

Tech Tips and Blogs 2017

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Distribution Notes: This document may be freely distributed to all interested audiences to help APM Administrators and Users. However, no modifications may be made to this work.

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Section 1: Introduction

Since 2011, I have been posting Blogs and Tech Tips in the APM/AXA/ASM Community. In 2017, I focused more on creating Blogs than Tech Tips. A special focus this year was a series of posts on how to build a Vibrant Community for APM/AXA, and ASM users. Now you can read them in one place! Minimum proofing was done. Links may grow old.

Comments and suggestions for future topics are always welcomed. You may send directly to hallett.german@ca.com

Section 2: Tech Tips and Regular Blogs

[Both parts are included for completeness.]

2.1 TIM/MTP Administration Responsibilities: Part 1 – Model Shift (2016)

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/message/241897636>

Introduction

It has been two years since the TIM Administration model last changed. This new series discusses the changing responsibilities for APM administrators since the transition.

Since there are new readers to these Tech Tips (welcome!), it is best to review where we have been and are now.

Three Phases of APM TIM Administration Responsibilities

The paradigm of TIM and MTP Administration has gone through three distinct phases:

1) TIM as an Appliance (CEM 1-4.x) and MTP as an appliance (1-10.5).

What happened:

- The hardware, operating system, and TIM software were provided to the customer.
- The customer would open a support case to deal with security, operating system, and third-party concerns.
- The system was not to be modified unless given the okay by Support.

- Customer did not have to plan for TIM sizing but simply determine how many TIM appliances were needed.

2) TIM was no longer an appliance -- aka "TimSoft". (APM 9.0-9.5)

What happened:

- The operating system and TIM software was supplied to customers
- Customers had to plan spend time determining [TIM sizing](#).
- The customer would open a support case to deal with security, operating system, and third-party concerns.
- The compatibility guide specified a list of hardware choices. The hardware market changed at a faster pace than the certification of TIM servers.
- The system was not to be modified unless given the okay by Support.

3) TIM as software only (APM 9.6 onward) /MTP as software only (VMTP 10.6 onward)

- This was documented in [APM 9.6 New Unofficial Rules](#)

The documentation noted the transition as the following:

[TIM installation is now available as software](#). Because the TIM is no longer a "software appliance", it is easier for you to maintain and upgrade the software.

TIM installation is now available as software that can be installed on any hardware that complies with the security policies of your organization. You can hence maintain and control the underlying operating system according to your IT policies

[The VMTP April 2016 release notes](#) talk about the product change only and little on the corresponding administration model change.

This is a new, non-appliance product that provides a similar kind of traffic monitoring to CA Multi-Port Monitor (CA MTP). It runs on a user-managed CentOS 6 system, running on third-party supplied hardware.

What happened:

- Only the TIM or MTP software only was provided
- Customers are responsible for providing the Linux OS and necessary license.
- Customers had the freedom to install the third-party and security updates on their TIMs provided it did not interfere with/slow down TIM performance.
- There should be less of a need to open Support cases because customers were responsible for operating system, security, and third-party software/hardware.
- But other customers had to deal with for the first time obtaining Linux resources and becoming Linux administrators.
- Customers provided their own hardware. For MTP, [the hardware choices are specified](#) such as the TIM second phase.
- Customers are responsible for providing the Linux OS and necessary license.
- Customers had to ensure that their server met the necessary software pre-requisites:

TIM: <https://docops.ca.com/ca-apm/10-3/en/installing/apm-installation-and-upgrade/install-and-configure-tim-for-ca-cem>

VMTP: <https://docops.ca.com/ca-virtual-multi-port-monitor/en/installing/software-specifications>

Next time we will discuss the impact of the "software-only TIM" administration model.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What TIM administration model worked best for your site?
2. What are the tradeoffs for your site in TIM administrator responsibilities
3. What other topics would you like me to cover?

2.2 TIM/MTP Administration Responsibilities: Part 2 – Implications

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/message/241954221>

Introduction

In the Part 1 written last July, I began talking about the transition of the TIM and MTP from a hardware/software package including the OS to a software model only.

Along the way, the administration roles and responsibilities changed as well. This time, we discuss the implications of this evolution.

(FYI: Why the gap in writing between the two parts? See <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2016/12/18/2016-why-i-stopped-writing-apm-blogs-and-then-started-again-part-1>.)

New Roles and Responsibilities

Let's begin on what is covered on TIM Administration roles and responsibilities. The essence of the new role model can be found in <https://docops.ca.com/ca-apm/10/en/installing/apm-installation-and-upgrade/install-and-configure-tim-for-cem>.) It states the following:

TIM installation is now available as software that can be installed on any hardware that complies with the security policies of your organization. You can hence maintain and control the underlying operating system according to your IT policies.

Note that this was something that was requested by many customers.

There does not appear to be similar text in the 10.6 VMTP Release Notes or even in the later 11.0 Installing section of the VMTP documentation:

10.6: <https://docops.ca.com/ca-virtual-multi-port-monitor/10-6/en/release-notes>

11.0: <https://docops.ca.com/ca-virtual-multi-port-monitor/11-0/en/installing>

In part 1, I noted some of the impacts of this change for customers:

- Having the freedom to install the third-party and security updates on their TIMs provided it did not interfere with or slow down TIM performance. This was the main reason customers wanted the change.
- Budgeting for hardware and a Linux license/support. Some also had to find or hire Linux administrators to oversee the TIM operations.

- Spending a little extra time to deal with TIM sizing and meeting operating system and application requirements rather than to "plop in a TIM." But the TIM Planning and Installation documentation, if reviewed should be of great assistance:

TIM Capacity Planning: <https://docops.ca.com/ca-apm/10-5/en/installing/apm-sizing-and-performance-guide/ca-cem-capacity-planning>

TIM Pre-Requisites: <https://docops.ca.com/ca-apm/10/en/installing/apm-installation-and-upgrade/install-and-configure-tim-for-cem>

- There should be less of a need to open Support cases because customers were responsible for operating system, security, and third-party software/hardware.

Overlapping Support?

Looking at the questions and concerns that arise in support cases and this Community, there are some areas where Customer System Administration overlaps with TIM operations.

These include but are not limited to

- Operating System/Application package issues

- Although the operating system pre-requisites are specified, there is sometimes a package missing or installing recent package release impacts TIM installation:
- VMTP Package Pre-reqs: <https://docops.ca.com/ca-virtual-multi-port-monitor/11-0/en/installing/software-specifications>),
- TIM Package Pre-reqs: (<https://docops.ca.com/ca-apm/10/en/installing/apm-installation-and-upgrade/install-and-configure-tim-for-cem#InstallandConfigureTIMforCEM-VerifyPrerequisites>)
- A variation of this is asking if installing release *x* of package *y* impacts TIM.

