

How Foglight Makes User Experience Management a Reality: Three Case Studies

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Executive Introduction

Extensive ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES® (EMA™) research on User Experience Management (UEM), [User Experience Management and Business Impact: A Cornerstone for IT Transformation](#), August 2012, revealed that UEM is a multi-faceted requirement that includes performance management, business impact, end-user productivity, and even insights into application design and usage. The interviews below with three Foglight customers underscore UEM's diverse appeal, its essential values to IT, and Foglight's proven versatility in supporting the multiple faces of UEM.

Three Customers

A Large Financial Services Institution in North America

Can you say a little bit about your particular organization?

The organization I currently lead is a new internal organizational unit responsible for the Foglight tool deployment and management. I report to the Vice President of Service Delivery. In general, we don't own anything, so we need to have to circulate data across silos and report degradations and other performance issues to the Vice Presidents of both Operations and Development, so it doesn't hurt that I'm familiar with the management structures in both organizations.

How did your organization get launched?

The spark behind our organization came from an executive Vice President who headed up our sales and services organization. She attended one of our quarterly review sessions in 2007 and came there deliberately to shake things up. She was extremely blunt about the fact that we weren't providing the service quality that we needed to provide for her staff to meet its sales targets. This was the best possible argument for UEM in my opinion. She had statistics on how many sales they do an hour and how much money would be lost due to service degradation. It was probably the most powerful data set I've ever seen on the impact of IT to a business outcome.

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How does your organization work with the broader IT organization?

We have about 75,000 staff across the world including many silos of technology. Closer to home, we have a modest challenge in that we have two data center locations in our city – one focused on applications and the other on infrastructure – and we need to try to promote a common approach to APM and UEM across both groups.

Can you say something about your particular background and role and how it relates to User Experience Management?

My prior career was mostly in development, which gave me a different perspective from where I am now in operations. After more than twenty years in development, I became even more focused on understanding how applications were affecting consumers. Right now I'm trying to stir up interest and commitment for reducing Mean-Time-to-Repair and assuring better overall application service performance for our consumers.

How are you currently “stirring things up?” And how effective have you been?

Among other communications, I do daily and monthly trending of the data – and trend it a number of different ways to make it clear where problems are arising – for instance, outliers where latencies are abnormally high. In other words, I try to make it impossible for Operations and Development to hide from our UEM and APM metrics!

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But then the challenge remains – if you report it, will someone actually act upon it and use those metrics to improve their performance? Accountability and the need to be proactive versus reactive remain as two very significant challenges. And those are at least in part cultural challenges.

How was Foglight selected?

I didn't select Foglight. It was picked before me by our architecture group. But I did see the deployment and Foglight turned out to be easy to implement, whereas before, we were struggling to cobble together siloed tools from IBM and BMC. Foglight agents were easy to install and configure, and Foglight has a well-integrated console. It also has a lot of built-in alerts and best practices that cover our critical environments such as WebSphere and DB servers. This contrasted with our predecessor solutions where we pretty much had to define everything from scratch. We have been able to integrate a lot of ongoing, relevant baselines from multiple sources and combine them with the self-learning capabilities from Foglight to assess what was normal in our environment without much added administrative effort.

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What application services are you currently targeting?

Right now we are primarily focused on our major sales and service platforms – primarily those that impact external consumers. We have leveraged the Foglight Experience Monitor to instrument three key Business Platforms to date:

- *Domestic Bank Intranet Sales and Service servicing 15,000 staff*
- *Global Transaction Banking for commercial customers*
- *Internet personal banking – targeted at our Caribbean branches*

We run these through a Web-based infrastructure including WebSphere and Tuxedo middleware, as well as full Foglight instrumentation across databases such as Oracle, DB2 and Microsoft SQL, Tuxedo. In other words these are complex application ecosystems. We have about eighty Java applications supporting everything from setting up mortgages, to commercial banking, to investments across many of the industry verticals in the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS) lists, to other banking activities.

How do you use Foglight to support you in your drive towards improved User Experience?

