

**EMC's
VoyenceControl 4.0:**

Enhanced solution
positions EMC
as key
SOI provider.

Breakaway Information Group Market Analysis



Executive Summary

EMC's VoyenceControl 4.0 is not only a slick yet understated enhancement to an already feature-rich solution, it indicates that EMC is a serious contender for the "hearts and minds" of IT professionals moving to implement virtualization-centric Service Oriented Infrastructure (SOI).

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The News

A scant 6 months into becoming a foundational component in EMC's resource management arsenal, Voyence has issued a major version upgrade to its change and configuration management suite. The new release, VoyenceControl 4.0, includes five enhancements of note in addition to improved integration with other tools in EMC's management sandbox. Much of what Voyence has enhanced is expected, but there are some pleasantly unexpected surprises as well.

The Analysis

For one, the use of Web 2.0-like presentation layer technologies allows end-users to remake the face of Voyence as they see fit. This attribute is easy to overlook from a skeptical, "what's innovative" perspective, but doing so would be a grievous error given how rapidly EMC/Voyence developers added this capability to the suite. But, more importantly, the flexibility it affords IT operations staff could be a critical point in winning new business in an increasingly consolidated and competitive market. One dirty little secret of software is that beyond a package's features and functions, specialists who depend on interface-intensive tools (such as Voyence, SMARTs, nLayers and similar competitive offerings) often forego new tools that require learning a new graphical environment even if they are more functionally robust. To this end, Voyence's new graphical and data expressions opens the door to improved competitive positioning with IT operators and partners that have embraced – and implemented – Web 2.0 .

Of Voyence 4.0's other four enhancements, support for multi-configuration stands out. Multi-configuration is a critical attribute of change and configuration management (CCM) tools for several reasons. The key value of this capability is that it allows operators to create device profiles or models that are distinct even if the devices themselves are the same. The most significant and broadly pursued IT activity of the past three years has been "infrastructure consolidation" – with or without virtualization. That, in turn, has driven organizations' desire to standardize as many infrastructure elements as possible, and for good reason. In short, how many Dell logos must an operator see in a configuration or error reporting window before his or her eyes glaze over?

Beyond addressing the disconnect between legacy capability and contemporary need, the multi-configuration facility of Voyence 4.0 paves a way to the future. This path is grounded in the infrastructure consolidation drive, but is also pertinent to the growing presence of virtualization in IT ecosystems of all sizes. However, virtualization introduces as many operational challenges as it resolves. Keeping track of the inventory of virtualized machines, all appearing to be the same but each belonging to a distinct operational class, is remarkably difficult. Multi-configuration, on the other hand, allows operators to model classes of function for similar, if not the exactly same, virtualization technologies. Before the days of multi-configuration, the range of common VMs associated with different naming schemes challenged even the most thorough and organized operations teams.

Our last word on the "multi-configuration" feature is that, in concert with enhanced integration with SMARTs and nLayers, Voyence is now ready to help businesses enter the world of increasingly virtualized applications. Virtualized applications are popping up as product innovators quickly realize the benefits of so-called "virtual appliances." Add to this reality the fact that most packaged business software is itself increasingly modular and dependent on virtual machines leading to an increasingly lengthy and opaque chain of dependencies. The "multi-configuration" capability allows Voyence 4.0 to feed timely and critical configuration and state data to the managers of distributed, multi-tier applications.

Complementing the effort to establish a foundation for highly virtualized, services-based offerings, Voyence has instituted the ability to ingest state, error, configuration and role information from multiple devices. Some of this work is done through hand-coding as standards for management data expression are still incomplete. However, the need for this feature in Voyence 4.0 is driven as much by future considerations as it is by current operational demands. In a world where automation increasingly affects both physical and virtual device provisioning, the chance of a configuration error is all too real. When that happens, it's critical for operators to distinguish between model-based behavior and configuration errors. Looping this data back into the CCM tool with Voyence, or up the stack to network and process managers such as SMARTs and/or nLayers can eliminate error storms in operation's centers while opening the door for true self-correction based on environmental learning – a key attribute of EMC's SMARTs.

In all, we are impressed with this update to Voyence and anticipate a vigorous response from partners in the field to solution vendors like Cisco Systems. The market is becoming even more competitive as HP puts its marketing muscle behind OpsWare and Microsoft highlights the smooth interoperability of its new Hyper-V, Windows Server virtualization, and System Center offerings. Add to this mix the renewed presence of Quest Software, and the continuing resurgence of BMC and CA. The travails of Symantec, which not too long ago unburdened itself of the Precise i3 family of application performance management and configuration products, speaks to the intensity of the market and the difficult task of being focused on both storage and systems management.



Regarding this last point, EMC has done a good job of claiming its territory as it marches further into the systems management space. Not only has the company made good use of sensible acquisitions, it has also been both sincere and public in its efforts to enhance the management features and manageability of its crown jewel VMware. The story and product releases that have unfolded over the past three years from Hopkinton and other EMC environs indicates that the company is working to create software solutions that really do work together despite their distinctive origins.

To this end, and as discussed in our November piece analyzing EMC's acquisition of Voyence, we see more integration with other company properties on the horizon – RSA in particular. In addition, Darren Orzechowski, VP of Marketing for Voyence has readily discussed the need for and benefit of linking classes of function and data expression from Voyence to RSA technologies to meet the needs of the rapidly growing and operationally challenged Payment Card Industry. To the Breakaway Information Group, there are too many organic points of overlap between Voyence, virtualization, RSA and distributed information to ignore, and we expect to produce more material and commentary on this nexus in the coming months.

The Takeaways

- Turning out a truly enhanced version of Voyence some six months after acquiring the company demonstrates both that EMC is using a steady management hand and also performed thorough *due diligence* in purchasing a healthy product and company.
- The enhancements to VoyenceControl address significant, current short-comings in the market.
- These new capabilities subtly pave the path for customers to employ Voyence in concert with EMC virtualization technology.
- EMC can help overcome some buyers' storage-centric mind-share by pitching virtualization-driven consolidation of all IT assets, servers and storage alike.
- Many of the new or enhanced attributes of Voyence evoke thoughts of Service Oriented Infrastructure (SOI) – and that's a good thing.