



ConicIT: A Customer Success Story

Location: North America

Industry: Insurance

The Challenge

- ▶ Identify CICS performance anomalies before they impact users
- ▶ Set thresholds dynamically
- ▶ Receive useful alerts
- ▶ No definition of baseline behavior

The Solution: ConicIT®

- ▶ Fewer performance problems
- ▶ Longer mean time to failure
- ▶ Meaningful, timely alerts
- ▶ Automated collection of pertinent data
- ▶ IT staff free to work on other issues

A large North American insurance company was experiencing issues with CICS performance that affected batch work and severely impacted SLAs. On one occasion, an errant CICS application used excessive CPU resources, but it was hours before anyone was alerted.

Otherwise happy with their TMON suite for performance monitoring, IT staff assumed they would have to reset thresholds, then code something themselves to provide useful alerts.

They needed alerts well in advance of performance anomalies to be proactive – they needed to fix performance problems before users were affected. They were annoyed and distracted by false alerts, so they wanted a system that recognized the difference between real trouble and nuisance notifications.

In addition, IT needed a monitoring and alerting solution that would scale up to hundreds of CICS regions and paths.

*“With only static thresholds in TMON CICS, we received **too many false alerts**. We finally just turned off the alerts. Then we experienced a wayward task running hot for 24 hours without anyone knowing. We knew we needed **a solution with dynamic thresholds** but we didn’t have the statistical skills in house to code it ourselves. We knew this wasn’t just a TMON issue; any performance monitoring tool has the same limitations.”*

— Director, zSeries/iSeries Platform Services

The Solution

Realizing that they could not identify when their systems started performing abnormally—because they didn't really know what performance was normal—the IT staff at the insurance company turned to ConicIT. They found that ConicIT could determine normal baseline behavior for any given time of the day, day of the week, or month, or quarter. Then it could accurately identify problems and reliably issue useful alerts.

ConicIT is not a monitor. It relies on existing monitoring infrastructure to provide 1) the data used to draw and refine its picture of normal behavior, and 2) data about current performance that it then compares to the norm. With accurate comparisons and sound criteria, ConicIT produces genuinely meaningful alerts.

No maintenance tool should be a maintenance problem. ConicIT uses a self-teaching methodology to minimize maintenance and tuning activities. For a learning period of five to six weeks, ConicIT nightly 'scraped' system performance data. The resulting database allowed ConicIT to predict normal system behavior by time of day and day of the week.

The insurance company installed ConicIT on z/Linux. (It can run just as well on a separate Linux box.) After initial configuration, monitoring was completely automated. It continually learned about the mainframe system while providing analysis and alerts regarding current system behavior.

“ConicIT not only provides us dynamic thresholds, but it predicts how a specific task or CICS region should perform based on past performance.”

— Manager, zSeries System Optimization and Recovery

The Benefits

ConicIT lowered the number of performance problems that affected users, provided management with insight into current system behavior, and increased the speed with which performance problems were fixed by the IT experts.

Having managed the issues with CICS response times, CPU utilization, and errant tasks, IT now focused ConicIT on MVS started tasks because those are more indicative of overall workload.

IT is now the first to know about pending problems. Resolving problems costs less. The mean time between failures is longer, and the mean time to effect repairs is shorter. ConicIT means company IT can better ensure that SLAs (service-level agreements) are adhered to, at lower cost.

ConicIT takes full advantage of artificial intelligence and behavior analytics to provide dynamic, not static, analysis. Few such ground-breaking tools are available, so more and more companies are looking to ConicIT for this type of dynamic threshold setting and useful behavioral analysis.

“We’re now alerted when CICS or DB2 is running hot based on ConicIT knowing our systems, our environment. We immediately get the right group or person involved to fix the issue before it affects our SLAs. It minimizes the war rooms and task force meetings.”

For more information about ConicIT from SDS, please visit our website at www.sdsusa.com/mainframe-performance-optimization/conicit/.

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