- Security questions and issues

- Security vulnerability impact on TIM software components. (As mentioned above, installing security software is a customer responsibility.)
- Hardening a TIM affects TIM's operations. For more see <https://www.ca.com/us/services-support/ca-support/ca-support-online/knowledge-base-articles.tec1292346.html>.
- Or installing security software can block TIM port communications. This can also be due to selinux (firewall) or iptables settings.
- Issues with Apache (configuration, SSL certificates) affect the TIM System menu showing up. See <https://communities.ca.com/thread/241771221> as a typical example.

If any of these issues occur, feel free to open a case and we will assist you in resolving the issue. Also note that Support and other groups spend a good deal of time adding to our documentation and knowledge base in these areas providing pointers and workarounds/resolutions whenever possible.

Questions of Discussion

1. What changes did your customer site make to successfully administer TIM after the role and responsibilities change?
2. Have I covered the major overlap areas? If not, what else would you add?
3. What are some of the things that you do to keep your TIM OS/applications happy and secure?

2.3 Thoughts on Training While on the Run

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/01/08/thoughts-on-training-while-on-the-run>

As I am snowbound for a couple days, it is the perfect time to create a blog or two.]

Introduction

Each application monitoring solution goes through traditionally a [maturity life-cycle](#). It begins as a brand spanking new product with all the associated charms. This may include lack of documentation and limited functionality. As it matures, becomes fully featured, stabilized, and scalable. A victim of its success, customers find new limitations of functionality and scale. In time, the existing architecture and functionality of the product is retired. Or it is replaced by a major redesign in a subsequent release.

But this life-cycle has sped up due to the 24 by 7 nature of the digital economy and the ever-changing list of operating systems, devices, application/transport/security protocols, etc.

[As Alice in Wonderland said, it is the ever constant struggle of going twice as fast just to stay in place.](#)

As a result, there is a dramatic increase in the number of times that a product is new, replaced, or redesigned. This is accompanied by an always shrinking amount of time to learn it. So what does one do to keep their product knowledge current?

The Ongoing Training Struggle

Given such a culture, this blog hopes to begin a dialog on what those in the Community are doing to keep up. Some things that come to mind are the following:

- * [Bite the Bullet](#). Scheduling dedicated partial or full days to learn. Some resort to using their weekends for this role.
- * [Taking shortcuts](#) -- Reading technical communities like this, watching videos, or reading overview documents.
- * [Quickly understand key functionality and audiences](#). What is this solution supposed to monitor and not monitor? What out of the box and custom alerting, monitoring, reporting, and metric displays are available?
- * [Review the solution architecture](#). Determine the key application components, their related functions, and workflows.
- * [Practice install, upgrades, and migrations of the software](#) to learn the various gotchas.
- * [Once having an installation environment, learn what a "steady state" of healthy system looks like](#). Otherwise, you will have no idea what to look for when issues occur.

* Focus on:

- Key monitoring and supportability metrics.
- Log names, their functions and levels, and what are normal and unexpected error messages.
- Proactive administration tasks to keep all healthy.

Your Turn

Please respond with the challenge you face in finding training time and once found, your training approach with new or redesigned software. I hope that you take this opportunity to weigh in.

2.4 Everything I Learned about Product Management and Customer Service is from Japanese Dramas/Movies

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/01/08/everything-i-learned-about-product-management-and-customer-service-was-from-japanese-dramasmovies>

Introduction

For some time, I have appreciated how the Japanese culture in their films has made quality customer support the centerpiece of their movies. This includes

- [Jiro Dreams of Sushi](#) (Sushi Chef)
- [The Great Passage](#) (Creating a Dictionary.)
- [A Stitch of Life](#) (Dressmaking)
- [Departures](#) (Mortician)

Doramas & Customer Service

But I am pleased that this has also carried over to [doramas or Japanese dramas](#). Here some of the key takeaways.

1. Make your Mission be a Part of Each Day

In [Aquarium Girl](#), at the start of each workday, those working at the aquarium get together for an all-employee meeting and end by reciting the "business" mission which is strongly customer focused.

What a great reinforcement and wonderful thing to do!

2. Provide a service or product that customers truly want and **NOT** what you think they want.

This is a reoccurring theme which causes some growing pains for protagonists.

[Chef: Mitsuboshi no Kyushoku](#) has the chef undergo a painful learning journey to understand how to make her new clients (elementary school students) happy with their lunches. First, she starts with what she was successful with in the past -- three star french cooking. But that is visibly rejected by her new charges. Afterwards, she starts learning about meeting the strict government requirements as well as researching the perfect meal. At one point, she pulls off making a meal that satisfies parents and their children -- not an easy task. But patience and persistence leads to eventual success. (An ongoing theme.)

In [Rich Man, Poor Woman](#), the lead develops a product that no one uses. Only afterwards, interviewing their customers (elderly) do they develop an innovative and useful system.

3. Understand and surpass customer expectations.

I like how the protagonists take great pains to understand their customer's past and current intentions. This sometimes takes a leap of faith based on the data gathered. One successful, they have to do the

same thing in the following weeks. But what a wonderful thing to see customer expectations exceeded. Some examples are:

- [Itsutsu Boshi Tourist](#) spends a lot of time asking questions and learning about their customers before creating the perfect customized tour of Kyoto.
- [The Knife and the Sword](#) and [Gu Ra Me](#) deal with creating a meal that must also pass a political message.
- [Pretty Proofreader](#) deals with a proofreader(!!!) trying to verify facts in a manuscript and also determine the author's intentions. Even if successful, the proofreader stays anonymous in the book credits.

So the next time you watch a movie, show, or read a book, there may be an underlying customer service lesson in it! Please share with this community.

2.5 Why I stopped writing APM Blogs and then Started Again: Part 1

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2016/12/18/2016-why-i-stopped-writing-apm-blogs-and-then-started-again-part-1>

Introduction

The first half of this year I was writing at a fast pace:

- 14 Blogs
- 7 Tech Tips (One a month as I have done since 2011).

Then I went silent for five months until now.

This was unnoticed apparently since there were no comments or emails to me asking why.

So what happened?



In July, I was nominated to take a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt course at a CA campus. This was the first year that they allowed Support Engineers to attend.

From Wikipedia -- [Lean Six Sigma](#) "is a methodology that relies on a collaborative team effort to improve performance by systematically removing waste."

To obtain the Green Belt, I had to

- Attend all five days of the INTENSE class
- Take and pass an in-class exam
- And complete a Lean Six Sigma Project in 6 months (By January 31 2016) including getting the participation of an executive sponsor.
- Still do my day job and keep my wits about me.

