



Automated event notification and resolution: a core component of IT service availability

The Business Need

In high pressure IT environments, undetected and unresolved events are costly to an enterprise. Often the leading causes include human error, manual escalation processes, inadequate event notification technology and false alerts sent to an already overloaded IT staff. The results are serious including slow times to resolve, inaccurate staff dispatch, outages and the risk of breaching a service level agreement. Many IT organizations respond reactively using inadequate event systems, manual processes and inaccurate data.

The AlarmPoint Approach to Event Notification and Resolution

AlarmPoint Systems views event notification and resolution as inter-related and dependent. Notification methods serve to automate the event resolution processes as an ultimate means to improving IT service availability across the network and the enterprise. AlarmPoint is an enabler of the event resolution process – but it doesn't need to play the starring role. It's very comfortable being the quiet, but powerful enabler running behind the scenes of BMC Remedy, Performance Manager or

Service Impact Manager; IBM Tivoli or Netcool, and HP OpenView Operations, Network Node Manager or Service Desk. Integration is not limited to systems management, but can certainly include other business-critical applications that generate alerts. Centralizing notification through AlarmPoint ensures events are automated through easily scalable, repeatable processes.

IT Priority: Increase Operational Efficiency Through Automation

The 2006 IT survey by IDC notes "IT service management is based on implementing well-defined processes that address specific IT service functions while optimizing the use of people, tools, and technology to reduce the total cost of delivering services to the business."

Improving IT service availability is often a key metric that corporate leaders focus on to align IT to the business processes they serve. Too often process improvement conjures up images of costly studies, questionable outcomes, and lengthy consulting engagements. However, the 2006 CIO Insight survey found 65% of CIO respondents cited "improving business processes" as a top business

"Improvement of management processes should not only address how notification bridges the gap between business critical IT services and assigned staff, but the need for increasing productivity and efficiency by avoiding event overload, and expanding notifications to a new audience of business process partners and customers with event subscriptions."

– DEB CURTIS
GARTNER GROUP

THE ROLE OF ALARMPOINT

IN THE IT INFRASTRUCTURE LIBRARY (ITIL)

Incident, event and support management

AlarmPoint allows enterprises to create repeatable, structured processes for incident and service management notifications and their ultimate resolution. AlarmPoint helps resolve IT events faster by ensuring events and incidents are properly assigned and resolution activities are coordinated.

Service impact and business service management

AlarmPoint is the bridge between service-impacting events, the people who are responsible for resolving the issues, and/or the people affected by the service impact. AlarmPoint enables the resolution process and can be used to inform all effected users of the time-to-fix, completed fix and other appropriate information. In short, AlarmPoint ties IT events to actual business users and provides an audit-able trail regarding everyone that was involved in the resolution of an event.

Change and configuration

Emergency change requests are particularly well-served through AlarmPoint's ability to target the notification, require acknowledgment, and if necessary, escalate a response to complete the request. AlarmPoint proactively assists both IT and business-driven change processes by allowing personnel to subscribe to authorization alerts and alerts when "change is approved/declined" on a service that impacts their business area (e.g., alert me if a change is approved during the week on the a counting system).

Continuity

AlarmPoint offers an advanced messaging module designed to allow personnel to build, test and initiate scenarios that may affect an organization's ability to manage communications during a crisis. AlarmPoint's capabilities ensure that specified personnel are dispatched and respond immediately.





Putting AlarmPoint Productivity to Work

Progressive IT organizations are realizing the value of automating the event notification and resolution process as a critical way to deliver IT service availability. With AlarmPoint operating in IT operations, the risk of costly downtime is significantly reduced.

Expect important improvements in services

- Tangible reduction in dispatch costs
- Increased accuracy of personnel assignment and dispatch
- Decreased mean time-to-fix service outages
- Reduce event re-work
- Reduce system monitoring labor costs
- Proactive notification and resolution before faults and service degradation occur
- Significantly increased service levels

goal, with reducing costs and improving productivity as strong secondary goals. Automated event notification and resolution is a core component of the quest to maximize IT service availability – in fact, improving the sophistication and automation capabilities of event notification in managing critical events can be the low-hanging fruit of event resolution and maintaining service availability.

AlarmPoint Enterprise automates dispatch with centralized interactive event notification, eliminates human error in the process, manages event and personnel assignment, and maintains service availability for complex, business-critical applications.

