

Understanding Performance Reporting Automation Milestones

Mapping and Paving the Way to Performance Reporting Success

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Every successful journey begins with a clearly mapped route. The mission of performance reporting automation fits that mold as well. As Technology Managers strive to meet the requests of internal and external customers has resulted in an equally increasing desire for performance reporting automation. There are basic milestones innate to performance reporting automation essential to keep your expedition on the road to success.

Technology Managers today continuously need to investigate system performance and be able to respond to questions such as “What is going on with the system?” “Have you made the decision to historically graph your performance for future reference?”

There will always be a point in which monetary resources will be requested. How do you justify your request? You have already made the decision to proactively chart your performance, but now you have to coordinate the delivery of your charts. Most often it is requested that you show two different views of the same data collection period with two different perspectives.

The Vice President is attracted to a printed report that contains the colorful “big picture” and averages out the month. Your IT Manager wants to review the performance remotely, in a more detailed manner, on a weekly basis. Doesn't seem so bad? How about all the time it takes to create data extractions, load your data into a graphing tool, open 10 different graphs, adjust the averaging for a clear monthly view, copy and paste the graphs into a Word Processing program, and print the report. Then start all over again but adjust the averaging to be less extensive for when you want a weekly view.

This process doubles the number of data files and consequently doubles the amount of work. Not to mention the extra space on your drives that is being sucked up by performance extractions and all the graphs you have to create. Who has time or space?

The solution is automation. Automation stands today as the wave of the performance reporting future. Automation expedites the reports you need with the same hands-on look and feel of previous labor-intensive reports.

It's time to sit down and map out your road to reporting success. The first thing to consider is WHO will be looking at the reports. Then you must determine exactly what the audience wants to get out of the reports? Do they want to know how the CPU is doing on an average, or do they want to know which department is sponging the resources? Do they want to know how many times your users experience high response times? How often will you be reporting on performance? What time frame will most benefit your performance-reporting program? How do you want to deliver the reporting product? Via charts, hardcopies, e-mail, a web page?

Once you determine your destination, it is simply a matter of designing the way to get from point A to B. There are truly only a few milestones along your course. The heart of your reporting is data collection. Investigate the various parameters surrounding your data collection to ensure that you are truly gathering the data of most benefit to you. Don't sell yourself short. Most often we discover the information we opted not to gather is the information that would solve the mystery currently in hand, and proper archiving habits will eliminate unnecessary space hogs on the disks along with maintaining data for historical analysis.

Once you have established the best course of action for data collection and archiving, the next milestone is to determine exactly what you want to communicate. Do you want to show monthly or weekly charts? What type of data do you want to show? For a complete system review at a minimum, charts pertaining to the CPU, disks and memory should be selected. However, it would be wise to gather a list of questions from those requesting the charts then adjust the automated presentations through a method of trial and error.

The next milestone in the automation process is creating charts. A comprehensive graphing package that supports automation should be chosen. The graphing package should load the data, load a user-defined list of graphs, modify chart options and export the charts as objects such as a .jpg graphic.

Once you have automated chart graphics creation, you must determine how you want to deliver the charts. Does the reader prefer printed report? Will you be e-mailing the report or will you be creating a web page that displays your performance charts?

At Lund Performance Solutions (LUND) our consulting division is spearheading a campaign to address each of these milestones specifically and then to automate the performance reporting for offering as a product and service through Lund Consulting Services (LCS). The improved, automated reporting process is expected to double the percentage of time spent on analysis.

By decreasing the administrative time spent handling the technical report request, LUND has directly decreased the overall time to produce the report and increased the time available for technical analysis. Turn-around time for many Lund Consulting Services performance analysis reports will decrease.

For the customer, the wave of the future means more rapid reporting. Any CFO, CTO, MIS Director or System Administrator/Manager will have the collateral he/she needs to make informed, crucial decisions regarding the specific environment.

By utilizing the automation features innate to the LUND performance tool, Performance Gallery Gold, Lund Consulting Services has developed a strategy to link reporting software, Performance Gallery Gold, and the web. LUND can quickly analyze and serve-up a technically sound, visually pleasing, informative report.

The value of the, performance analysis reports greatly increases the credibility of every related environment management decision. LUND empowers every participating System Manager to leverage the data from today and yesterday to make better business decisions for tomorrow.

Visit our booth and let us show you how our consulting division would present your system performance reporting data to assist you at the crossroads of your IT decision-making and to manage significant hurdles facing your environment. Come to us, and we can get you there!