



# PTC Availability Gets the Green Light



Peter Bull and Dave Swinnock of Canterbury CC

Being able to see our infrastructure's performance measured against our own thresholds has enabled us to be proactive in dealing with potential problems. We are also able to react swiftly and decisively to failures. Having a view of our infrastructure, from Routers through to Citrix Servers, helps us to diagnose root cause of failure by knowing what other components are affected at the same time.

*Peter Bull, Business Services Manager, Canterbury City Council*

Canterbury City Council take their Business and IT support very seriously. They have developed a system called 'Tommy', whereby one member of staff is effectively the incident manager for a period, and it is Tommy's responsibility to monitor the health of their systems, and pass on problems to the relevant support section. To support the incident manager they needed a system that could 'WATCH' their infrastructure and applications, from network visibility through to overloading of Citrix Servers, from database accessibility to Web site functionality. Not for them the easily ignored e-mails, that might or might not elicit a response and fix from the right person. They wanted an 'In Your Face' system that Tommy would have on his or her desktop, and just in case Tommy was away from his or her desk, could be repeated on the Support Office wall for all to see. Another prickly problem was the production of figures showing the availability, frequency of failure, down time and all the other statistics required for monitoring and improving Service Levels. ITIL specifies such statistics as % Availability, Mean Time Between Failures, Mean Time to Diagnose, Mean Time to Repair, Mean Time Between System Incidents and others, which can be difficult to gather, and, if reliant on an IT technician to enter manually, are often inaccurate and not borne out by the end users experience. PTC Availability has provided the Real Time notification of problems, plus the historic statistics required for an ITIL implementation.



## SYNOPSIS

### The Requirement:

To provide Canterbury City Council ICT department with an effective performance, escalation and management application focused initially on infrastructure and applications. To produce accurate performance figures automatically.

### The Resolution:

Implementation of a system that monitors the performance of the key servers and services, and provides immediate visible evidence of system problems. Reports of systems availability over weeks or months were also a prerequisite.

### The Software:

#### PTC Availability

Monitors and Measures Service Availability and Status

### The Benefits:

- Improved service availability.
- Increased failure prevention.
- Centralised View.
- Improved working environment
- High quality of service delivered to citizens of Canterbury.

For more information on **PTC Availability** or this Case Study, visit [www.ptc.co.uk](http://www.ptc.co.uk) or contact us: [software@ptc.co.uk](mailto:software@ptc.co.uk)

## Knowledge of Your Systems is Vital to Enable Effective Service Improvements

### Leading from the Top

Angela Waite is Head of ICT at Canterbury City Council. Prior to becoming President of Socitm in April 2005, Angela had been chair of Socitm's Performance Management Group since December 2002. Her interest in performance management reflects responsibilities in her day job. Angela has worked in local government since 1988, with Rochester City Council through LG reorganisation to Medway Unitary Council, where she helped create and manage the ICT team, developed SLAs and performance measures using the Socitm KPIs. In line with Canterbury CC's desire to build procedures and methods for improving service, Lita Guy, the Computer Services Manager, has recently passed (with flying colours) the gruelling and testing ISEB Managers's Certificate in IT Service Management, the bedrock of the ITIL methodology. PTC Availability has provided a cost effective method for providing the Performance Management required by Canterbury C.C.

### Continuing a Long Term Commitment to Customer Service

Canterbury City Council ICT was first awarded the Charter Mark in 2004, and it has subsequently been renewed in 2006. Charter Mark is the Government's national standard for customer service excellence and is a registered certification mark accredited by the Office for Public Services Reform in the Cabinet Office. What more cost effective way to continue improving service than increasing systems availability and reducing time to diagnose and repair?



### More Servers, More Problems

As the number of servers increase (there are approximately 90 in the three racks at Canterbury pictured here), the need to keep an eye on them can become more and more difficult. Oh for the days of the mainframe, when everything was in one place. But, reality is reality, and PTC Availability can cope with the ever increasing complexity of the modern IT infrastructure.



### Peter Bull, Canterbury City Council's Business Services Manager, Explains Why Canterbury City Council Chose PTC's Availability Software

Canterbury has been dedicated to Systems and Procedures for a long time. We see following systems such as ITIL as the most effective way of improving our service standards, thus providing better value for money to our users, both council tax payers and internal departments. To follow this path we needed to satisfy the requirement that we know the availability of our core systems, how many times they fail, how long the failures last and so on. Without this knowledge we could not move forward to the ultimate goal of improving service, reducing down time and proving the value for money that we were providing.

We wanted a system that would give high visibility to the status of our systems, not just send yet more anonymous e-mails to get lost in someone's inbox.

Although the system had to be easy to install and set up, we soon discovered that, to be effective, it had to be able to be tuned and configured to do some of the more complex tasks that were necessary for Canterbury to get a true view of the infrastructure status. Software that sent out an alert on every peak or trough of performance was always going to lose the confidence of the technical staff, when they were being informed of things that they could do nothing about, and cured themselves within seconds anyway.

PTC Availability has the ability to go from the simplest monitoring (e.g. cpu, memory, ping) to the most complex of metric such as Citrix Statistics or Database Response times averaged over a period to avoid peaks and false alarms.

The time required to customise PTC Availability for our environment was surprisingly short.

We can now depend on it to provide useful, believable alarms, and it is an indispensable tool for our support team in their battle to provide a premier service to our users.

*"We wanted a system that would give high visibility to the status of our systems, not just send yet more anonymous e-mails to get lost in someone's inbox," said Peter Bull, Business Services Manager at Canterbury City Council "and continual false alarms swiftly bring a monitoring system into disrepute".*