4 Pillars of Event Resolution

- Ability to manage a mobile workforce
- Ability to intelligently manage and handle events
- Abstract users from complexities of notification technologies
- Automate the resolution process

Mobile Workforce Management

Event resolution is a complicated, error-prone, largely manual process. AlarmPoint's particular focus – finding and engaging the appropriate person in the resolution process – can be plagued with data issues. Outdated, stale contact information is the most common issue and can be easily managed through the use of AlarmPoint Enterprise's self-service contact and device updating capabilities. Powerful calendaring and group assignment eliminates the

potential for gaps in staff coverage, or the administrative burdens of tracking people, time zones, vacations, and roles.

Intelligently Manage and Handle Events

As organizations are dependent on an increasing number of IT assets and critical business systems, the burden on IT staff grows and the volume of system events increases. Because Systems Management is the central hub of enterprise-critical applications, capturing events from those applications into a single repository such as AlarmPoint Enterprise allows IT management to efficiently deal with service exceptions before the problems become costly. AlarmPoint Enterprise receives the event, enriches it with contextual, meaningful information, and matches it to the personnel responsible for ensuring the incident is quickly cured, thereby reducing personnel call-out costs and errors. IT staff can provide better service with less time.

- Assign incidents without direct human observation
- Enable lights-out incident dispatch from any “monitoring” system
- Remove human error, inaccurate call-outs and manual escalation from the event resolution process
- Enhance a person's effectiveness with better information at the time of the incident
- Remove unintelligent data by suppressing and filtering as well as enriching events with meaningful system information

Advanced event management in

AlarmPoint Enterprise provides scheduled filtering, suppression and enrichment, and event transformation based on the recipient.

AlarmPoint Simplifies Notification Complexity

IT systems typically send email alerts that overload people and contribute little value to handling events. Without an intelligent system, many organizations are forced to send “group” emails to all members of a group, hoping someone will accept responsibility. When business-impacting events must be resolved because business services are about to be impacted, AlarmPoint earns its value by removing “send and hope” from a process and ensuring the right person is contacted at the right time on the right device to resolve the event.

- Use any wireless text provider including SMS, paging, two-way paging, instant messenger and other channels
- Guarantee information delivery using localized voice on wired and wireless telephones
- Enable a meaningful call to action, collect responses and enable the resolution process
- Build and publish the audit trail to the users of the system, creating accountability and responsibility in the process
- AlarmPoint supports all voice or wireless communications channels

MESSAGE AUDIENCE	TARGETED MESSAGE TYPES
IT staff	Enable mobile IT staff to quickly understand the event, take ownership and resolve, remotely
Service owners	Receive relevant service availability messaging according to their responsibility and interests
Impacted people	Receive event notification for system/application users
Executives	Limit updates to critical business availability risk

Automate the Resolution Process

AlarmPoint provides IT management with the capability to automate the responsibility chain per event, ensuring that the appropriate personnel take ownership of events. Once found, the event owner can take action using their chosen device. With AlarmPoint, critical events are alive and escalating until they are assigned and cured.

Who is Responsible?

One of AlarmPoint’s key contributions to event resolution is its people-focused notification and intelligent, but unrelenting ability to search device-to-device – with delay between devices set by the user – for the right personnel appropriate to the event or incident.

Personalized, Proactive Service Alerts

AlarmPoint Enterprise provides a variety of stakeholders with pertinent, personalized alert information according to their needs & requests. Within AlarmPoint Enterprise, users simply “**subscribe**” or get “**assigned**” to events. This ultimate flexibility allows IT management to define who needs to know in the event resolution process, including the following five types of notification usually identified:

- Responsibility for resolution
- Known ability/subject matter expertise
- Impacted service users
- Process owners/line of business responsibility
- Required per regulatory rules

This flexibility recognizes that system events or incidents are different, and the people involved or related to those events change according to the context of the event. Event messaging should also recognize those differences.

Dynamic Groups and Messaging

With AlarmPoint Enterprise, administrators can assign unlimited attributes per person (user) and create dynamic groups at the moment an event takes place – notifying people based on their skills, location, certifications, and experience levels or identifying resources with a known ability to resolve an issue or cure a problem. This flexibility directly affects administrators' ability to move away from scheduling people, reduce dispatch efforts and speed resolution.

Distributed, Enterprise-Class System Architecture

Built 100% in Java, AlarmPoint Enterprise uses standard application program interfaces (APIs) to improve event handling; a customizable web user interface for improving self-service, reporting and device handling; and architecture that allows distributed, global deployment ensuring high availability.

AlarmPoint Enterprise easily integrates with enterprise systems management applications and runs on Unix, Windows, Linux and other platforms, plus supports Oracle and Microsoft SQL databases. Robust data integrations utilize LDAP, AD, SSO, CMDB, PeopleSoft, .XLS Load, Synchronization and other custom integrations, to further enable the definition of user roles and permissions.

