

August, 2008

OPNET Has a Clear Vision of the Future - Adds Capabilities for Addressing All the Top Application Performance Concerns

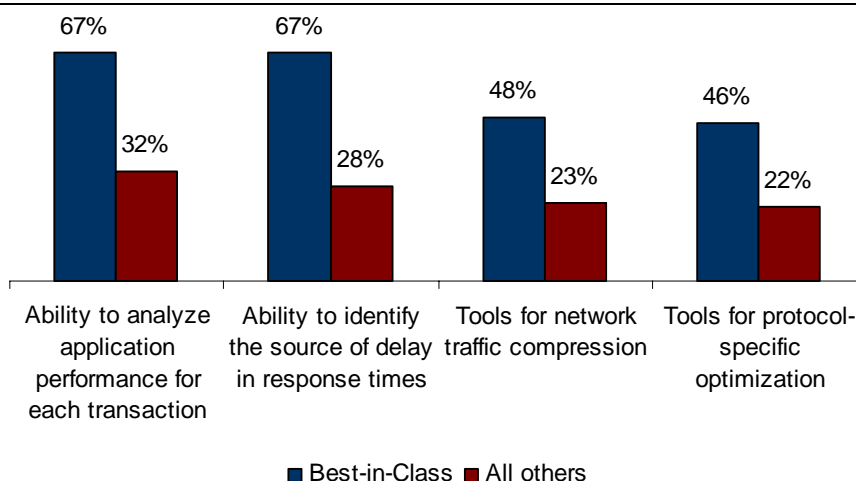
Between August 5 and 7, OPNET Technologies announced the addition of two major application performance management capabilities to their offerings. These capabilities include end-to-end visibility into application performance for organizations using WAN Optimization solutions and the ability to capture and analyze NetFlow data.

This Aberdeen Market Alert examines the impact that these announcements will have on customers and prospects of OPNET Technologies, as well as the relevance of these announcements based on Aberdeen's research findings.

Business Context

Aberdeen's June benchmark study on [Application Performance Management](#), revealed that 72% of organizations experiencing network related application performance issues report that these issues are caused by Wide Area Networks (WAN) bottlenecks. The report also revealed that Best-in-Class organizations are five-times more likely to report improvements in the quality of end-user experience as compared to Laggards, which is a result of these organizations being more likely to deploy solutions for both network and application visibility and optimization of application delivery over the WAN (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Best-in-Class Approach Includes Capabilities for Visibility and Acceleration



Source: Aberdeen Group, June 2008

Market Alert

Aberdeen's Market Alerts provide timely analysis of current market events drawing upon independent fact-based research to lend insight into the topics that impact organizations

Definition of Best-in-Class

For the [Application Performance Management](#) study, Aberdeen used three performance criteria to distinguish Best-in-Class from Industry Average, and Laggard organizations. These performance indicators are:

- ✓ Average improvement in response times for business critical applications
- ✓ Average improvement in application availability
- ✓ Success rate in resolving issues with application performance

Not only are Best-in-Class organizations deploying application visibility solutions coupled with solutions for application acceleration, but these organizations are also leveraging solutions that allow them to have full visibility even with the presence of WAN acceleration appliances on their networks. It should be noted that techniques for optimizing application delivery over the WAN, such as traffic compression, protocol specific optimization, data reduction, etc. are resulting in activities that could diminish an organizations' ability to clearly view how applications are really performing and, therefore, could deteriorate an organizations' ability to troubleshoot and repair performance issues. OPNET's upgrade of its ACE Analyst software includes functionality that will allow end-user organizations using Riverbed, Cisco, or Juniper WAN optimization appliances to maintain end-to-end visibility into application performance while deploying WAN acceleration solutions.

