

# OPNET and Keynote Join in an Application Performance Alliance that Signals Innovation and Growth for Both

## Abstract

OPNET Technologies and Keynote Systems announced a “strategic Application Performance Management (APM) Alliance” in July of 2010 that should be strongly advantageous to both companies and their customers. The alliance helps to unify Keynote’s strengths in synthetic capabilities for 24x7 application performance monitoring outside the firewall with OPNET’s rich support for Service Impact monitoring and diagnostics with a focus on transaction analysis and application-to-infrastructure interdependencies. The announcement also reflects the growing importance of “User Experience Management,” and the need to manage application ecosystems beyond the boundaries of a single enterprise. This ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES® (EMA™) impact brief looks at the some of the specifics of this new APM alliance and its ramifications for Keynote, OPNET and the broader industry.

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## Event

On July 22, 2010, OPNET Technologies and Keynote Systems introduced a strategic Application Performance Management (APM) Alliance that involves both technical integration as well as coordinated marketing and sales efforts. The APM Alliance calls out what is actually a pre-existing integration between Keynote’s SaaS synthetic testing for Web application performance with OPNET’s ACE Live™ solution for broad-based application and application-to-infrastructure monitoring. According to spokespersons at both companies, the alliance was made public in response to real customer interest after several prior months of dialog.

The alliance is not exclusive, in that Keynote and OPNET can each partner with the other’s competitors; however, it does reflect a strong commitment to support both near-term opportunities and long-term growth in terms of deeper levels of integration, as well as increased levels of sales, marketing and services support.

The APM Alliance at present is targeted largely at operational requirements to support 24x7, global, geographically-specific awareness with powerful contextual drill down into Web application transactions for both internal and external application issues, as well as rich capabilities for capturing application-to-infrastructure interdependencies. These capabilities will help support a number of different roles, including application support and Q/A Test, as well as more business-aligned functions such as Online Operations, and IT and Line of Business Executives. The alliance is currently directed at joint OPNET/Keynote customers, but could also easily extend to bringing Keynote into some OPNET accounts, or promote investments in OPNET’s APM solutions among existing Keynote customers.

## Context

In July of 2010, EMA completed its BSM Service Impact Radar Report ([EMA Radar™ for Business Service Management: Service Impact Q3 2010](#)) which revealed a slow but determined trend among both vendors and adopters to move towards a more unified, service impact approach to managing services

versus more traditional siloed approaches. Dialogs with nearly 30 deployments underscored the fact that this was often an “assimilative” initiative, in which IT executives were seeking to combine and reconcile monitoring, change management, security and other insights from a wide variety of sources and

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perspectives. The research also revealed a growing requirement to unify IT application service performance with meaningful business outcomes. Finally, the BSM Service Impact Radar Report offered further evidence that user experience is becoming the dominant “SLA” metric when it comes to assessing the actual effectiveness of an application service.

The APM Alliance addresses all three of these requirements, and does so with two clear and complementary industry leaders.

## Keynote Systems

Keynote is a leading SaaS provider for application performance monitoring and user experience management outside the firewall – with more than 240 global locations and 3,000 measurement computers. Keynote is optimized to support a broad array of roles, from operations to application support, application development, Q/A Test, Online Operations and IT to provide business executives with well-designed role-aware analysis. Keynote’s customer base spans more than 2,800 small, mid-tier and enterprise customers with high densities in e-business, telecommunications, financial services, and other areas where application service performance is clearly business critical. Because Keynote’s tests are largely synthetic in nature and hence scheduled, it is well positioned to provide 24x7 coverage and global or customized geographical reach.

Keynote’s capabilities include granular capabilities to proactively assess transactional efficiencies, including abandonment rates and page-specific Web 2.0 capabilities such as Ajax, as well as load testing to proactively evaluate transactional efficiencies at different levels of use. Keynote’s strengths in including mobile devices and specific browser types is also a strong complement to OPNET’s capabilities, as are its abilities to provide geographically specific tests that can pinpoint problems with carrier services in specific geographies, including “last-mile” testing. Moreover, Keynote offers competitive industry intelligence in terms of Web application performance for many of its customers, so that clients can evaluate their transactional efficiencies with an eye to their competitors.