I will save for my next blog about the project itself. I made a decision early on to go "all in" which meant long hours on nights and weekends.

It also meant giving up things temporarily that I love doing like publishing APM blogs and Tech Tips.

So until the project was completed, I stopped writing articles in my favorite Community. Happily, the project got completed (in 5 months with an option to go on for one more month.) So now that I have all this free time , I will resume writing again.

And there is a lot to write about with all of the changes and opportunities with APM. I hope that you "watch this space" and read them when published.

Thank you for all of the support and kind words throughout the years.

Happy Holidays and may 2017 fulfill all your wildest dreams!!!

2.6 Why I stopped writing APM Blogs and then Started Again: Part 2

Introduction

[2016: Why I stopped writing APM Blogs and then Started Again: Part 1](#) -- For those that want to catch up

I did not plan to write this second part six months later. But I am glad this happened since I can add some fresh perspective.

In part 1, I described working on a Lean Six Sigma project. but not the details of the project itself, That is described below at a high-level. Some other steps were left out for brevity. Part 3 will be on the project outcomes.

Investing in Knowledge

To keep your APM environment running smoothly, you, the APM administrator and user, need access to a knowledge base that is kept current and has solutions/next steps/workarounds to your issues. An ideal knowledge base also provides best practices on how to optimize and take full advantage of the APM solution. All this will help resolve a situation quicker. And the knowledge base must be easy to search and quickly retrieve relevant results.

Based on cases, conversations with internal experts, and other knowledge sources, Support Engineers have been actively creating typically 30-60 new APM/AXA/ASM knowledge documents each month These gets published quickly after a solution is found. Some of these are focused

on [install/upgrade](#) effort. I post these new knowledge document links in this Community each month and now each week.

My Lean Six Sigma project was focusing getting the experts, Sustaining Engineering, to provide inputs to create new and updated knowledge documents as part of a formal process. A pilot would assess a possible process. Support and Engineering would decide after six months of tracking hits on these knowledge docs if this will be implemented as an official process.

Educating and Evangelizing

This is not something that you can turn on something like this in one day. Before a pilot took place for a month, the following needed to take place:

- Show the value of creating knowledge to APM Sustaining Engineer Management. They embraced this idea because they understood this meant more informed customers which can then stabilize, optimize, and maintain their environments (and I am grateful that still do very quite vocally.) They also suggested the participating Engineers for the pilot. This effort is a good partnership between our two teams with giving constant feedback, and making corresponding improvements.
- Conduct a survey to key APM non-support staff on how they search for knowledge and what areas they may be able to contribute knowledge document inputs.
- Create a wiki page explaining the pilot.
- Create, give and record training. This also included showing the value and the process during the pilot.
- Create spreadsheets to monitor pilot.
- Create a FAQ based on training on questions raised.

How did it go? And what happened after the pilot? That is for next time

2.7 Why I stopped writing APM Blogs and Started Writing Again Part 3

[This was a part of a self-imposed blog challenge to write as many blogs as I could in one week.]

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/09/18/personal-blog-challenge-why-i-stopped-writing-apm-blogs-and-started-writing-again-part-3>

Introduction

Like many people, I save a bulging "blog topic inventory list." My list has grown so much, that I am challenging myself to write as many blogs as I can this week.

So for those that came late to the story, please feel free to read:

<https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2016/12/18/2016-why-i-stopped-writing-apm-blogs-and-then-started-again-part-1> -- Part 1

<https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/06/21/2017-why-i-stopped-writing-apm-blogs-and-then-started-again-part-2> -- Part 2

How did it turn out?

In the previous blogs, I talked about the Lean Six Sigma Green Belt project that I led to spur Sustaining Engineering active participation in creating knowledge documents. So what the result?

* Sustaining Engineer, Product Management, SWAT, Development, and Professional Services have all provided content that were used in creating knowledge documents. This has become the rule rather than the exception.

* The Non-Support Knowledge Documents from the above groups continue to be heavily accessed each month by APM customers.

* Sustaining Engineering has provided information to create four new knowledge documents on average this month including on

- common issues they are seeing
- fixes added to APM hot fixes
- possible workarounds
- best practices for installs/upgrade, configuration settings, and optimal cluster performance
- previously undocumented features

Thirty-three new knowledge documents have been created in over eight months with a combined total of 655 hits that same timeframe. These documents also had an average of 24 hits per month. My thanks for Alfred Wong, Ramesh Palla, Haroon Ahmed, and their wonderful staff for their invaluable contributions and support of this project.

Next Steps

Sustaining has started to update existing knowledge documents. A lot more could be done in that area. Other APM groups are welcomed to get more involved this effort as well. My team is working with Diana Parks and her education staff to provide inputs to create helpful videos in various subject areas. The effort to provide timely and quality knowledge document never ends. Support looks forward to continue making the knowledge base grow to provide the right information when you need it.

2.8 Streamlining Your APM Installation/Upgrade/Migration Experience

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/06/19/streamlining-your-apm-installationupgrademigration-experience>

Introduction

The goal of any install/upgrade regardless of the software used should be a smooth experience from start to finish. It should not matter if the work takes place on a weekday or a weekend. This process should include clear messages on what is happening, a solid next step should any problems occur, and the capability of a complete backup and transparent restoration of the pre-installation implementation environment.

Install/Upgrade/Migration Streamline Focus Project

To help APM continue to make great strides in this crucial area, I am focusing for six months on various tasks to improve the APM installation/upgrade/migration process.

This includes but is not limited to

- * Having Support and Sustaining Engineers create or provide input for knowledge documents in this area. Then measure the number of accesses of these documents.
- * Work with various APM Development Teams to provide input on improvements to the install/upgrade software steps such as the APM Database area.
- * Create an APM/MTP Cookbook with step by step on what to do for installs/upgrades. This was completed and is in the process of being incorporated into the official APM documentation.
- * Actively partnering with Technical Documentation staff to revise the official documentation as an ongoing task. For example, I talked previously about the new [APM Install/Upgrade Checklists](#) that is part now of APM 10.5.2. Also track number of accesses for the checklists and other new documentation links,
- * Track the number of support cases before and after this effort to understand the impact of the above improvements.

Your Turn

I expect this to continue past the six months. So, I would like to know your suggestions on how this effort should proceed.

I value your opinion and hope to hear from you soon on other things that we should be doing in this area.

2.9 PCM and the Little Team that Could!

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/07/11/pcm-the-little-team-that-could>

Introduction.

[Note: This was essentially written in August 2016 and has been patiently waiting the right time to publish!]

