

Healthcare Identifies Cause of Access Issues to Oncology Application

Healthcare organizations have several very common, well-known, critical applications that are used by doctors, nurses, clinicians, and/or administrators and staff throughout the day. Some of those include electronic medical records (EMR), imaging, e-prescriptions, and more recently, telemedicine applications.

However, there are many others that are used by smaller subsets of the medical community to support specialized services. One such service is an Oncology Information Systems (OIS) application used by the hospital's oncology department as a comprehensive patient management and information system for maintaining specific details, images, modeling, and treatment plans of cancer patients.

One healthcare organization recently leveraged their nGeniusONE® Service Assurance solution to quickly address an access problem with their OIS application.

Failure

Over the course of several hours, users attempting to connect to the healthcare's OIS application were having trouble. In fact, they were effectively unable to access the application, regardless of the device they were using.

Impact

The impact on the oncology staff was immediate and significant. The staff, including doctors, nurses, and clinicians, were unable to connect to the application to look up patient information and treatment plans or to update the records with details on medications and therapies administered. If the problem persisted for an extended period of time, the impact could be significant, requiring use of paper records possibly located in different parts of the hospital campus. This could delay critical, time-sensitive patient diagnosis, testing, and / or care.

Troubleshooting

The IT team at this healthcare was a long-time NETSCOUT® user and relied on expertise and support from their Premium Services Engineer (PSE). They leveraged the nGeniusONE Service Assurance solution with strategically deployed InfiniStreamNG® (ISNG) appliances throughout their private data center to provide visibility into this essential service. nGeniusONE alerts related to the OIS application indicated that it was experiencing a high number of "access denied errors," putting the IT staff on notice of a new problem to investigate. From the OIS service tile in the dashboard, the PSE was able to drill down into the service monitor view for details regarding the OIS application servers, which confirmed the significance of the problem. Building in intensity over the course of several hours, there were already millions of "access denied" errors.

The information showed that the error message was in fact coming from the application server, which helped prove that the access issue was not related to remote connectivity like WAN or Internet access, or due to a network issue in the data center. Rather, it was in fact going to take intervention from the team responsible for the OIS application to rectify the situation.

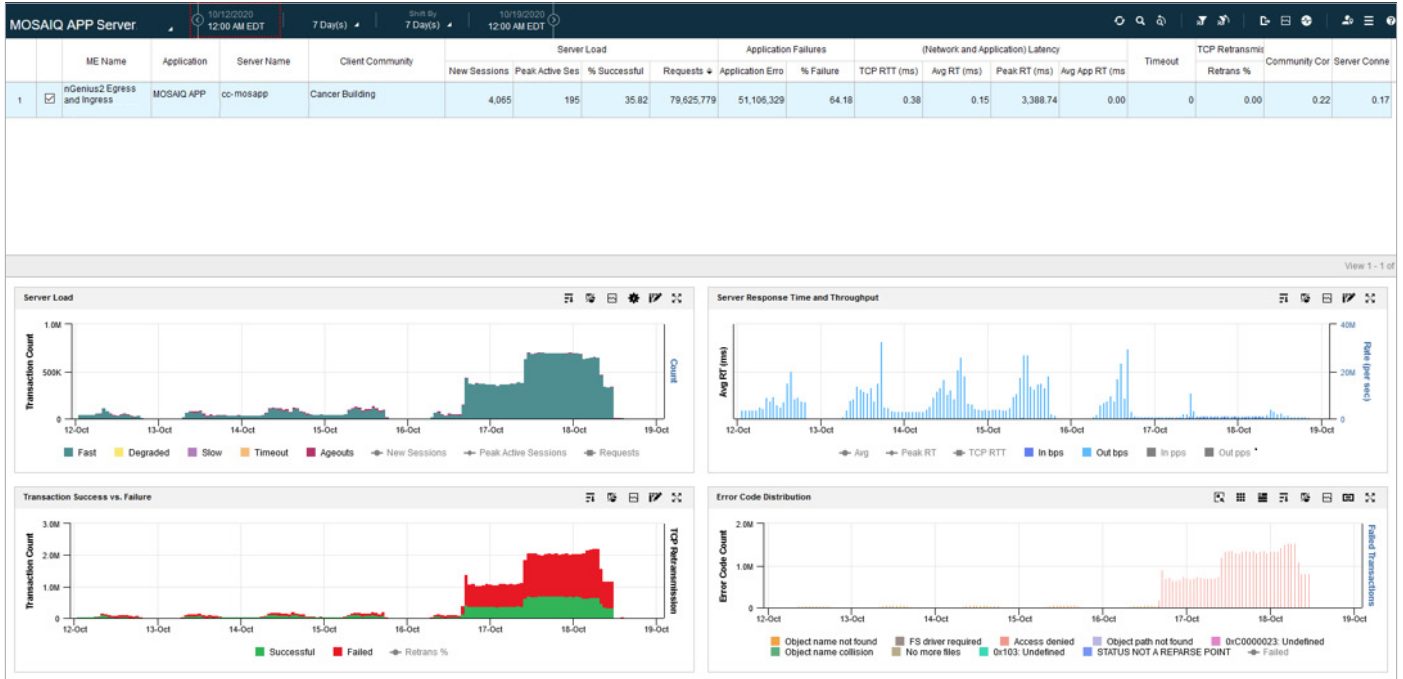


Figure 1: The Universal Service Monitor view in nGeniusONE was able to reveal details related to the access problem, with the critical oncology information services application showing millions of “access denied” errors over several hours.

Restoration

The visibility provided by the ISNG appliances and analysis by nGeniusONE revealed that the source of the access issue for the oncology application was isolated to the application server itself. The netops team was able to provide the evidence from nGeniusONE to the application operations team for corrective action.

Summary

Given the criticality of the oncology information management application for swift, safe patient treatment, delays and unavailability needed to be addressed and remediated as quickly as possible. The PSE, using nGeniusONE with real-time, packet data from ISNG appliances, provided the netops and application teams the information necessary to isolate the problem and share evidence to address the denied access problem in the application server. Avoiding time lost trying to prove the network was not the source of the issue enabled quick action by the right team and minimized impact on patient care and experience.



Corporate Headquarters
 NETSCOUT Systems, Inc.
 Westford, MA 01886-4105
 Phone: +1 978-614-4000
www.netscout.com

Sales Information
 Toll Free US: 800-309-4804
 (International numbers below)

Product Support
 Toll Free US: 888-357-7667
 (International numbers below)

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