



# Igniting growth and innovation

Spark NZ gains end-to-end network  
visibility with IBM SevOne NPM

by Brian Promes

4-minute read

Spark is a word that connotes life, potential, energy and creativity. That's what Spark NZ, the largest telecom carrier in New Zealand, strives to bring to New Zealanders every day.

To increase its business agility and drive growth, Spark is actively pursuing digital transformation. This involves using digital technologies to improve the customer experience with stronger wireless offerings, new efficiencies in service delivery, and streamlined and automated operations.

In each of these key areas, network performance is a critical element. As Spark aims to continually deliver a superior customer experience, it must ensure reliable, high-quality, and cost-effective network services. Doing so amid major growth and change is a significant challenge. That's why Spark decided to use [IBM® SevOne Network Performance Management](#) software.

Spark consolidated  
its network  
performance  
management  
solutions from

5 to 1

by replacing existing tools with SevOne

SevOne provides  
end-to-end  
visibility for

> 400,000

objects in the Spark network

# Legacy NPM tools impeded change

As a company, Spark has experienced its share of transformational change over the years. The latest, its digital transformation initiative, is a drive to operate with more agility, efficiency and responsiveness in order to become more customer-focused.

As it pursued these goals, the Spark team quickly realized that it needed equally agile network performance management (NPM) capabilities to support the operational changes it was making.

What Spark had, however, was a patchwork of legacy NPM tools. With each system providing only partial coverage, it was difficult and time consuming for Spark's NetOps and IT teams to gather and analyze performance data, assess problems and come up with solutions, and then





take decisive action to resolve issues. Challenges included:

- **Incomplete data:** With the inconsistent and incomplete polling capabilities of its legacy systems, Spark's team had to manually piece together network performance data. This slowed event analysis and remediation and created risks of erroneous items being included in client reports.
- **Limited visibility:** Without unified, end-to-end network visibility, it was difficult for Spark's DevOps team to model and test the impact of moving to automated networking processes. This was slowing down key network automation projects.
- **Inability to scale:** the legacy NPM tools lacked the scalability to handle the more dynamic, digitally driven network operations the company was implementing. Spark needed a more comprehensive, flexible and scalable NPM solution to support its growth and evolving operations.

# SevOne's trial by fire

Spark's NetOps team set three key criteria for a new NPM solution:

- **More complete data collection:** Comprehensive, accurate and normalized coverage of all types of network, machine and user-experience data, including flows, logs, metrics and metadata—with the scalability and flexibility to handle future requirements.
- **Enhanced network visibility:** Real-time, end-to-end views of the company's entire network infrastructure and IT operations from a "single pane of glass"—all automated, with no manual stitching together of disparate datasets or reports required.
- **Improved customer reporting:** Accurate, timely and insightful performance reports to document SLA compliance and other performance metrics, and facilitate communication and collaboration that promotes greater customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The Spark project team conducted an extensive and rigorous evaluation of several industry-leading NPM solutions,





including IBM SevOne NPM . Each of the other solutions fell short for reasons that included insufficient data collection, overly complicated reporting and limited network visibility. In addition, none of those products offered the scalability and flexibility that Spark required.

The IBM SevOne NPM solution, however, checked all the boxes on the team's must-have list. It offered the most comprehensive data collection, complete end-to-end network visibility and intuitive reporting. And with superior flexibility and unlimited scalability, the IBM SevOne NPM solution could keep pace with Spark's changing business and NPM needs.

With IBM SevOne NPM winning the head-to-head comparison test, the Spark team decided to give it a trial by fire. That came in the form of proofs of concept (POCs) with some of Spark's most demanding and critical teams, including Tier 2 and Tier 3 network groups, as well as senior NetOps teams. Each of the POCs was very successful, with highly positive feedback and strong user acceptance across the board.

"These are tough reviewers who weren't big fans of some of the tools we trialed with them before," says Graham Prowse, DevOps Manager for Spark and the lead on this project. "When the glowing reviews for the SevOne solution came in from all the teams, we knew we had a winner."

# Results to Date

Spark's initial IBM SevOne NPM deployment centered in the company's core network, which covers its voice and data offerings. Today, the IBM SevOne NPM solution monitors over 385,000 objects in that core network, as well as more than 20,000 objects in Spark's Global Internet network. Additionally, the company is continuing to deploy IBM SevOne NPM for its Spark Digital business unit's Managed Data customers, where the solution will become the primary collection system driving both internal and customer-facing performance dashboards.

With comprehensive data collection, complete network visibility and powerful yet easy-to-use reporting functions, the IBM SevOne NPM solution is meeting and often exceeding the Spark team's expectations.

"In all our deployments so far, we haven't encountered a single device that couldn't be polled or a metric that couldn't be captured by the SevOne solution," adds Prowse. "Given the diverse and highly complex nature of our network environment, we found that really remarkable."





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**Graham Prowse**, DevOps Manager, Spark NZ

As for consolidation, Spark is on track to replace five legacy NPM tools with IBM SevOne NPM software. With some of those tools now swapped out, Spark has already reduced OpEx by eliminating software licensing, maintenance and other associated costs. The company has also reduced CapEx by not having to replace or upgrade appliances that the legacy NPM tools required.

The consolidation has also reduced the time staff members spend cobbling together data and reports from the various systems. Now, internal teams have detailed dashboards showing real-time and historical performance data, and corporate customers have instant access to dashboard and reports customized to meet their needs.

Based on the successes of its initial deployments, Spark has plans to expand its use of IBM SevOne NPM. One notable POC is already underway in Spark's mobile network—a strategic area for the company due to its growth potential—and other expansions are planned.



## About Spark NZ

Spark is New Zealand's largest telecommunications carrier, earning more than USD 3.5 billion in annual revenue. It provides fixed line, mobile telephony, internet, data and wireless network services to millions of individuals and thousands of businesses throughout New Zealand.

## Solution component

- IBM® SevOne Network Performance Management

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