One of the natural strengths of Foglight's performance management capabilities, and Foglight Experience Monitor in particular, is that they can become a bridge between the operations group and the development group. Foglight helps us by providing solid insights that help to bridge this divide. For instance, in addition to production-level performance and availability metrics, we use Foglight's replay capabilities for our Quality Assurance Testing Group – so we can isolate where problems are, do screen prints, and then toss the problem back over the walls for developers to work with.

We're also using Foglight to support triage efforts, working with architects, infrastructure planning, development and establishing close links with outsourced application and infrastructure performance. Here Foglight shines through because it not only provides good performance data, but also gives us a good basic understanding of the topology and the application flows.

What is your biggest single challenge regarding UEM and APM?

I would say that trying to break down the silos is one of the biggest issues for both UEM and APM. This means getting both Operations and Development into the act, as well as key organizations such as the Performance and Capacity Management Group. This often means creating our own best practices beyond the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL), which isn't so directly focused on either APM or UEM.

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A Global Provider of Managed Services Headquartered in the U.S.

Could you describe your business model and its requirements for User Experience Management?

Our company provides outsourced management services, including infrastructure and application services, for enterprise corporations and public sector organizations. My group is especially focused on federal organizations, some of which are quite large and span global international boundaries. So we manage a wide variety of data centers and are hosting many of our clients' applications.

Our User Experience Management requirements touch internal consumers, among our own team, as well as our customer consumers and their external service consumers. In all we support clients with sizes ranging from ten users to multiple thousands of users with hundreds of applications – spread out in some cases globally. These include transactions in fairly remote parts of the world where latencies can create serious issues. Needless to say the specifics vary from client to client depending on our contractual requirements which range from custom to more commoditized offerings.

How did you come to select Foglight for User Experience Management?

One of our clients required more support for User Experience and once we began evaluating solutions, for both synthetic and observed user transaction monitoring, we realized that it was a service that many of our customers could use. When evaluating Foglight, we did look at other offerings, but we liked what Foglight could do, and we already had a positive experience with Foglight's capabilities for monitoring databases and Java-based applications. I should point out that we're also using Foglight's playback and reporting capabilities for UEM – primarily to support better insights into operational issues. We do these both internally, as well as in some cases jointly with customer IT organizations.

Could you say more about the stakeholders and skill groups in your organization using Foglight?

Foglight currently is supporting a wide range of skill groups from systems admins to DBAs, to network managers, to application support. But in spite of the scope of our requirements, we have a lean IT organization where every individual counts, and so we depend heavily on the efficiencies and automation capabilities of our tools.

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How do your clients view your UEM capabilities?

In general, our clients have been very interested and aware of the UEM capabilities from Quest. And many are looking for us to push these out to support a yet broader geographical reach – not only to other cities, but to airports, sea ports and other critical service-related locations.

I might add that we often operate our client service desks as well, and so another target objective is to make those service-related end-user views available to and relevant to our service desk personnel. We're trying to give our service desks visibility into User Experience so that before they even get a call, they know what's going on. This is facilitated in no small part because the latest version of Foglight has a very good Web-enabled dashboard view that makes customization by service desk professionals fairly easy.

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A Global Media Conglomerate Headquartered in the U.S.

Can you provide a little background on your role, and organization?

My title is Director of Global Data Operations – with a focus on performance and reliability across applications and critical infrastructure. I have a staff of about seven. We have responsibility for the data base servers with a focus on MySQL and application servers – which are mostly Java-based Apache Web Servers. My charge is to make sure that the applications are fast and up and running 24 by 7.

What types of application services are you supporting?

It would be easier to tell you which we're not supporting, as we are covering many of the critical applications. These include customer facing services for Order Entry, Shopping Cart, Order Fulfillment, etc., as well as a back office applications.

How did you get involved with User Experience Management?

The core driver was business impact. Originally we hadn't selected the Foglight Experience Monitor. It seemed mostly like icing on the cake to us at first. We chose Foglight for its ability to bring a "single-pane-of-glass" approach to monitoring application services across domains. Then Quest showed us its Real User Management (RUM) capabilities and we went ahead with their recommendations and purchased it anyway.

