



QUARTERLY E-ZINE

## Identify and Measure Critical Application Processes

By Robert Stinnett

If you are a fan of music of the '80s (and who isn't?) then you probably have the following song by the Bangles cued up on your iPod ready for Monday morning:

"Have to catch an early train  
Got to be to work by nine  
And if I had an air-o-plane  
I still couldn't make it on time."

No doubt you also feel this way about a lot of your batch jobs and business processes that are running in your company as well — files coming in, files going out, events taking place around the clock, and Service Level Agreements that have to be met — and only so much time to process them all and meet your deadlines. What's critical that has to be run now and what can wait? What type of contractual agreements do we have in place that if we don't meet will cost us money? How important is it that we run payroll by 9 a.m.? (Very!) Questions such as this are perfect for BMC's Batch Impact Manager tool, an optional add-on for BMC's CONTROL-M batch scheduling product.

Today, our IT world is full of things that "have to get done." We've taken our traditional batch scheduler that once reigned as king during the night (or off-hours) and made it a part of the 24x7 IT infrastructure. We may have tens of thousands — if not hundreds of thousands — of jobs that must complete in a given timeframe. How do we begin to make sense out of what is really important and what can wait? How do we sort out the technical nonsense and present job flows to management in a language they can understand? Questions such as these are what we are asking ourselves everyday in IT. Delays in processing, however slight, can cause a ripple effect across our entire Enterprise. We have to be proactive in addressing these concerns before they seriously impact not only our day-to-day operations, but have an impact on our revenue streams and SLA agreements with both internal and external customers.

BMC's Batch Impact Manager helps associate the business with IT through the batch environment. By associating groups of jobs with a common business service name it allows us to define critical business processes and tracks them as a single entity. It allows us to answer the question "What must complete by a given time in order to ensure that the business process is successful?" It also dives deeper by helping answer the other half of that question, "What will happen to my business process if there is a failure upstream, processing is delayed, or hardware failures occur?"

The truth is that many of us in the IT world don't know what is critical and what needs to be tracked until our phone starts ringing or our e-mail box fills up with angry phone calls when something doesn't finish when the customer expects it to. Businesses nowadays are not only a 24x7 operation, but they are also connected globally to other business partners that either supply them with information, or provide them with data they need to run their own business processes. In a sense, Web 2.0 has landed at IT shops around the world as we realize the days of isolation are over — data is flowing freely both in and out and often there is a hefty price to be paid when that data stops flowing.

So how do you define what is critical and what isn't in your IT organization? It starts with going to your customers — you know, the folks who actually tie up your systems with all that data. One of the best approaches to gathering this information is by letting them know you want to make it easy for them to get the information they want in a format they can understand without being frustrated by the IT talk. After all, wouldn't it be great if Gregg in HR could pull up a Web page and see immediately the status of "Payroll Processing" without calling down to IT and asking if it will be run

by 9 a.m. every Monday?

Batch Impact Manager is made so you can use as little or as much of it as you need. It couldn't be simpler to implement — just find the end of your batch flow for a particular business service and stick a BIM job on it. It will automatically connect all of the preceding jobs that make up the critical path needed for successful completion and link them up with Batch Impact Manager. Start out small, build a success case and move forward with other departments and business services within your organization. Trust me, once people see how easily Gregg is getting his information they will want to jump on it as well without you having to ask!

Often I tell people to think of Batch Impact Manager as a paradigm shift. It allows us to not only put a business name to the jumble of jobs that might be running in our system, so everyone can understand what is running out there, but it also lets us take a proactive approach to managing our scheduling environment and meeting our SLAs. Currently, most scheduling environments are reactive — a job fails, a tape fails to mount, a file doesn't arrive. We find out about it after the fact — usually long after any chances of meeting our deadlines have passed. With Batch Impact Manager we start taking a proactive approach to managing the scheduling environment. We stop asking "What happened?" and start asking "What might happen and how can I avoid it?"

One of the features of BIM is that it can help you find those bottlenecks and failures upstream in your scheduling environment and let you know about it before it's too late. It not only tells you about them, it gives you estimates on how this will affect your environment. After you know about the problems, you can use the information it generates to prioritize how you resolve issues. After all, what's more important? Fixing the job that prints out a low-priority report or fixing the payroll application so that everyone gets paid next week?

Again, we see that paradigm shift coming into focus. We are managing our scheduling environment with respect to the business instead of IT. The business is driving IT instead of IT driving the business. We're monitoring and measuring our SLAs and helping achieve the five nine's of uptime and delivery instead of reacting to failures without any idea how it impacts SLAs and the business. Most importantly, we stop talking in IT talk and start talking in terms the entire business can understand. In essence, we are moving our batch environment up to the next strategic level in our organization.

If you are ready to make the change in your organization from reactive to proactive, from IT-centric to business-centric, from missing SLAs to meeting SLAs then BMC's Batch Impact Manager is a solution definitely worth looking into. If you have CONTROL-M already up and running in your organization, you can have Batch Impact Manager up and running in no time at all. If you are thinking of bringing your scheduling solution into the "Web 2.0 world" of business then Batch Impact Manager may very well be the one product that helps you make the switch over to the CONTROL-M line.