Site Monitoring Tools Help Prevent Downtime

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO DETECT PROBLEMS

BY DAVE YOUNG

In order for an ecommerce site to sell products and services, it must be continuously available to online customers. Any downtime could potentially cause a retailer to lose thousands of dollars. Consequently, an important element in any online endeavor is having a structure in place to monitor a website's performance systems.

"There are many services necessary to keep an ecommerce site running optimally," said Manish Chowdhary, founder and CEO of GoECart.com. According to Chowdhary, in addition to loading DNS, HTTP, HTTPS, and database services, ecommerce sites need to load quickly. And while some of the ecommerce services that need to be monitored may be foreign to you, there are services available to help a merchant monitor a site for maximum uptime.

GoECart, which provides shopping cart software and ecommerce solutions, offers a more advanced monitoring option to their clients where a script simulates a user conducting an online transaction. "This ensures virtually every aspect of the site is tested (including DNS, HTTP, HTTPS, and database services) and accessible," said Chowdhary. "At GoECart, we use the collective intelligence derived from the monitoring reports of hundreds of our merchants. This allows us to quickly detect and correct even the slightest problems."

AlertSite provides a suite of site monitoring tools to monitor all aspects of a website. "We monitor all the basic site services such as HTTP, HTTPS, SMTP, FTP, Database, DNS, TCP ports, but only the database monitoring requires involvement or awareness by the ecommerce customer," said Jim Chard, AlertSite's vice president of Business Development.

In addition, there are several other aspects and services site owners need to monitor, including those behind a firewall and on the network in front of a firewall. "For example, we monitor customers' websites and services from 35 locations. And by utilizing various geographic locations around the world, we can alert customers when their sites experience problems from any of the locations," Chard said.

AlertSite also conducts measurements from the end user's perspective where the system monitors many elements that come from Content Delivery Networks (CDNs), advertisers and other objects. "These objects include price feeds, news crawlers, product inventory/updates, product configurators, portfolio management, mapping functions, search functions, weather updates, and streaming audio or video," Chard said. Importantly, each impact performance, but are not directly controllable by the customer.

Retailers can also utilize DéjàClick by AlertSite to dynamically create scripts that measure website and Rich Internet Applications (RIA) performance continuously while simulating the activity of end users from locations all over the world.

RIA incorporates environments like Flash, Java, and similar platforms that support video, animation, sound, and interactivity that contribute to a website's look and feel. "Customers can upload scripts directly into their AlertSite account and begin monitoring transactions from multiple locations within minutes," Chard said. Users can also view detailed performance and availability measurement reports, edit monitoring intervals and notifications, and analyze the results of changes to their virtual business transactions.

DéjàClick by AlertSite technology also eliminates the need for technicians to prepare and write scripts. "Our transaction monitoring is established by using the click stream of a transaction to generate monitoring scripts, thereby eliminating the need for programmers and developers," Chard said. ∎

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