

Ixia Introduces Hawkeye for Proactive SLA and User Experience Monitoring

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Infrastructure testing and visibility solutions provider Ixia introduced Hawkeye for proactive service-level agreement (SLA) and user experience monitoring. Hawkeye generates and analyzes synthetic network and application traffic to model how applications will perform on the network. Hawkeye can provide pre-deployment validation of application performance and allow IT operations to proactively assess production application performance even when there is no actual traffic to monitor and analyze.

Synthetic Traffic Monitoring for Protecting End-User Experience

Ixia Hawkeye is a proactive SLA and user experience monitoring solution that generates and analyzes synthetic network and application traffic to assess how applications and services will perform on the network. It is ideal for monitoring the performance of critical applications at regular intervals, regardless of whether those applications are currently generating traffic on the network.

Hawkeye is based on IxChariot, one of Ixia's infrastructure testing products. However, it has been enhanced for deployment on production networks, where it can model how applications will behave and how users will experience them. Hawkeye is ideal for proactively monitoring application performance at times when the application isn't active on the network or in situations where IT operations is otherwise unable to capture production traffic for monitoring. For instance, the IT organization can configure Hawkeye to perform overnight SLA monitoring for applications. If it detects a problem, Hawkeye can send an alert to the network management system so that network operations can correct the issue before users start using the application in the morning.

Hawkeye can emulate traffic for voice, unified communications, webcasts, and other rich media applications and analyze how current network conditions will affect overall quality of the media application. This capability allows network operations to identify network problems before they affect production application traffic.

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Hawkeye is an agent-based platform. Ixia offers software-only agents for installation on a variety of endpoints and hosts. The company also offers a Hawkeye XR hardware agent, which can monitor hundreds of hosts within a data center from a single appliance for operational efficiency.

With agents on either end of a synthetic transaction, Hawkeye can provide end-to-end, hop-by-hop visibility and analysis of application SLAs and user experience. In environments where IT operations is unable to deploy an agent (e.g., a SaaS provider's data center), Hawkeye supports asymmetric monitoring, with the ability to perform more than a dozen one-sided tests, such as tests of application response times, from an endpoint agent.

Hawkeye stores metadata on the SLA and user experience monitoring it performs, allowing IT operations to analyze trends over the course of years and perform change impact analysis.

EMA Perspective

The days of network managers focusing exclusively on the network layer without regard for how applications are performing on the network are over. Network managers today need to think about how the network contributes to overall service quality and end-user experience. In fact, EMA research has found that 59% of network management teams believe end-user experience is becoming more important to them.¹

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Given the growing importance of end-user experience, network managers need tools that can help them measure it. Many application-aware network performance management (NPM) products excel at analyzing application performance in the context of network performance. However, these tools usually rely on passive monitoring of production traffic.

Production traffic is not always available for passive monitoring. For instance, an enterprise might not have the sufficient number of taps in place to mirror traffic to a monitoring tool. In the case of the cloud, particularly with SaaS-based applications, the infrastructure team often lacks any options for mirroring traffic to a monitoring tool. Synthetic traffic monitoring is an important technique for evaluating end-user experience without relying on passive monitoring of production traffic. It is used by a large number of application performance management vendors and a growing number of NPM vendors.

A synthetic traffic monitoring solution can fill the gap by providing visibility into end-user experience. Furthermore, such a tool can proactively monitor the network during off-hours to uncover any emerging network conditions that could impact end-user experience during peak usage.

Ixia Hawkeye is a new synthetic traffic monitoring tool based on proven technology from Ixia's testing product portfolio. It complements Ixia's IxVision product portfolio of network taps, network monitoring switches, and other products for passive network monitoring. IT organizations that have identified a need for such a solution should evaluate Hawkeye to determine if it meets their requirements.

¹ EMA, "[Managing Networks in the Age of Cloud, SDN, and Big Data: Network Management Megatrends 2014](#)," April 2014.

About EMA

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