Astellas Pharma

Astellas needed to reduce the number of alerts the IT department was dealing with during server maintenance without interrupting important alerts. Micro Focus® Aegis® enabled Astellas to move server maintenances from a paper-based system to web-based forms, enabling the IT department to handle urgent issues instantly and on screen. The solution stops monitoring during server maintenance to avoid needless alerts and turns monitoring back on automatically. It also records one event per incident.

Overview

Astellas Pharma is a global R&D-oriented pharmaceutical leader that targets markets where existing treatments are considered unsatisfactory. Maintaining its leadership position meant it needed to improve the reliability and efficiency of its IT support for everyday business activities.

Challenge

The company develops new pharmaceuticals by improving creativity and establishing a solid business foundation. To improve creativity, the company built a global research network to more quickly improve research that leads to new pharmaceuticals. The company needs to support this network while also promoting global IT measures to strengthen its business foundation.

"Needless alerts have been minimized, so we can concentrate on improving the way we handle more important warnings and further enhance efficiency."

CAC STAFF MEMBER
Astellas Pharma

"To strengthen our business operations, we have been continuously improving the reliability and effectiveness of our IT support for daily business activities," said Mikio Takezawa, deputy director of the Corporate IT Division. Astellas had been monitoring about 1,000 servers to improve efficiency, but it ran into a problem during an upgrade, when the IT staff received tens of thousands of event alerts for changes related to the upgrade. The IT staff responded by focusing on its operations and ignoring the alerts.

Astellas outsources its operational monitoring to CAC Corporation and Fujitsu. "CAC was authorized to embargo alerts during server maintenance, but we were concerned that they might forget to release the embargo, so operations continued without halting the alerts," said Toshiaki Tsukuda, manager of the Infrastructure Group in the Corporate IT Division. Monthly security patches also generated an enormous volume of alerts.

Every time an alert was raised, operators had to look through a thick file of check sheets to handle it. This was very inefficient, considering that we had to check many alerts that we could have ignored. Another problem was that important alerts were buried in the mass of superfluous alerts," Tsukuda added. What's more,

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At a Glance

■ **Industry**
Healthcare & Medical

■ **Location**
Japan

■ **Challenge**
The company needed to reduce the number of alerts the IT department was dealing with during server maintenance without interrupting important alerts.

■ **Products and Services**
Aegis
AppManager

■ **Results**
+ Minimized needless alerts
+ Provided the ability to comply with regulations by automatically recording one event per incident

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operations ended at different times, and when operation hours changed, we had to manually submit an application form, which resulted in an inevitable time lag.

To comply with regulations, such as J-SOX, the company also needed a way to link single incident reports to single events without the confusion of automatically recording overlapping events.

Solution

The company selected Aegis to move from its existing paper-based system to web-based forms. The improvements have been dramatic. "We can change operations hours and handle urgent maintenance, with the updates showing instantly on screen. Thus we eliminated any time lag between when we submit applications and actual operational hours. We can also administer the history and registration details from a central location, so we can quickly browse reference data when setting operational hours," a Fujitsu staff member explained.

Aegis also uses a web application to control Micro Focus AppManager®, which automatically stops issuing alerts during server maintenance. The staff can now set the start and finish for up to two weeks apart, with three-day extensions. For added reliability, the staff can't start an operation until the start and end times are entered, and when the end time is reached, monitoring begins automatically. Aegis also keeps track of who submitted what kind of web application to ensure internal controls are maintained.

Results

Alerts that used to flood in during server maintenance have been eliminated, as have the troublesome emails that advised each operator to ignore the alerts. "Needless alerts have been minimized, so we can concentrate on improving the way we handle more important warnings and further enhance efficiency," a CAC staff member said. Aegis automatically turns off monitoring and alerts per server and per monitoring unit during server maintenance.

"To comply with J-SOX and other regulations, we needed to link incident management with modified events in the case of failures." Takezawa explained. "To do this, we needed to automatically record all events using the incident management tool, but automatically registering overlapping events created confusion. Thus one of the reasons we installed Aegis was to record one event per incident."

Astellas plans to expand the way it uses Aegis in the future. "We are considering using Aegis to automate our processes where a pattern develops for handling certain types of alerts." Tsukuda said. "We also plan to improve efficiency and reliability for operational management by extending the Aegis application services. I think there is good potential for improving reliability and efficiency for operational management by not only linking Aegis application services to the monitoring tool, but also using it for disaster recovery, pandemic response and so on."

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