

Intuit Deploys RTView™ to Ensure Capacity During Tax Seasons and Monitor Application Performance in Support of Product Orders



The Business Challenge

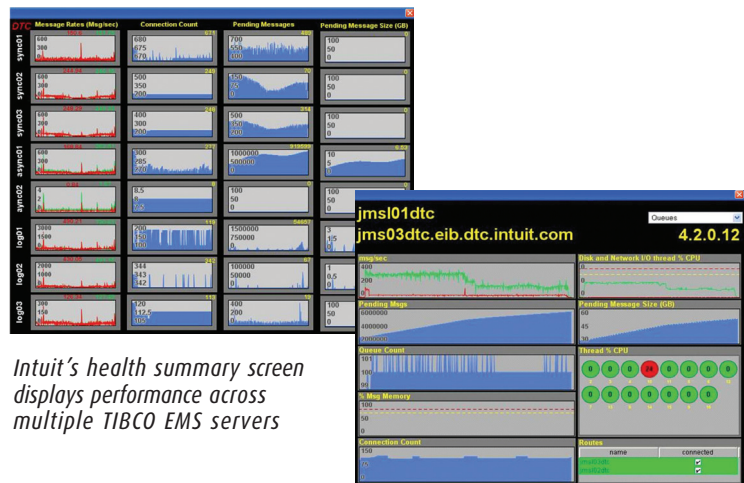
The seasonal nature of the tax business means Intuit faces extreme peaks in volume surrounding key tax filing dates. As a company that sees 20% – 50% growth in their product lines year-over-year, efficient scaling is extremely important. Intuit needed to know without question, 1) that they had enough capacity to support their business-critical peak periods, 2) the performance status of their systems at any given moment, and 3) the real-time status of their orders in the queue.

To achieve this, they needed real-time, single-pane-of-glass visibility into the performance of their recently implemented TIBCO EMS servers that support their enterprise-wide integration system. They also needed the ability to analyze historical trends to forecast infrastructure capacity for next year's tax season.

In the past, Intuit used a number of different legacy monitoring tools, but found that they lacked comprehensive visibility into the performance of their EMS servers, and didn't provide the historical context necessary for accurate capacity planning.

Intuit's engineering team found themselves taking a "crystal-ball" approach to capacity planning. They started with the limited amount of information they retrieved from their command-line administrative tool, "tibemsadmin." They proceeded to make a "best guess" based on this information for the required capacity and then tested their guess for accuracy. With a tight window for correction between testing and production, it was next to impossible to make adjustments in-time if capacity had been underestimated. As such, there was a tendency to overspend on capacity "just to be sure."

Determining the status of orders in the queue during peak periods was also challenging. Intuit's operations teams determined order status by manually querying data and reporting it to the business team. This proved to be time consuming, often causing the information to be out-of-date by the time the process was complete.



Intuit's health summary screen displays performance across multiple TIBCO EMS servers

Drill down to server component level, with real-time alerting functionality

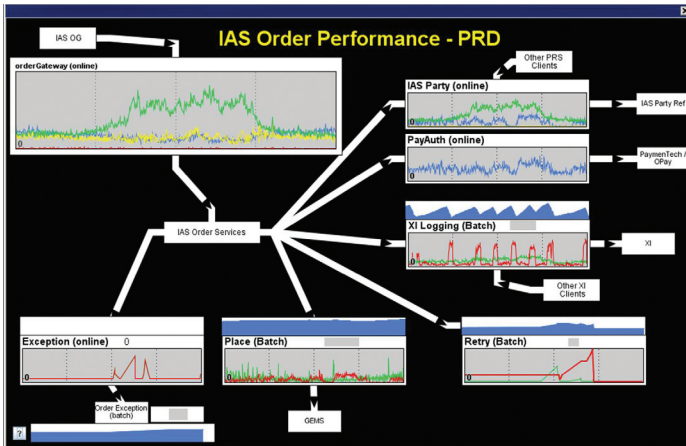
RTView Provides True Visibility – Eliminates the Crystal Ball

Intuit turned to SL Corporation and selected RTView in October 2007. With the work of a single engineer, Bill Schuller, working part-time, Intuit was able to have a fully functional, custom monitoring solution up-and-running within two months.

