

SWOT Assessment: Evolgen

Helping IT operations address change and configuration management challenges

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SUMMARY

Catalyst

Today's IT environment is complex and is becoming increasingly difficult to analyze and manage. Huge amounts of data are being generated, the rate of change is more frequent, and departmental silos can make it challenging to gain clear perspective on issues affecting service management.

The complexity of change and configuration in an increasingly dynamic and virtualized environment requires a cross-domain approach to change and configuration management that is optimized for performance, risk, and service assurance. Evolgen, an IT operations analytics vendor, is one of a small number of vendors that have recognized the need for a shift in thinking in terms of how change and configuration management is executed in highly dynamic, consumer-focused environments.

Key messages

- Evolgen differentiates by not just providing data, but by providing deep insight and understanding into the infrastructure and application layers and what may be affecting them.
- The collection of the environment information can be scheduled or on-demand.
- Evolgen can help validate that releases are successful and can be used to create a feedback loop to developers.
- Evolgen can help identify the root-cause of incidents and accelerate incident investigation.
- Evolgen can help detect inconsistencies and drift between environments.

Ovum view

Ovum believes that gaining actionable information from the wealth of data generated through change and configuration management activities can help IT work proactively, reduce disruptions to normal service, and help more effectively manage change. The insight that Evolgen can deliver to IT operations extends the appeal of the solution beyond solely change and configuration management. However, to obtain the maximum benefit from Evolgen, organizations may need to modify existing process and procedures, which the Evolgen technology supports.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENTERPRISES

Why consider Evolgen?

The ITIL change and configuration management processes define the steps needed to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of IT as a service. However, while these processes have made IT more reliable, efficient, and effective at managing risk, they have not done much to help the customers of IT exploit new disruptive technologies. In a cloud computing environment these ITIL processes, along with incident management and continual service improvement, appear to leave open-ended loops that require manual intervention to close. As the systems become more complex, the processes become more bureaucratic, and hence slower. The net result is that in a more dynamic environment the efficiency of these processes is diminished and downtime and the mean time to repair (MTTR) increases, which results in customers receiving a poorer service for longer than is considered acceptable.

Evolgen applies analytics to transform change and configuration management. The Evolgen approach is to collect low-level granular data and apply analytics to it. By using analytics tools, such as statistical algorithms, comparison engines, and configuration-impact knowledge bases, this data is turned into actionable information. This increased insight offers IT a greater level of visibility into the environment it is supporting. Being armed with this knowledge of not only the environment, but also what may be affecting normal operations, is invaluable, especially to support teams seeking technology to help them work more proactively.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

Faster and more informative incident investigations

Disruptions to the IT environment are often the result of failed changes and can lead to a spike in demand for support from functions such as the service desk. The process of investigating a resolution to such incidents can be inhibited by a lack of information and visibility into how, and where, the infrastructure has been impacted. Evolgen can help cut these investigation times through providing information on what changes have taken place over a specified time period, how these changes may have affected related CIs (configuration items), and if releases were successful.

Powerful analytics provide comprehensive insights

The amount of configuration and change data gathered can be exponential. The challenge is often in how to use the data in a way that would be meaningful in helping IT departments deliver greater levels of value. Evolgen's analytics engine can help in leveraging value from this wealth of data by providing information on critical changes made, what differences have been made between environment

snapshots, and potential environment inconsistencies. This information can be reported in a variety of ways, including a web-based visual presentation. The functionality to set specific alerts also exists, which is useful in tracking unauthorized changes, for example.

Weaknesses

Evolgen is targeted toward a specific audience

Evolgen's messaging is specifically aimed toward realizing the benefits of improved change and configuration management, yet the functions, activities, and roles that can be improved through the use of the solution are much broader. Evolgen recognizes that insights based on the generated data can benefit additional processes beyond change and configuration management, such as release management and incident management. Among its customers, it sees different scenarios regarding the use cases they wish to begin with (depending on an organization's pain points). Ovum believes Evolgen would benefit from better highlighting such use cases in its messaging and improving both its presence and recognition within the broader IT infrastructure and operations space.

Further integration with ITSM tools should be explored

While many ITSM solutions support change and configuration management, the granularity of information that Evolgen can provide on configuration items is an interesting differentiator. The proprietary set of analytic technologies used to analyze and leverage value from the information gathered will certainly have appeal beyond change and configuration management. Evolgen currently integrates with ServiceNow, with 70% of Evolgen's prospects being ServiceNow customers. Improving the solutions integration with a wider variety of ITSM solutions will benefit Evolgen.

Opportunities

Security analysis

A natural expansion for the Evolgen technology is to integrate the change and configuration management with other functions. A notable approach is the rise of SecurityOps, where the management of some aspect of security is performed by the operations team. The Evolgen approach lends itself to crossing this divide and enabling greater collaboration and allocation of duties between the different teams.

Mobile device access

The Evolgen presentation client, which presents the analysis of the environment to users, is currently accessed via a web browser. As the use of mobile devices within the enterprise continues to proliferate, there is an opportunity for Evolgen to expand the methods by which the presentation client can be accessed. Native access from mobile devices (such as iPads and smartphones) has the advantage of

providing users with a wealth of information on-demand, anytime, anywhere, via an intuitive user interface.

Threats

ITSM vendor solutions offering similar functionality as part of a broader suite

The ITSM solutions market is mature, with strong functional equivalence across many of the highly adopted tools. Vendors are constantly looking at ways in which they can differentiate their solutions. Introducing functionality that offers IT departments improved analytics and granular visibility into their supported environments could be an area which they look to improve upon, especially if solutions such as Evolven gain significant traction.

DATA SHEET

Key facts about the solution

Table 1: Data sheet

Product name	Evolven IT Operation Analytics	Product classification	IT operations analytics
Version number	4.3	Release date	April 2013
Industries covered	All major industries and sectors are covered	Geographies covered	North America, Europe, South America
Relevant company sizes	Large and medium enterprises	Platforms supported	Over 90 different platforms
Languages supported	English	Licensing options	Perpetual and subscription
Deployment options	On-premise and SaaS	Route(s) to market	Direct and resellers
URL	www.evolven.com	Company headquarters	New Jersey, US

Source: Ovum

APPENDIX

Methodology

Ovum SWOT Assessments are independent reviews carried out using Ovum's evaluation model for the relevant technology area, supported by conversations with vendors, users, and service providers of the solution concerned, and in-depth secondary research.

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