



Vignette and OPNET Introduce Advanced Support Services to Accelerate Web Content Delivery



"The OPNET Technologies/Vignette partnership has exceeded our expectations in providing our customers enhanced support by identifying the true root cause of complex issues much faster, and reducing the impact on their business."



*Global Support Management Team
Vignette*

Vignette is a global provider of Web experience solutions. The company offers a broad set of capabilities for improving online interactions with customers, prospects, employees, partners, citizens, patients and other key audiences. Their customer list includes some of the world's most successful organizations in the telecommunications, entertainment, new media and publishing, financial services, government, healthcare, technology, higher education, life sciences, manufacturing, retail and travel industries worldwide.

Because organizations are now more dependent than ever on the Web as a strategic asset to drive revenue and control costs, maximum availability and responsiveness are required from content delivery systems. Flexibility is required to publish and manage content from a broad range of sources rapidly, at all times. Vignette products are therefore designed to be easily augmented, customized, and integrated with other systems using open standards such as XML, J2EE, and Web services. Systems that interface with

Vignette's products -- including a network of databases, web servers, application servers, and custom code -- come from different development teams and vendors, who use different technologies.

In order to ensure high customer satisfaction, it follows naturally that Vignette's Global Support team needs visibility not only across its own product technology stack, but across the application infrastructure that its stack depends on. But this is not traditionally how support services are structured in the content management industry. For practical reasons, vendors tend to focus on their own products and leave end-to-end problem solving to their clients. A reported problem with online content delivery could be due to any one of a number of issues related to the client's particular environment -- often outside of the vendor's control. Until each possibility is eliminated, the client and the vendor's support team are in "fire fighting mode," and under tremendous pressure given the business ramification of delays. Under stress, clients often make costly decisions to upgrade infrastructure or make other technology changes based on inadequate information without ever fixing the problem.

Vignette's forward-thinking Global Support team set out to change the game. They imagined a new way of interacting with their clients based on visibility beyond the boundaries of their own product. After evaluating numerous performance management products and vendors, Vignette selected OPNET Panorama. The selection criteria included comprehensive system and application instrumentation for real-time monitoring, ease and speed of set up, rapid root cause diagnostic workflows

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covering both production and test environments, and lightweight architecture that doesn't interfere with content delivery.

In preparation for launching the new support service, Vignette's support team did extensive training and internal testing with OPNET's Panorama solution. Templates and triage methodologies were developed to respond to a wide range of problem incidents. Depending on the root cause, the appropriate specialist from Vignette or the client's organization would be brought in to provide a fix. In many cases, proactive early detection of issues within individual application components was found to prevent content delivery failures visible to end users.

Vignette then introduced OPNET to several of its large clients for pilots. If successful, OPNET could provide a common language for discussing performance between client support teams and Vignette. OPNET completed implementations with several Vignette clients that had experienced serious performance issues. The results were impressive. Representative feedback included:

"I was able to find the root cause of a JVM issue within 60 minutes that normally takes 1 engineer and 1 support person 2 days." – Client

"It would have taken us months to find the issue that you just identified in a couple hours." – Client

"During a 30 day pilot we systematically resolved multiple high-impact issues plaguing the customer's environment, which was very complex, and included many customizations. Once rectified, the customer reported 'tremendous' performance improvements."

– Vignette Support Team

"Panorama reduced 80% of our low hanging fruit issues within 30 days of installation. Our team is spending more time on proactive IT projects that impact the business vs. "fire-fighting". –Client

In summary, once armed with the right technology from Vignette and OPNET, Vignette's clients are able to maximize the performance of their online content. Previously difficult questions that would take days, weeks, or months to answer by highly "silo'd" support teams are now either avoided or resolved immediately.

- Are J2EE components performing at acceptable levels?
- Is authorization/authentication performing at acceptable levels?
- Is the problem within Vignette's code, another vendor's code, custom code or extension?
- Which specific java method is performing poorly?
- Are Vignette caches configured for optimal performance?
- Are virtual servers allocated with enough resources?
- Is a CPU or database spike correlated with a particular URL?
- Which component correlates to root cause (database, application server, ldap, operating system, network, etc)?

Vignette's support has achieved substantial return on investment from their new internal processes, as well. Measured improvements were statistically significant in the following areas:

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Reduced iterations and overall time spent resolving problem incidents
- Increased support team headcount costs avoided