

The best way to reduce errors and waste, she added, "is to make sure we have really good applications and really effective workflows to meet healthcare needs today."

Williams recommends healthcare IT leaders consider workflows, IT portfolios and data footprints as a whole system, not as silos, and involve all lines of business that benefit from better overall application performance.

"We live in a time of uncertainty. But it's an absolute a certainty that technology needs to lend a hand in allowing us to drive down costs and to improve productivity," she continued. "It doesn't need to be done more, it needs to be done better. And technology is key to doing things better."

NETSCOUT.