In 2016, I ran into a situation that I don't recall covering in any Project Management course. A little more on that later.

A Brief History (The Opportunity)

In 2014, Cary Andrews had been fielding many queries from his team on APM Product Compatibility. He came to a realization that while the existing compatibility guide was adequate, a real-time database was needed that would be fast, scalable, and mobile-friendly. Joerg Mertin quickly built a web-based prototype. (The first one was created in 2013.) and multiple teams were formed to plan for a more acceptable and robust public-facing solution. These teams covered user interface, data modeling, and many more topics. A good deal of useful research was done and a comprehensive set of requirements gathered.

Let's return to 2016, Due to reorgs and other factors, this effort lost its sponsor and key team members. Most of the team left and went on with their lives. The project was effectively shut down.

The Unusual Situation

Except it wasn't. Four determined people would not say quit. And that is when this story starts.

So what was done, knowing there was is no official project and you want to make progress?

- 1) **Keep the dream alive.** The team” never saw the project as dead, only in hiatus. We knew it would come back to live at a later date
- 2) **Keep the focus on the end-user.** We all believed in the tremendous value that would offer to customers, CA Technologies staff, and partners.
- 3) **Never stop seeing yourself as a team.** We kept meeting periodically. In turn, this allowed us to continue evangelizing the need for this requirement, keep communicating to potential stakeholders/users, and make incremental changes to the prototype,
- 4) **We knew just because the project ended, the requirement was still there and growing.** So it needed to be addressed in a proactive fashion and soon.
- 5) **We kept working to overcome any circumstance.** Perseverance and Persistence!

Accomplishment!

The result of the effort of Cary Andrews (original project founder/leader), Joerg Mertin (developer and technical interface), Phil Mullis (interface to Product Management and giver of good advice), Carey Feldstein (Quality documentation and keeping us honest) and myself (a little project management, evangelizing, etc.) is <http://pcm.ca.com> -- the first on-line APM/ADA/AXA product compatibility database!

Please freely use this link. Feel free to drop a line to Team - Ops - PCM <Team-Ops-PCM@ca.com> with your PCM comments and concerns. We want this to be a useful tool addressing your APM/AXA/ASM/ADA compatibility concerns.

2.10 Learning a New Application Monitoring Solution Architecture

[This was part of a Blog challenge to write as many blogs as I could in one week.]

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/09/20/blog-challenge-2-learning-a-new-application-monitoring-solution-architecture>

Introduction

I am trying to write as many blogs as I can this week to reduce my "to-do blog topic inventory."

Today, I cover learning a new solution architecture.

It is a followup to my 2014 blog -- [It's the Architecture, Silly!](#)

First step: Get an Overview

Review both a high-level and detailed solution architecture diagram and see what major components are involved. If you can, determine the high-level workflow of a "transaction/event".

Understand the basic and advanced functions of each solution component. Which functions/components are enabled by default?

Review official docs/training/user communities for a "real world" understanding of the solution architecture.

Understand capacity limits and what configuration settings/hardware are recommended for an optimized environment.

Second Step: Prepare to Dive Deeper

Determine the function/workflow combination of the solution.
For example, if you learn that only one component directly monitors network traffic, then you now know not to look there for end-user reporting export problems.

Create Knowledge Documents/Troubleshooting Guides based on these insights.

Third Step: Getting to a Deployment-Ready Architecture

Learn what a steady state for a solution looks like including a healthy monitoring component log.
Review known issues and fixed bugs for a particular release

Fourth Step: Optimize/Maintain Your Architecture

As I stated before, Solution Architectures should be reviewed two-four times a year. Optimization of hardware/software is key, especially in a fast changing environment. Review documentation, blogs, etc. on optimization/maintenance including capacity planning for your next architectural upgrade.

Your Turn:

Was this a good topic to cover? Are you using an approach like the above or something else? Please share your experiences!

2.11 Perceptions: Best Friend, Worst Enemy or Somewhere In-between?

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/11/01/perceptions-best-friend-worst-enemy-or-somewhere-in-between>



Introduction

Imagine if you were the proud owner of an old all-wooden house. While climbing up the steps to the entrance, you are greeted by numerous swarming bees. They hover around and fly uncomfortably close to you. In the past, you had a bad encounter with some bees and lived in mortal fear of them ever since. You freeze up in reaction and don't know what to do.

Fortunately, a nature lover and all-around nice person is taking their afternoon walk nearby and immediately sizes up your situation. "Oh there is nothing to worry about. They are just carpenter bees. See, there is no yellow stripe like bumble bees. And the male bees do not sting. Just annoy you a little. "

Suddenly, you don't feel as threatened. You learn to walk slowly around them and not mind their hovering. You start to move in and made a new friend along the way.

Perceptions: Overview

Perceptions are our conduit to comprehending life situations. These are our impressions based on what our senses show us. From this input, our mind may race to a conclusion that could later be incorrect. This can impact our ability to resolve a situation, solve a problem, or deal with another person

So what can we do instead to keep us on track?

1. [Have a reflective mind](#)

Our minds are very clever in creating perpetual emotional dramas and it is far too easy to be trapped "in mind." Rather than react, observe, observe some more, reflect then act. A sense of calm and spaciousness typically follows doing this. You might even feel your body starting to relax.

2. Ask questions/Investigate if needed before jumping to conclusions, It is very easy when seeing an error message on a screen to get concerned. But looking further may show it to be a one-time occurrence due to unique circumstances.

3. Turn off a sense. In the movie [Shallow Hal](#) (no relation to the character or the actor Jack Black), the protagonist eyes/judgments cause them to perceive incorrectly a person's worth. Something just listening to a person or touching an object may produce a different response and thought pattern.

4. Patience and Persistence. All of the above includes a process of persistent investigation and reflection. And just as important, being patient with yourself and not be so outcome-driven. Understanding the true nature of a situation is a lifetime voyage of discovery

Your Turn

We all had our misconceptions of various things and sometimes learned the hard way how to do things better. Feel free to share what worked for you in these situations. We are all learners in this life and can pick up a useful tip or two from one another.

2.12 Tech Tip # 66: Drat!!! Why Can't I record in APM CE (CEM)???

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/12/01/tech-tip-66-drat-why-cant-i-record-in-apm-ce-cem>

Introduction

It has been around a year since I've written a tech tip. Instead I've focused on APM & Community Blogs.

Support has seen a slight rise in the number of APM CE (CEM) recording cases. Why is this?

Contributing Factors to Non-Recording

Here are typical factors impacting recording.