"We saw value with our first display," said Mr. Schuller, Senior Software Engineer of the Services Foundation Team at Intuit. **"And within a few iterations, we had exactly what we needed for the upcoming tax season."**

With RTView, Intuit has taken the guesswork out of capacity planning. By viewing historical data through the RTView Historian, they are able to analyze trends over specific time periods, enabling them to make more accurate business decisions about capacity and scaling.

Intuit is a leading software provider of personal and small business finance solutions including QuickBooks, Quicken, and Turbo Tax. Founded in 1983, they have grown into a \$3 billion dollar company with 8,000 employees, and offices in the United States, Canada, and the UK.



Business-centric display shows the rate at which orders, quotes, and other transactions are being serviced in real time

Rather than using a number of different tools to monitor EMS performance metrics, Intuit's operations and engineering teams now have real-time, single-pane-of-glass visibility across all of their TIBCO EMS servers, as well as the ability to drill down for more detail. They are able to correlate the number of incoming message loads with the number of pending messages, and assess the impact on CPU and memory utilization, enabling them to immediately detect bottlenecks and pinpoint issues.

Further, Intuit's application engineering and business teams can now view business-centric displays that help them to easily determine the rate at which orders, quotes and other transactions are being serviced in real time. They are also able to answer other key business questions like, "How many orders are in the queue waiting to be entered into Intuit's ERP system?" and "How many orders are in the exception queue?" and "How fast are orders flowing in and out of the queue?" Even more importantly, however, Mr. Schuller could, with confidence, answer the question, "Given the load we had last year and what we expect this year, do we have enough infrastructure to handle the upcoming peak period?"

The Results: "Everyone who has seen RTView says, 'I want that!'"

Intuit has recognized a number of benefits since they implemented RTView. From an IT perspective, they reduced monitoring time significantly during critical periods. This not only reduced IT costs, but also increased productivity, freeing up Intuit's teams to focus their attention on other issues.

"It used to take several engineers to monitor our systems. Now, with RTView's intuitive application views, even a single manager can effectively monitor many systems at once," said Mr. Schuller.

Intuit's IT organization also recognized a significant reduction in capacity spending. RTView enabled Intuit's engineering team to accurately forecast their capacity requirements, significantly reducing overspending on unneeded capacity.

One of the most significant business benefits was the visibility RTView provided into applications that weren't directly monitored by RTView. With the ability to monitor EMS traffic, Intuit is able to leverage these performance metrics to infer performance of other applications by monitoring how they consumed messages from EMS. **"In the past, we did not have any visibility into behavior patterns at this level,"** added Mr. Schuller.

Within the first four months of deployment, Intuit's engineering team experienced two separate instances where they were able to detect and address a critical problem with their order processing infrastructure before their customers ever noticed there was an issue.

With RTView, Intuit is able to accurately forecast just the right amount of capacity to support the subsequent peak tax season, and determine at-a-glance the performance status of all of their TIBCO EMS servers so they can immediately fix any issues that arise. More importantly, Intuit's business teams now have comprehensive visibility into critical business metrics to ensure optimal order service levels are met during critical, high-volume periods. **Mr. Schuller concludes, "Everyone (at Intuit) who has seen RTView says, 'I want that!'"**

About SL Corporation

Over the past 24 years, SL Corporation has become the most knowledgeable and responsive provider of real-time monitoring, analytics, and visibility solutions. SL's flagship product, RTView, addresses a broad spectrum of enterprise visibility challenges spanning application performance management (APM), business activity monitoring (BAM), and component-level infrastructure monitoring. RTView has also become the de facto standard for extending the visualization of complex event processing (CEP) engines, TIBCO messaging middleware, Oracle Coherence data grids, and custom applications. SL's exclusive focus on real-time visibility solutions, commitment to customer success, and partner-centric culture are why thousands of industry leaders have chosen to work with SL to support their most critical applications and businesses. www.sl.com.