But now we're seeing the impact and the value. We're beginning to see when and why people are at least potentially bailing out of placing orders – but with clear tie ins to performance and reliability. And with the replay capability, we can look over the user's shoulder. Over time we look to take this value beyond IT to business stakeholders.

Where are you in the overall deployment from a UEM perspective?

One of the reasons we haven't gotten to business stakeholders yet is that our use of Foglight Experience Monitor is still quite new – within the last few months. So we're also in the preliminary stages of our dialogs with the Web Support Manager and in getting involvement from our DevOps and ServiceDesk teams.

What do you like best about Foglight – from a UEM perspective?

Well, as I mentioned, we really like the replay capability. You can go through a thousand data points and get different answers every time. But the replay really tells a story, and the insights are quite fascinating. It's stimulating better questions – and better outreach across IT and potentially the business organization. What may seem obvious to you or me may not be obvious to the average user out there who fires up a browser. Our apps development may say, "Oh, this is easy, anyone can do this!" Which is what one of them said before it was pointed out to them that a significant number of the transactions failed.

Anything more you'd like to say about Quest?

Sure. I think it speaks a lot to say that we gave them no set requirements. They sent out a consultant for a week and we just let him set up the system the way he felt it would be optimal for us. Basically he anticipated our needs. And that's just what I was looking for. I used to be a consultant and I believe a true consultant can sort through 100 different ways to do the wrong job and come up with the one right way to do the right one without anyone telling him or her what to do on the customer side.

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Foglight User Experience Management: An EMA Perspective

Foglight offers a diverse set of options that deliver the values and benefits of User Experience Management across its multiple use cases, from performance management and triage, to business impact and business optimization, to user productivity, to application usage and application design.

Current capabilities include:

- Real User Session Capture and Replay – critical for integrating operations and development priorities in terms of user productivity, application navigation, and business outcomes, as well as providing insights relevant to performance and triage. This allows IT to understand performance, design and business objectives from the user or consumer's perspective. It can also extend value to a service desk professional seeking to better understand user-related incidents.
- Synthetic User Record and Playback – especially valuable in developing applications for optimal transaction efficiency across diverse geographical environments, as well as for testing for production-level performance based on transactional or business outcomes.
- Real User Performance Monitoring – as integrated with Foglight's broader portfolio is designed to support operational requirements for application service performance across network, systems, database and middleware interdependencies, including service level management objectives. It can also provide insights into application usage and user priorities – which are becoming increasingly critical in optimizing cloud-related service options.
- Business Analysis Data Mart – provides BI-level support for analyzing user experience and application performance in the context of business outcomes.

EMA is pleased to see how Dell is combining critical insights into business outcomes and user behaviors with performance and application design. With these capabilities, EMA expects Foglight to emerge as one of the very few industry solutions capable of unifying Operations with both Development and Business constituencies.

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About Foglight User Experience Management

Foglight's User Experience Management (UEM) capabilities provide the multi-dimensional visibility required to address web application performance issues while ensuring a high-quality user experience. Foglight's powerful user experience monitoring will reduce both the number of external support calls and the resolution time for reported problems from the help desk or call center. Foglight captures every user interaction with an application to enable more effective collaboration among User Experience Management stakeholders with consistent reference points for establishing business priorities for improving the quality of user experience. This alerting on degrading application performance, identifying users experiencing common problems, replaying application interaction from the user perspective, and quick and effective cross-domain triage.

About Enterprise Management Associates, Inc.

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst firm that provides deep insight across the full spectrum of IT and data management technologies. EMA analysts leverage a unique combination of practical experience, insight into industry best practices, and in-depth knowledge of current and planned vendor solutions to help its clients achieve their goals. Learn more about EMA research, analysis, and consulting services for enterprise line of business users, IT professionals and IT vendors at www.enterprisemanagement.com or blogs.enterprisemanagement.com. You can also follow EMA on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

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Corporate Headquarters:

1995 North 57th Court, Suite 120
Boulder, CO 80301
Phone: +1 303.543.9500
Fax: +1 303.543.7687
www.enterprisemanagement.com

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