



Overview

The need

Harald Biedermann, leader of the service platform team for ÖBB Business Competence Center, needed a way to consolidate the management and monitoring of a massive heterogeneous business services architecture.

The solution

The organization consolidated all technical events from the monitoring environment with IBM® Tivoli® Netcool® OMNIBus software and built service views using the Tivoli software's dashboarding capabilities.

The benefit

Consolidation onto the Tivoli Netcool OMNIBus software improved service visibility, which led to the service platform team reducing the number of critical service events by 90 percent.

Österreichische Bundesbahnen

*IBM Tivoli Netcool OMNIBus software provides
a single view of a heterogeneous systems environment*

Harald Biedermann and the service platform team he leads—all employed by the Österreichische Bundesbahnen (ÖBB) Business Competence Center, which is a subsidiary of Austrian Federal Railways—deliver 700 business services for the railway within an IT infrastructure that consists of nine data centers and approximately 4,300 servers and 2,500 databases.

Managing IT infrastructure visibility

Any IT infrastructure equal to the task of supporting a rail enterprise such as Austrian Federal Railways, which employs over 40,000 people and transports nearly half a billion passengers annually, is, by its nature, going to be as sophisticated as it is massive. It follows, then, that such an environment requires a robust service management architecture to optimize its value to business, IT and operational users.

IBM Tivoli Netcool OMNIBus software helps the Austrian Federal Railways service platform team determine the criticality of IT events and rapidly associate them with affected systems. “For the first time, we find the appropriate configuration item in our service tree from a single dashboard,” says Harald Biedermann, service platform team lead, Österreichische Bundesbahnen.



“We can much more rapidly see what applications and services are impacted when a problem occurs.”

— Harald Biedermann, service platform team lead,
Österreichische Bundesbahnen

“It’s critical for us to have centralized visibility into all the important events arising from our IT infrastructure, to consolidate that view to a single console so we can match events against our service trees,” says Biedermann. “Our existing service management architecture worked very well; however, it was built with products from different vendors, which meant one had to be very experienced to find out where to look to retrieve information about our business and IT services.”

The challenge was more acute given the range of individuals—business and IT users—needing such information access. Depending on a user’s role, that may involve access to documentation concerning technology-based services such as infrastructure monitoring, people-based services such as service level agreements, process-based services such as IT change management and information-based services such as service data reporting.

Biedermann recounts some major issues arising from the service management architecture’s complexity. “I couldn’t teach the people how to interact with the product. They’d have to use more than one system and always had to use more than one interface. The operations team didn’t ever know where to fill in the data they needed to maintain the service trees.

“This was a real big problem, because if a service tree is not built in the right manner, events—and we have nearly 30,000 events monthly—that come to the console and are moved forward to the impact management [system] can’t be matched against the service tree. We won’t know if a service or application is affected or not. We get a root-cause event, but we’re really blind to which service is affected.”

“I calculated the time savings to be two hours per month per individual. That efficiency gain adds up to an enormous amount of money.”

— Harald Biedermann, service platform team lead,
Österreichische Bundesbahnen

Deploying a consolidated dashboard

To consolidate, enrich and display all events reported from its heterogeneous service management architecture on a centralized dashboard in near real-time, Austrian Federal Railways deployed IBM Tivoli Netcool OMNIBus software, integrated with IBM SmartCloud® Monitoring software. “It has adaptors to integrate products from different vendors, which makes it very easy for us to put the events forward in our impact management platform,” says Biedermann. “Also, the dashboard is strategic for our IT environment, because it’s used by our managers, our operations staff, our service desk personnel and even our customers. Now it is so easy to build a view for the different people, for the different roles.”

Biedermann combined the Tivoli software’s dashboard with its consolidation capabilities to build and centralize event and service views. “One great advantage of Netcool OMNIBus is the ability to centralize that function. Over 110,000 monitors are installed on our various IT systems, and if IBM SmartCloud Monitoring detects a failure, it sends that event to a single Netcool OMNIBus console,” he explains. “Netcool then correlates and normalizes the event, and if it is critical, it’s forwarded to the service impact system and matched against the service tree, at which time a trouble ticket is generated and the service team notified.”

The Netcool OMNIBus and SmartCloud Monitoring systems are running in an IBM Power System E870 server environment, with enterprise storage provided by an IBM System Storage 8800 platform, connected to a fully virtualized IBM System Storage SAN Volume Controller appliance.

Solution Components

Hardware

- IBM Power System E870
- IBM System Storage
SAN Volume Controller
- IBM System Storage DS8800

Software

- IBM® Tivoli® Netcool® OMNibus
 - IBM SmartCloud® Monitoring
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Improving efficiency, realizing savings

In service management, visibility is control and time is money. With the newfound ability to view over 700 services on a single Tivoli Netcool OMNibus software console comes a greater understanding of the nature and criticality of events, a quicker resolution to any service issues and fewer demands on staff. “We can much more rapidly see what applications and services are impacted when a problem occurs. And because we can see everything, we can react immediately,” says Biedermann.

Reaction times have also improved, in part, because of the event enrichment capabilities of the Tivoli Netcool OMNibus software, which allow Biedermann and his team to classify approximately 90 percent of the 30,000 incidents reported monthly as insignificant, requiring no action. In turn, the savings associated with reducing the demand on operations staff resources resulted in a 30-day return on Austrian Federal Railways’ investment in the Tivoli software itself and in the required training.

“The key metric in determining return on investment is the time people consumed for configuration management, asset management and event management,” says Biedermann. “We have more than 100 people on our operations team. Before, they might have had to look in five different consoles to gather the information they needed. Now, they get an event and can view its impact on services from one dashboard. I calculated the time savings to be two hours per month per individual. That efficiency gain adds up to an enormous amount of money.”

For more information

To learn more about IBM Tivoli Netcool OMNIbus and IBM SmartCloud Monitoring software, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following websites:

ibm.com/software/products/ibmtivolinetcoolomnibus

ibm.com/software/products/ibmsmarmoni

ibm.com/systems/power/hardware/e870

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