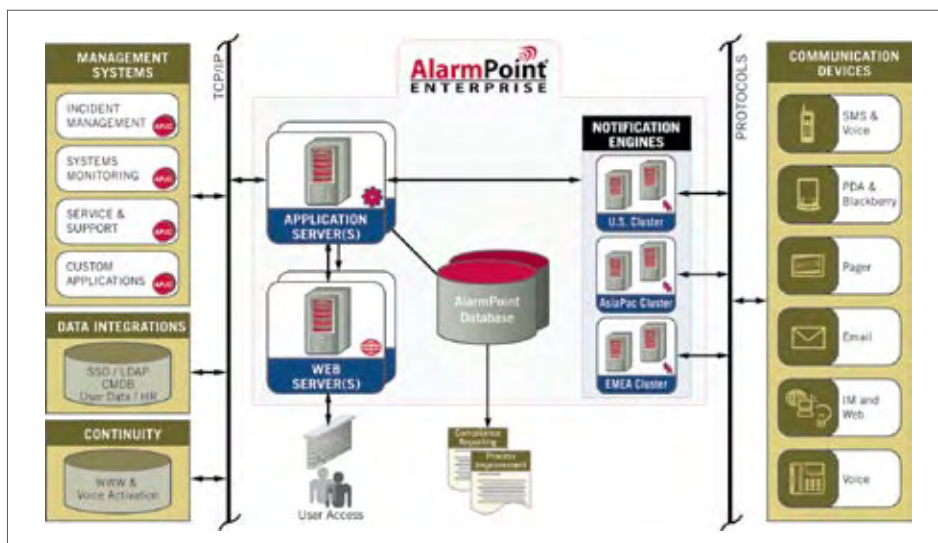


AlarmPoint Improves the Big Picture

Problems and process limitations in event notification escalate up the IT value chain to affect greater dependencies, including business-critical systems, people and resources.

- Impact to resolve or cure an event/comply with a regulation
- Impact to systems availability
- Cost of system downtime
- Potential for SLA breach

However, expanding the traditional role of notification to resolving events with AlarmPoint Enterprise delivers real financial return.



Distributed, enterprise-class system architecture

AlarmPoint Addresses the Event Resolution Needs for a Variety of Stakeholders in IT

IT management can be confident that AlarmPoint enables improvement in event notification and resolution processes and addresses the needs of stakeholders throughout the data center.

FOCUS AREA	ISSUES AND QUESTIONS
IT Operations Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can my IT service personnel solve business-critical events before service levels degrade? • Can staffing levels be reduced if operators aren't watching consoles? • Is there a way to notify the right person to resolve events without spamming everyone unnecessarily? • My administrators complain that vacations, changing schedules, phones and other contact devices, and roles are a nightmare to keep updated. Accuracy of personnel dispatch is a real problem. • Can I verify that our event resolver(s) received the notification? • Some of our events are informational-only while others require taking ownership – can we send both 1-way and 2-way communications?
Network Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can improving notification reduce the cost of an outage? • How can we allocate personnel or group work based on severity, incident type, asset type, or location?
Security Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I speed notifications of intrusions or alarm on problems to avoid unauthorized access?
Service/Help Desk Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can my team focus on resolving system events before angry service users start calling? • Is there a way to provide service alerts to self-identified groups of impacted users? • Can I get an audit trail of who was involved in resolving a ticket or incident? • What if we're not ticketing all incidents?
Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can I rely on the correct person automatically being notified when a problem occurs? • The volume of events is increasing. We're putting out fires, but risk missing critical problems.
Batch Job Schedulers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a way to eliminate reliance on operators' tribal knowledge or cumbersome job books to notify resolvers or subject matter experts? • Can the event owner take action remotely to avoid a slowdown or unscheduled outage? • Will our subject matter experts in the Berlin and Tokyo data centers receive their communications in German and Japanese?



About the Next-Generation AlarmPoint Platform

AlarmPoint is an enterprise-wide notification and event resolution platform that centralizes all system events through easily scalable, repeatable processes. The AlarmPoint product suite is built to automate event resolution by managing the needs of today's mobile workforce – roles, skills, location, language, schedule, contact details, groups and more -- with self-service personalization, event assignment and subscription for any and all users. Designed to filter, suppress and enrich important events, route those events to the right person on any communication device and give the person the ability to solve, escalate or enlist others to resolve, AlarmPoint bridges the gap between business-critical IT services and relevant human resources.

AlarmPoint® Systems
Enabling enterprise event notification & resolution

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