

# An Executive Overview of End User Service Management

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*The Key to Optimizing the End User Computing Experience*

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## End User Service Management: The Key to Optimizing the End User Computing Experience

With all the recent attention focused on managing large-scale information systems from a business perspective, there is one area of corporate computing that has largely been left out of the information technology service management (ITSM) equation: the individual “end user.” Now there is a new discipline emerging in the realm of ITSM called “end user service management,” or EUSM. This discipline involves measuring the performance, usability and availability of key business applications and other computing resources from the perspective of the people who use those resources.

EUSM is very much in line with the Service Support discipline within the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) that is focused on the *user* of IT services. Considering that users are a key entry point to most business processes, the concepts of measuring and analyzing performance and reliability from an end user perspective are important steps in ITIL-based methods. The emerging EUSM tools contribute new performance data to the service desk, enabling the IT department to be more proactive in preventing or resolving end user computing problems, and driving the efficient and effective use of business applications. What’s more, large companies spend an enormous amount of money on end user applications; managing end user performance can help the organizations derive the full value from their investments.

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Now the tools exist to monitor and manage an end user’s total computing experience, from booting his PC to interacting with business applications and using network resources such as printers and virtual private networks (VPNs). And like ITSM, EUSM seeks to understand computing performance not merely from a technology perspective, but in terms of how well the computer and applications support a worker’s ability to do his job.

There are three primary business drivers that are leading companies to adopt end user service management:

1. Line of business executives want to increase worker productivity.
2. CIOs/IT executives want to be proactive in meeting their users’ needs.
3. CFOs/managing directors want proof that financial investments in IT are providing maximum value.

Jean-Pierre Garbani, vice president, Forrester Research, analyzes the IT management software market. According to his report “The IT End User Experience Monitoring Software Market” from June 2007, “The integration of the end user experience into the performance management solutions from large IT management software vendors means IT operations groups are now closer to widely adopting it, and the business market is warming up to having more information than just availability and response time. We see the two markets converging on the use of common technologies that produce results adapted to specific functions. This should lead to a hefty

growth rate in the next few years.”<sup>1</sup>

In his report Garbani describes tools he calls “passive-agent desktop-based products.” He writes: “These are a potentially very interesting family of solutions, as the technology makes them independent of the network protocol used. The salient feature of these products is that they also provide a wealth of information about user behavior and desktop configuration.”

### **Capturing, measuring and correlating a wealth of information**

This new breed of tools for EUSM goes beyond the collection of hardware and software configuration data points that desktop management tools collect. Rather, EUSM tools commonly capture the utilization, availability, usage and response time of applications (including enterprise, PC and Web applications) and PC and network resources, as well as user or systems errors. These parameters help define the end user computing experience.

For example, in the category of application utilization and availability, the tool would track all of the applications an end user launches on or via his PC. This includes the running time and usage time, as well as the resource usage (e.g., CPU cycles) of each application. The tool would track the availability of applications, including errors or crashes the user encounters, and what was happening at the time of the error or disruption. Application response time – how long it takes to complete a task -- is another critical measurement.

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These performance data points can all be measured objectively in terms of CPU utilization, bandwidth usage, the length of time it takes for the system to open an application or conduct a task, and so on. A software agent on the desktop collects the performance data and passes it off to a central database where it is merged with configuration data from other tools like DM.

The real power of an EUSM system is its ability to correlate performance and configuration data to business processes. Connecting the previously-hidden dots allows you to visualize current conditions as well as trends and to understand where you need to place your IT investment priorities to improve quality of service. For the first time, CIOs can get a much more accurate estimate on the cost and the expected return on investment of a technology decision before committing to it.

### **End user service management differs from desktop management**

You may be familiar with desktop management (DM) tools such as LANDesk Management Suite and Altiris Client Management Suite. DM products primarily are aimed at automating systems and security tasks in order to manage, update and protect your servers, desktops and mobile devices.

EUSM is distinct from -- yet complementary to -- DM. A key differentiator is the tool's point of view: systems-centric (i.e., what the technology needs) versus user-centric (i.e., what the worker needs and wants). DM's systems-centric view is focused on holding a technology component to pre-determined technical specifications. By contrast, EUSM's user-centric view looks beyond a device's or an application's technical specifications, and determines how well the usability and performance of that component meets the business needs and expectations (i.e., quality of service).