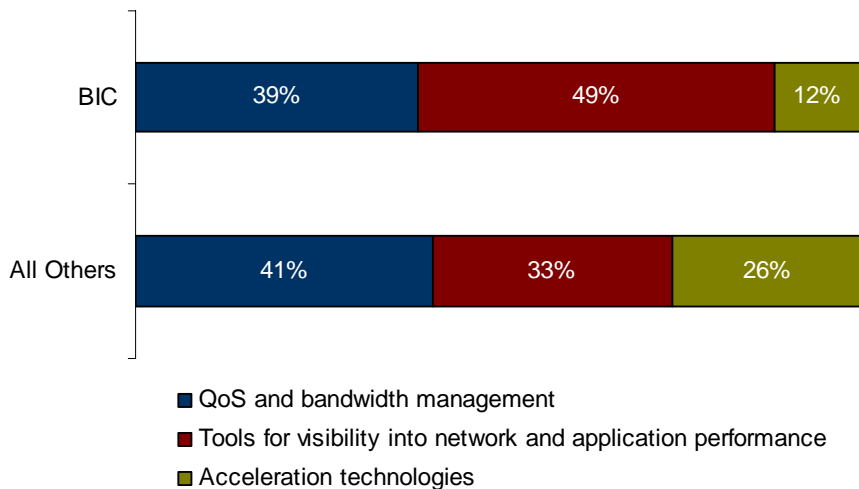
"The key issue with network performance is how to get a good handle on what types of traffic you are experiencing when you are seeing higher throughput rates, and educating users on flow of traffic through the network."

~ IT Director, Utilities Company

Challenges of Achieving End-to-End Visibility

Aberdeen's Benchmark Report, *The Roadmap to the Next Generation Branch Office Networks*, revealed that when compared to all other companies, Best-in-Class organizations were 48% more likely to report that tools for visibility into network and application performance are more important in relation to network and application performance initiatives than tools for bandwidth management or application acceleration (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Technology Enablers - The Highest Importance



Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2008

One of the key capabilities that Best-in-Class organizations have developed is the ability to capture and analyze NetFlow data from Cisco's network devices. Aberdeen's December 2007 Benchmark study, *The Real Value of Network Visibility*, found that 83% of organizations that have capabilities for analyzing packet flow data are using NetFlow (as compared to sFlow, jFlow, etc.). Figure 3 shows that the deployment of capabilities for capturing and analyzing NetFlow data allows end-user organizations to resolve

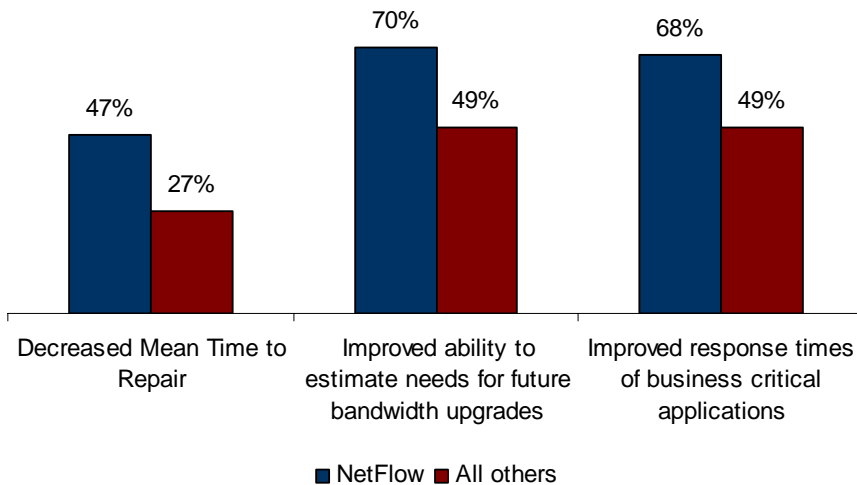
Definition of Best-in-Class

For *The Roadmap to the Next Generation Branch Office Networks* study, Aberdeen used three performance criteria to distinguish Best-in-Class from Industry Average, and Laggard organizations. These performance indicators are:

- ✓ Change in the performance of business critical applications at the branch
- ✓ Application performance at the branch as compared to central network location
- ✓ Number of end-user complaints due to network performance at the branch as compared to central network location

performance issues in a timely manner, to make better decisions about network upgrade requirements, and to be more proactive when managing application performance.