#1 More Complex Networking Environments

- o [Traffic may not be as clean as needed resulting in packet loss](#)

- o Complex environments means it is quite possible to "miss something" in setting up

HTTP/HTTPS traffic to the TIM.

- o Traffic may not be two way or have round trip server affinity for a transaction

- o Customer is using a networking feature ([GRE tunnelling](#)), a [network card](#), or issues with

OS/network interface setup (DNS, host file, ifcfg file etc.)

#2 Evolving Server SSL Setups

- o Release of cipher suites that may not be supported. See for details:

<https://support.ca.com/us/knowledge-base-articles.tec1667615.html> -- Which Cipher Suites are supported CEM/TIM for decoding SSL hosted applications and how can I check those against the Ciphers installed on my web servers?

<https://support.ca.com/us/knowledge-base-articles.TEC1271109.html> -- TIM Unable to decode TLS_RSA_WITH_AES_128_GCM_SHA256 SSL Cipher Suite.

<https://support.ca.com/us/knowledge-base-articles.TEC1419466.html> -- After disabling Diffie-Hellman and GCM ciphers TIM SSL Server Status page still shows many unsupported cipher suite decode failures with unsupported ECDH and AES GCM ciphers visible in TIM logs.

<https://support.ca.com/us/knowledge-base-articles.tec1667615.html> -- Which Cipher Suites are supported CEM/TIM for decoding SSL hosted applications and how can I check those against the Ciphers installed on my web servers?

- o Evolution of SSL functionality such as [TLS Session tickets](#) and [Extended Master Secret Plugin](#)

- o And the basics

- Using the wrong IP/URL to access application.
- Incorrect browser configuration including proxy, language etc.
- Web server/hardware filters not added to TIM/MTP.
- Transaction already enabled (Transaction Discovery)

#3 Not checking TIM/MOM/TIM Collector status/log while recording

- o Wrong script recorder arguments or being sent to wrong EM.
- o Time is not synchronized between EMs, database, and TIMs.
- o EM in Unknown state due to MOM properties file misconfiguration.
- o Recording Service not running or started.

How to resolve

I basically start looking in this order

Switch>Tim (NIC/OS/SSL/Filters)>Tim Logs>Tim Collector Mom Log/Configuration

For TIM, I start with the steps outlined in [TIM Readiness Guide](#) or the [TIM Success Guide](#). If the TIM is seeing two-way unencrypted traffic, then I check it is showing up in the TIM log. If not, I look at SSL, web server/hardware filters etc, Debug logging can be turned on as well for [apmpacket](#) and [Transaction discovery](#)

If all the above fails, please consider opening a case.

Other sources

<https://communities.ca.com/thread/99969035> -- CA Tuesday Tip: Top APM CE Misconfigurations and Their Impacts

<https://communities.ca.com/message/22049399#22049399> --The APM Script Recorder and a 404 Error

<https://communities.ca.com/message/67186402#67186402> --CA Tuesday Tip: CEM Recording System Decision Matrix & <https://support.ca.com/us/knowledge-base-articles.tec600296.html>
<https://support.ca.com/us/knowledge-base-articles.TEC1545243.html> --Agent Recording
<https://docops.ca.com/ca-apm/10-5/en/extending/transaction-definition/recording-transaction-signatures> ---Recording Overview

Points for Discussion

1. Do you think these are the major factors impacting successful recording
2. Are there other factors that you have encountered?
3. Are there other TIM topics that you would like to see in future blogs?

Section 3: Vibrant Community Blogs

3.1 My Washington D.C. Adventure and the APM Community

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/07/18/my-big-dc-adventure-and-the-apm-community>

Introduction:

This past weekend, I attended the WordPress Users Group, **Wordcamp DC** -
- <https://2017.dc.wordcamp.org/> along with my daughter who does all of my fiction book covers -
- <http://www.alessandragerman.com/#home>)

Over 500 people attended and will likely be back next year. (If you are attending in 2018, glad to briefly meet!). However, the current location (Carnegie Library) may soon be an Apple Store.

Five Qualities of a Thriving Community

There were qualities that I saw there that I am hoping to see more of in this community

* *Passion* - People were excited about talking about technologies such as SVG, Personal Productivity Tools, and how to build a successful website community.

* *Willingness to help* - Speakers were available **long** after the presentation for follow-up questions. It was a friendly environment to try out ideas and seek help for nagging issues.

* *Fun* -- Silly prizes for audience involvement, amusing slides and anecdotes.

* *Technical Knowledge sharing in many formats* -- Slide locations were tweeted after the presentation. Talks were filmed and being transcribed.

* *Learn about your Neighbor* -- Sharing three things cool about yourself broke the ice in presentations.

I will be writing a series of articles on growing this community. In the end, I will put these into a PDF. I look forward each day seeing many of us get a little more involved in our APM community space!

Please think what you can do to make the APM Community more of what you want it to be. I end with a Hunter S. Thompson quote -- "You are always doomed when people don't participate."

I hope that shall never come to pass here. Feel free to reach out to me at hallett.german@ca.com or add your comments below to discuss further.

3.2 APM Community Opportunity: Help Your Online Neighbor!

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/06/12/apm-community-opportunity-help-your-online-neighbor>

YI: This is my first blog in some time because I am working on various knowledge document efforts. (Usually on weekends.) I hope to start posting again soon Blogs and Tech Tips.

Introduction

The APM/ASM/AXA Community is **very much alive** with the many questions being posted, discussions held constantly, and original content/software provided often.

But, now is a good time to consider how we can do much better in developing a highly rewarding electronic neighborhood.

Our Opportunity: The Need to Interact and Help Out Each Other More.

Let's briefly review the Wikipedia definition

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_community

An online community is a virtual community whose members interact with each other primarily via the Internet. For many, online communities may feel like home, consisting of a "family of invisible friends."

And that definition shows our goal and opportunity. We all should work a little harder each day to build that welcome and relaxed atmosphere here, Where anyone new or an expert of APM, AXA or ASM can ask that important question or share their contribution whether finished or a work-in-progress.

How Do We Proceed Doing This?

Best of all, you the administrator of these products can take a more active role in

- Sharing your experiences both out of the box and custom solutions with these products
- **Get involved in responding to each other's questions. Mark a response to a post as correct as appropriate.**

APM Support holding off just a little bit longer before responding will provide more opportunity to do this.

I hope that many of you will get more involved in actively scanning future community posts.
Then responding and answering questions. Thank you in advance for helping yourself and others.

And the optional homework question

What else should we as individuals do to help our APM Community neighbors and Pay it Forward in helping fellow community members?

I hope that this starts a good discussion.

3.3 How to Build a Vibrant APM Virtual Community: Active Participation!

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/07/24/how-to-build-a-vibrant-apm-virtual-community-active-participation>



As always, I thank Pixabay and their content creators for use of their images.