As an example, DM tools are very effective in maintaining your desktop and mobile configurations with up-to-date patches and drivers, which in turn help to deliver good operating conditions of these client devices. Consider what happens if a new security patch is installed, but it conflicts with a critical business application and run-time errors occur. The application crashes, giving the user a bad experience. To a desktop management system, the security patch is installed as required, so the situation is good. To an end user management system, the worker can't do his job because of the application error caused by the patch, so the situation requires attention.

Other high-level differences include the following:

A desktop management tool...	An end user systems management tool...
Uses an active agent on the desktop to continuously monitor conditions and configurations. The agent sends its data to a central console database, where policies dictate actions and trigger alerts.	Typically uses a passive agent on the desktop to gather performance and usage information. The agent periodically sends its data to a data warehouse, which also accepts data from the DM console, business applications and other sources to build a "business intelligence"-type of knowledgebase for analysis.
Reacts to the "black or white" data that it collects from each client device by kicking off scripts based on technical policies.	Provides <i>client service intelligence</i> (business intelligence for the end user environment) by enabling insight to the relationships between events and performance measurements.
Includes implementation tools that can address a configuration issue. For example, installing a critical operating system patch on all devices.	Includes decision support tools that help managers determine actions to take based on users' business conditions and needs. For example, understanding the "before" and "after" states of a software upgrade to determine if the upgrade improved efficiency or productivity.
Creates an inventory based on application executables on a given PC.	Determines the actual application usage to help you understand who is really using the software.
Creates/uses a configuration management database (CMDB), which records the configuration of the significant hardware and software components of the IT environment.	Creates/uses a performance management database (PMDB), which records the measurement of how well those significant hardware and software components perform in relation to predetermined goals.

To be sure, there is some overlap in what DM and EUSM tools do, but for the most part, they are very complementary. Where desktop management leaves off, end user service management takes over, and together they provide the capabilities and insight to control and cut operational costs, improve an organization's security and compliance posture, enhance end user productivity and support the business processes.

### **More ways to benefit from end user service management**

Once you intimately understand how employees use their PCs to interact with business applications, it's easy to see more opportunities to enhance your business decision making and improve end user computing. The CIO of a large consulting firm put it this way: "This information allows me to change the relationship I have with my internal customers. I can be proactive and solve their problems before they even know a problem exists."

Here are just a few ways your organization can benefit from the unique insight derived from EUSM:

- Reduce calls to the help desk and the cost of end user support.
- Set and negotiate realistic service level agreements.
- Understand the true usage and ranking of devices and applications.
- Monitor the performance of web applications.
- Conduct trend analysis for groups of users or applications.
- Understand the performance impact of infrastructure changes, workload growth, and application evolution.
- Manage the use of printers and external devices such as USB drives.

The discipline of end user service management is a logical and necessary requirement for today's complex end user computing environment. With business processes spread across the platforms of the PC, the data center servers and the Web, there is no other way to collect and detect the information that reveals what's really happening under the hood of enterprise applications. Without this knowledge, the secret to improving end user productivity will remain a mystery.

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Pierre Garbani with Thomas Mendel, Ph.D., Forrester Research, "The IT End User Experience Monitoring Software Market," June 8, 2007

## About Essential Solutions

**Essential Solutions Corporation** ([www.essential-iws.com](http://www.essential-iws.com)) specializes in helping decision makers evaluate, select, implement, and improve information solutions. Founded by hands-on practitioner Brian Musthaler and IT industry analyst Linda Musthaler, the firm offers a well-rounded perspective on how organizations can leverage information technology for competitive advantage and business success. The principals have extensive experience in the areas of enterprise and SMB applications, information systems operations, security and compliance. They write the weekly Technology Executive newsletter published by Network World magazine, offering their insights on a variety of network-related technologies, products and services.

## About Serden

**Serden** ([www.serden.com](http://www.serden.com)) is the pioneer and technology leader in the field of End-User based performance and quality of service measurement. InterAct ESTM is a solution that measures the User-Centric quality of service and provides realistic and timely information. InterAct ES™ is Client Service Intelligence. Serden is based in France, Spain, United States and Canada. The company's customers include National Grange Mutual, EDS, Rolls-Royce, PWC, Montreal Airport, Standard Life, i-BP Banques Populaires, Apec, AGPM, Saretec, MMA, Credit Mutuel-CIC, EDF, Unedic who already trust InterAct ES™ to measure their operational quality of service and enhance their IT management through the tool's decision-making functions.

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