Not included in this announcement, Keynote also offers capabilities for VoIP monitoring and application streaming monitoring.

## OPNET Technologies

OPNET offers a wide variety of solutions that help monitor, optimize and diagnose application performance issues across the networked infrastructure with a growing focus on business impact. In terms of the APM announcement, OPNET especially complements Keynote with observed or passive end-user experience monitoring (versus Keynote’s synthetic capabilities), its unique insights into application flows and transaction interdependencies across the infrastructure, and its in-depth diagnostics including transaction analytics and packet inspection.

OPNET’s ACE Live has already integrated Keynote transaction testing as one of its “Insights,” and the APM Alliance now brings that integration to the fore with collaborative sales, marketing and potentially services support. ACE Live is an appliance (developed from OPNET’s 2007 acquisition of industry innovator Network Physics), that can identify user location, response time per page, intra-server latency, application turns and database bottle necks. ACE Live has arguably the richest analytic technology in the industry optimized to understand holistic patterns of application performance across the infrastructure when problems occur or after changes are made, versus trying to assemble the health of application services from a collection of disjointed metrics. OPNET is continuing to enrich ACE Live in the area of more advanced Web and transaction diagnostics through the APM Alliance, as well as its own internal development.

ACE Live is strongly complemented by the rest of OPNET's versatile portfolio. This includes ACE Analyst for enhanced deep application forensics using network data, and the VNE Server® subsystem which maintains an integrated view of the network, including physical and logical topology, device configuration, protocol configuration, and traffic flow data. OPNET's nCompass BSM dashboard can integrate ACE Live into a larger view of business and service impact, and Panorama can augment ACE Live's contextual insights into application and transaction performance with much more granular Web transaction analytics. Panorama discovers application components such as ASP.NET pages, EJBs, servlets, JSPs, Operating Systems, generic classes, and database calls through the broad set of metrics reported by its agents.

## EMA Perspective

The Application Performance Management Alliance between Keynote Systems and OPNET Technologies should be strongly positive for both companies as well as for joint customers. Both partners are industry leaders in their areas and combined, offer strong values that taken separately, neither can fulfill. The APM Alliance should also do well, as it is a solid cultural as well as technical fit between the two companies. As the APM Alliance evolves and matures, it should position both OPNET and Keynote well against competitors such as Compuware and HP, which also have some versatile monitoring application services inside and outside the firewall.

The alliance also underscores a number of industry trends:

- The growing requirements for more unified, service-centric approaches to monitoring and diagnosing application and other service issues versus depending on an ad hoc array of more siloed and often unreconciled tools.
- The steady rise in the importance of user experience management as the ultimate SLA for application service efficiency, versus more purely technical or component-centric metrics. This includes insights into user behaviors, such as abandoned transactions, and “single page” Web 2.0 interactions, as well as transaction availability and response time.
- The rising need to provide consistent insights inside and outside the firewall across multiple constituencies who, even as separate businesses, may be collaborating on a single overall business service. This “community” or “ecosystem” requirement will only become more critical with the rise in cloud computing as IT seeks to evolve more towards a role of “service broker” versus a territorially defined organization with siloed, internally facing responsibilities. Having keen, accurate and proactive insights into application performance across a whole fabric of service providers, enterprises and partners is critical if IT is to assess, control and optimize this “Brave New World.”

As the APM Alliance matures, it should also test the willingness of both companies to grow beyond their respective “buyer base” in operations and applications test towards a wider variety of executive and business buyers and users. While over time this may require new services and consulting partners, it represents a strongly positive growth opportunity for both vendors, as well as a healthy nudge forward for the broader industry as it begins to take the idea of “business alignment” with the seriousness it deserves.

### About EMA

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst firm that specializes in going “beyond the surface” to provide deep insight across the full spectrum of IT management technologies. EMA analysts leverage a unique combination of practical experience, insight into industry best practices, and in-depth knowledge of current and planned vendor solutions to help its clients achieve their goals. Learn more about EMA research, analysis, and consulting services for enterprise IT professionals and IT vendors at [www.enterprisemanagement.com](http://www.enterprisemanagement.com) or follow EMA on Twitter ([http://twitter.com/ema\\_research](http://twitter.com/ema_research)).

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