Introduction

This kicks off a new series of articles on how to build a rich and vibrant APM Community.

Previous related articles are

- [APM Community Opportunity: Help Your Online Neighbor!](#)

- [My Big D.C. Adventure & the APM Community](#)

What is Participation?

Google defines participation "as the action of taking part in something."

Synonyms: involvement, part, contribution, association

This implies some sort of engagement and relationship with a group such as the APM Community.

Levels of Participation

A good article on this topic is https://thenextweb.com/2008/05/24/why-people-participate-in-online-communities/#.tnw_Cf5NYrAj

There is a whole spectrum of involvement that one can perform with the APM Community,

Below is a simplified and imperfect model presented for discussion purposes

- Rarely logs in and No/Scans postings. Due to time constraints or personal inclination, one may infrequently or never log into the APM Community. They scan at a few articles and move elsewhere.
- Regularly logs in/Reads postings/Some involvement. Takes the time to scan recent posting topics. They take the time to read in-depth key postings and blogs. They may
 - tag a topic

- mark a post as helpful or like
 - vote on an idea
 - attend an office hours/webinar
- Regularly logs in/Posting Involvement. Does everything as the previous type. However, they additionally post questions or respond to other questions. They also may mark questions as correct.
- Regularly logs in/Community trendsetters. In addition to the above, they may do the following: Writes Blogs, Creates Polls, Submits Documents, Creates Custom Code and Utilities.
- Leader -- In addition to doing the above, works with CA staff and other customers to plan and implement Community changes. Encourages community participation and growth. Stays with ideas through implementation. Brings passion to Communities. Helps bridge various parties and efforts, Limited by imagination/time.

In Conclusion

I hope that you find these posts inspiring you to do more for this community -- an invaluable resource and a friendly APM neighborhood

Your feedback, suggestions, and support are greatly welcomed below!

3.4 How to Build a Vibrant Community: More and More Content!

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/08/01/how-to-build-a-vibrant-community-content-content-and-then-some>

Introduction

Each week I am publishing another article on making this APM Community much richer. So far the following blogs have been published:

[Help Your Online Neighbor](#)
[My Big DC Adventure and the APM Community](#)
[How to Build a Vibrant APM Virtual Community: Active Participation!](#)

Content Overview

Content in this case are the subject areas covered in a community. These can be

- Problem or Resolution Related.
- New Release/Feature Related.
- Suggestions for Documentation/Knowledge Docs
- On Best practices
- Experiential (Examples: How I did or do not do x, Your Favorite CA World Moment, Successful Upgrade Experiences, How APM helped you solve an issue, What it is like being an APM Admin/User, etc.)
- Recycled (Older Community Posts that are still relevant.)
- Personal (On how you deal with the stresses of the work day including being an APM administrator.

Next Steps.

Few people would want to go to a site where the content hasn't been updated in months or years. To help remedy this for the APM Community, please do the following:

- 1) Find an older APM Community post that you want others to see and add a comment to make it come back to the forefront.:
- 2) Take one of the above areas and create some content!

If you like this series and have other content suggestions, please feel free to respond to this blog or can send me a note at hallett.german@ca.com

3.5 How to Build a Vibrant Community: Tell Us a Little About Yourself

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/08/09/how-to-build-a-vibrant-community-tell-us-a-little-about-yourself>

Introduction

Each week I am publishing another article on making this APM Community much richer. So far, the following blogs have been published:

[Help Your Online Neighbor](#)

[My Big DC Adventure and the APM Community](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant APM Virtual Community: Active Participation!](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Content, More Content, and Then Some!](#)

Relationships: The Secret Ingredient

In a neighborhood, building relationships may bring about a myriad of benefits to those involved including both parties mutually helping and changing each other for the better.

In an electronic community, we are all creating and posting articles at different times. Questions may be time-sensitive. Discussions may explore all facets of a topic. But you are not learning a lot about another person and their environment. Knowing something about other community members, you may be able to help each other a little better in the future

So, to start this off, I will ask six questions. Feel free to answer any or all of these. Keep it to a few sentences. And you see overlap with another person or can help them, let them know. Build a bridge!

1. What was the first Introscope/CEM/APM/AXA/ASM Release that you worked with? (For me CEM 3.3.1)
2. How often do you log into the community typically? (For me, six days a week.)
3. What one unanswered question about APM/AXA/ASM would you REALLY like an answer for? (For me: None at this time)
4. What topics do you find the most interesting in the Community? (For me: ATC, and CEM. Any Blog)
5. What is an APM/ASM/AXA project or area that you are currently working on and how can this community help you with it? (For me: The APM/AXA/ASM Vibrant Community effort. I post each week how you can help.)
6. What one question should I have asked and what is your answer? (For me: Why did you get into APM Support?)

3.6 How to Build a Vibrant Community: Wanted -- Engagers!

<https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/08/15/how-to-build-a-vibrant-community-wanted-engagers>

Introduction

Each week I plan to publish another article on suggestions for making this APM Community much richer. So far, the following blogs have been published:

[Help Your Online Neighbor](#)

[My Big DC Adventure and the APM Community](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant APM Virtual Community: Active Participation!](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Content, More Content, and Then Some!](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Tell Us a Little About Yourself](#)

Thank you to those to responded to my last post and shared something about themselves.

Note that this blog was not originally planned. But a conversation sparked its creation

A Trip to Tidewater Virginia



My home train station is the one used in the profile picture. This is the view heading North to Washington DC, Boston and New York. It is now a one track station. (But not in the past.) It has a strong sense of place and history with the photos from the past throughout the waiting rooms.

But what I really like about the station is the presence of Carolyn, our station manager. She is the welcoming person behind the ticket counter that also makes the announcements on the arriving or departing train (two or three a day). And as everyone lines up on the station platform, she checks that everyone is in the right place and patiently responds to those inevitable last minute questions. Her beaming face makes an ordinary arrival into an event to look forward to. You get a sense what waiting for trains in the past were like.

Needed: APM Community Engagers.

I think we need some of the same thing in the APM/AXA/ASM Community. People that

- * Encourage others to participate and learn about the particular product solution.
- * Provides a welcoming environment where other APM/ASM/ASM admins can just "hang out."
- * Actively interact with other community participants

- * Share what they are doing for APM monitoring solutions and encouraging others to do the same.
- * Bring a sense of fun and joy to the Community.

The Opportunity:

I hope that some of you read the above and embrace a few of the above roles. This community will be better-off as a result. You may comment below on this blog or the series to date or reach me at [hallett.german AT ca.com](mailto:hallett.german@ca.com).