Figure 3: Impact of NetFlow Capabilities on Managing Application Performance



Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2008

As a result, these organizations are 39% more likely to improve response times for business critical applications as compared to their peers that do not have this capability. In addition to OPNET, Fluke Networks, Mazu Networks, NetQoS, and NetScout are providing similar capabilities.

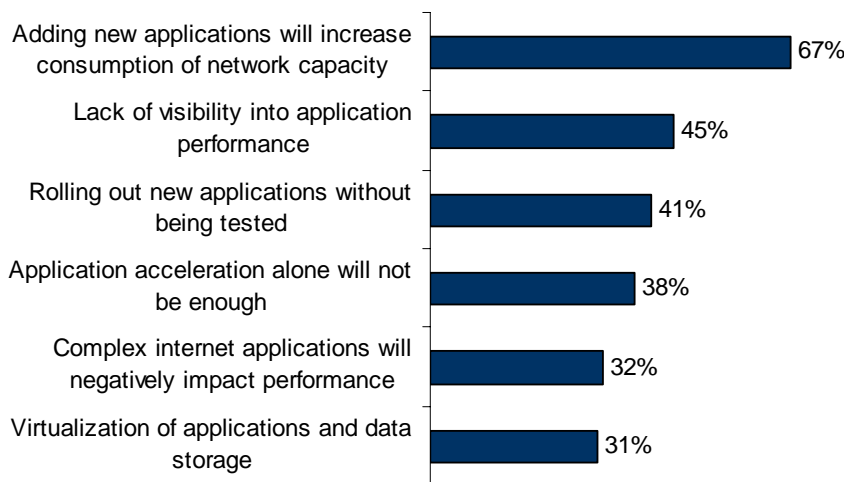
OPNET's addition of a new software module for NetFlow data collection and analysis will further strengthen the company's capabilities for visibility into network and application performance. More importantly, this capability will enable OPNET's customers and prospects to address their top challenge for application performance management - the inability to identify issues before end-users are impacted.

It Matters Now, But It Will Matter Even More in the Future

Not only will OPNET's new capabilities enable end-user organizations to address the challenges they are currently facing, but new functionalities will also enable the company's customers and prospects to prepare themselves for the future. Aberdeen's [Application Performance Management](#) report shows that the top application performance management concerns for companies in the next 12 months can be summarized as the need to make better decisions about requirements for network upgrades, to improve visibility into application performance while deploying WAN acceleration solutions, and to improve overall visibility into network and application performance (Figure 4). OPNET's capabilities for analyzing NetFlow data

will allow organizations to gain a better understanding of how bandwidth is currently being used and, therefore, make educated decisions about future upgrades. With 38% of organizations reporting that deploying WAN acceleration solutions without full visibility into application performance is one of their top concerns, this new version of ACE Analyst will allow users of Riverbed, Cisco, and Juniper to address that and increase the effectiveness of their WAN acceleration deployments.

Figure 4: Top Concerns for Application Performance Management in the Next 12 Months



Source: Aberdeen Group, June 2008

With the addition of these new capabilities, OPNET further strengthens its position in managing the production side of lifecycle of application performance. The company's ACE product family allows end-users to predict, monitor, analyze, and optimize application performance. The inclusion of NetFlow and WAN optimization functionalities into their product offerings shows that OPNET aims not only to help customers improve their current performance, but also to enable them to effectively deal with challenges of application performance in the future.

For more information on this or other research topics, please visit www.aberdeen.com.

“With respect to network performance and troubleshooting, I would recommend the selection of one of the tools that provides visibility of traffic by protocol and by well known application. The best tool is one that will graphically indicate transaction times divided into network time, platform (server) time, and application time. If such a tool is adopted by support teams responsible for these different areas, incident and problem related downtime can be reduced. Such tools are, of course, expensive. A business case needs to be built.”

~ Network Manager,
Professional Services

Related Research	
Application Performance Management: The Lifecycle Approach Brings IT and Business Together ; June 2008 The Roadmap to the Next Generation Branch Office Networks ; February 2008	The Real Value of Network Visibility ; December 2007 OPNET Moves Closer to Complete Network Visibility ; November 2007
Author: Bojan Simic, Research Analyst, Network Management (bojan.simic@aberdeen.com)	

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