Here is hoping to hear from you in the Community soon!

3.7 How to Build a Vibrant Community: If You Link 'Em They Will Come

<https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/08/23/how-to-build-a-vibrant-community-if-you-link-em-they-will-come>

Introduction

Each week I plan to publish another article on suggestions for making this APM Community much richer. So far, the following blogs have been published:

[Help Your Online Neighbor](#)

[My Big DC Adventure and the APM Community](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant APM Virtual Community: Active Participation!](#)

[**How to Build a Vibrant Community: Content, More Content, and Then Some!**](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Tell Us a Little About Yourself](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Wanted -- Engagers!](#)

Linking Overview

Definition of APM Information Linking: Providing a connection via a URL address to an information resource containing APM technical details.

It happens every day when someone seeks an answer to an APM technical question. What do they do? They query search engines, this Community, ask their acquaintances etc. And sometimes they come back with little success.

As a next step, they open a support case or pose a question on the Community. Then it may be the situation that, a response is given along with one or more community, document, and knowledge links.

We should make it easier to find this key APM information the first time. One way is creating content in this Community and other sites adding important links. Thus, making it more likely to find in a search engine.

Here are just a few suggestions:

- Adding new links to this Community using the Bookmark feature. (Looks like a globe.) [This is being underutilized.](#)
- Creating the best of the APM Community links on your internal sites.
- Create Discussion Items in this Community called "My 10 Favorite Links on APM Performance (or a topic of interest.)"

- Create a Discussion Item with your APM "Money" (High Value) Links
- Create a Discussion Item on my favorite Knowledge Docs in underdocumented, emerging, or release-specific areas
- Use Your Imagination!!!

Your Turn

What else do you do for APM linking/knowledge internally/externally?

Please share your experiences so we all can learn and grow from them. Thank you in advance.

3.8 How To Build a Vibrant Community: Tell a Friend/Colleague.

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/08/29/how-to-build-a-vibrant-community-tell-a-friendcolleague>

Introduction

Each week I plan to publish another article on suggestions for making this APM Community much richer. So far, the following blogs have been published:

[Help Your Online Neighbor](#)

[My Big DC Adventure and the APM Community](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant APM Virtual Community: Active Participation!](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Content, More Content, and Then Some!](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Tell Us a Little About Yourself](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Wanted -- Engagers!](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: If You Link 'Em They Will Come](#)

Introduction -- The Opportunity

This is a variation of last week's discussion on linking. Suppose you may have a great web resource with incredibly useful information. But unless someone knows

- that it exists
- how to find it.
- what to do when you are there.
- how they can participate at various levels

Then the visitor count to the web resource may stagnate and possibly decline.

It is my fervent wish that this Community grows with increased information sharing and administrator/user interaction and engagement. If you have suggestions on how to make this happen, please share them here or email me directly at <mailto:hallett.german@ca.com>

Starting this week, please do what you can to pass the word about this Community to colleagues and others. This is a good thing that we have here and all AXA/APM/ASM current and prospective admins & users are more than welcome to visit and participate.

Thank you for your support and looking forward to reading your future contributions!

Hal German

3.9 Building a Vibrant Community: Participation/Community Models

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/09/13/building-a-vibrant-community-participationcommunity-models>

Introduction

Each week I plan to publish another article on suggestions for making this APM Community much richer. So far, the following blogs have been published:

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[My Big DC Adventure and the APM Community](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant APM Virtual Community: Active Participation!](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Content, More Content, and Then Some!](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Tell Us a Little About Yourself](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: Wanted -- Engagers!](#)

[How to Build a Vibrant Community: If You Link 'Em They Will Come](#)

[How To Build a Vibrant Community: Tell a Friend/Colleague.](#)

Sociological Dinner

Sometime back, I attended a group dinner with sociologist E. Digby Baltzell. You can find more on him at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._Digby_Baltzell. There are two things that I remember of that night. One was his constant struggle to get a cigarette out of a well-worn pack while talking. The other was someone was talking what people had today as community. Baltzell dismissed this by saying something like, "You don't have Community today, you have instead Communion." I don't remember the vigorous dissent or much after that.

And thinking on that day brought me back to my mission here -- Encouraging *people daily to make this community grow in ways that are meaningful to them.*

Overall Models

Here are some different simplified models on how this community can grow. This is just a guiding idea on what to shoot for. The end-result doesn't have to be just one.

- A social community can just be a community. In this case, people share ideas/questions about a common set of products, infrastructures, and applications to monitor. And that can be sufficient for many.
- Members can strive for communion. That is a joining together of minds. This could be through such events as chats or ongoing meetings. And once achieved, perhaps some joint project projects take off.
- Members causally spending time together in the spirit of friendship. This could be informal discussions on a technical/non-technical topic.

There are also some simplified participation models to strive for.

Participation Models

- Simplified/Delayed two-way discussions. Someone posts a question and a person responds. But sustained two-way communications in a Community question/discussion can be difficult. And conversations are not real-time
- Real-time/Two-Way Discussions. This can happen when Instant Messaging is supported and through discussions from Office Hours and the like.

- Collaboration Discussions -- Multiple people working together on a deliverable or a joint problem. (Such as a document on naming standards for a particular function) And if this became common rather than the exception, how much richer would this Community be! Note that using the Jive Tools may alert you when a topic is being discussed. (<https://communities.ca.com/tools-eapis.jspa>)

Your Turn

Thank you for your support and participation in this community. **We are very lucky here to have so many talented people making this a better place each day!!!**

- I want to hear back from you on what we can do this make this Community more appealing to you personally so that you would log in frequently. Please reply to this post or email me directly at hallett.german@ca.com

3.10 Building a Vibrant Community: Altruistic Kindred Spirits

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/09/27/building-a-vibrant-community-altruistic-kindred-spirits>

Introduction

Every few weeks, I write about one more element of successful online communities.

Altruism

"All those happy in the world are so because of their desire for the happiness of others." Shantideva

One Definition: the daily practice of being selfless and acting on the behalf for other individuals.

Some time back I wrote how a Technical Support job lends itself well to a path of service. <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2016/02/21/on-service-and-apm-support>

A lot of that applies here. So please re-review.

The APM Community

Every day as I log in to this precious APM Community, I look forward to finding opportunities to help. All of my APM Colleagues are the same way. Even though they may be on the road like [Hiko Davis](#), [Guenter Grossberger](#) and [JMertin](#) or working other cases like [Lynn Williams](#), [SergioMorales](#), and [musma03](#)

without hesitation they respond to unanswered Community questions. With a strong sense of urgency, altruistic people dive into a Community question or discussion to help it move forward.

Communities like this bring out the best in people. It is a delight to watch how community members go out of their way to assist one other and help them take greater advantage of the APM Solution. Because it is known by all the impact of missing or partial metrics, cluster stability, etc, there is a strong desire to make things right in the world and bring a brief smile and moment of peace to someone else.

Homework assignment

So if you can make the time, please review the APM Community posts that are recent and do what

you can to offer assistance. Sometimes, even a so-called wrong answer can lead to the correct one. Just knowing someone is out there, listening, and wanting to help is a good start. Especially at 3 A.M. on a Wednesday

Your Turn

I am now two months in of creating these blogs. Please let me know if you are finding them interesting and helpful. You can respond below or send a note to hallett.german@ca.com Looking forward to hearing from you soon

3.11 How to Build a Vibrant Community: Feedback and Final Thoughts

Introduction:

This is the ninth and final post on characteristics of an active APM Community. I hope that you have found this series helpful. I will resume doing "regular" blogs instead.

How are We Doing?

A community needs to have a good feedback mechanism to ensure continued success. This is why in every one of my posts I always post questions for feedback and further interaction. This is why you always have a chance to respond to anything posted in this community. If there is silence, one cannot determine areas that are and are not working. And after knowing this, make any needed changes. Feedback ensures your needs are heard and something will be considered to meet them. So please start and keep sharing what you want to see more of or less of in the community.

Next steps

This community is a dynamic environment which is always changing to better meet your needs. As I say each week, it is an invaluable resource.

So what would I like to see more of? (Please add your list below!)

1) Self-organizing - A group of Community members can get together and decide for that week what is the personal or group involvement. Maybe they start a discussion on a rotating topic such as Best Practices for APM Dashboards, my Favorite Supportability Metric. Or someone decides to respond to as many community posts that they can for that week. Or just decide to do any of the above on your own. The choices for action are up to all of us. You/we need to figure out the best way to do this.

2) Involvement - Whether it is something simple as marking as correct/helpful/like or initiating or responding to a post. The sharing of knowledge, building of relationships, and feeling of engagement is a wonderful and tremendous thing to have here. This is one case where more of something is good!!!

3) More Non-CA Engagement Each APM/ASM/AXA Administrator, Partner, and User has real world experience and knowledge that would be so helpful to their peers. This involvement should become the rule and not the exception.

4) More Frequent Logins equals more Participation Opportunities. If you log in every few weeks or once a month, you are missing out on receiving timely updates on the APM product, time-proven advice, and best practices. There would also be additional opportunities to participate and contribute more.

5) More Interactions. More meetings like Office Hours where everyone can raise and discuss issues. Or do like [Manish Parikh's Blog](#) suggested and just covered one topic in a meeting.

Your Turn

I've shared my thoughts over these months. I really would like to hear from you where we should go from here. You can post below. Or mail me at hallett.german@ca.com. Thank you for your efforts in this Community! It is greatly appreciated by myself and all others that frequent here.

3.12 Community Hidden Gems: Followers and Following

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/10/18/community-hidden-gems-followers-and-following>

Introduction

So, for several months I've done a series of blogs on how to create and maintain a vibrant community. And during the same time, our APM Community has become a little more active. But I see one area that each of us may consider changing to enrich ourselves and this community.

Step 1: Start Following More People

What I noticed that most people in this Community are following few people or have few followers. That means that all of us are missing potentially out on:

- Useful new documents
- Helpful new ideas
- Invaluable new questions/discussions or responses
- Tremendous new videos and webinars
- Making a key connection.

Step 0: Determine Which People to Follow

But you see that I uncharacteristically jumped the gun above.

How can you follow someone if you don't know which someone to follow? Good point.

So here are some possible "following candidate" strategies

- Search for topics/environments that are important to you. And see which community members are contributing articles in that area.
- Look for peers at similar product levels. If a new customer, then search for other new customers
- Seek geographical colleagues
- You are only limited by your imagination! Wild and crazy guys? Large site administrators? Cat fanciers liking APM Scheduled Reports? Seek out your own birds of a feather!

Step 3: Gaining Followers/Increasing Following

The reason for doing this should be not to say proudly to someone, "I have two thousand followers/following five hundred members in the APM Community." Instead, the focus should be linking to other kindred spirits to see how they are living their lives and dealing with technical/personal challenges that may be like your own! And be among the first to find out about their contributions as well them finding out about yours.

Your Turn

I've said what I wanted to say. Now it is your turn.

Please drop a line to Hallett.german@ca.com or respond below on following/followers, "following candidate strategies", and if you want to see more of these types of blogs.

3.13 On Public Garden Visitors and Community Health

Link: <https://communities.ca.com/community/ca-apm/blog/2017/11/29/on-public-garden-visitors-and-community-health>

Introduction

During this past Thanksgiving, I took the time to visit a local tourist attraction. It was something that I was very much looking forward to. This meant stopping by a public garden associated with a particular ancient structure and walking through the carefully kept grounds.

But it was not meant to be. The garden was still there. Unexpectedly, it was roped off and closed until it could grow back. (Which for the hedges may mean some years to come.)

What Happened?

I asked around why this sad state came to be. In learning the unfortunate details, it reminded me of what an online community should avoid if not wanting a swift decline.

Taking things for granted and assuming that things will always be the same.

Visitors always assumed that the garden would always be there and be opened to all. But gardens are delicate and will not thrive if not properly treated by visitors. Like all of us, it takes time to heal if under distress.

Not seeing the beauty of it all.

Some of those that traversed this striking patch of earth failed to see the value of it. So they treated it accordingly. Hopefully this does not happen to other public gardens or any online community. A garden (or a community) is dependent on proper use and care by dedicated resources. As a result, it is becomes a beautiful place to visit.

For example, suppose if there are a lot of duplicate or wrong community posts. Then those posts were not moved or transferred. Then they would accumulate making it harder to find the appropriate posts. If people did not try to help each other, then possible users would seek elsewhere for answers. If new blogs on best practices are not shared due to lack of interest and contributors, the attraction to a community is far less.

Taking shortcuts

But the real killer was some inconsiderate garden temporary dwellers taking multiple shortcuts throughout the garden to move along faster. Sadly, this ruined it for all. And that's why it is closed today.

The interaction in a community can be impacted by those that ask questions which are unclear, incomplete, and without environment information or screenshots. This results in some back and forth posts for others to determine their true query.

Conclusion

As long as the roots are not severed, all is well. And all will be well in the garden. Being There

After taking an "after" photo, I will not soon forget what I've seen. It is my fervent wish that we all do what we can to keep this community healthy for years to come. Hoping that you agree!!!