

Opsview improves service levels for UKCloud's customers and delivers dramatic savings in support team costs

Specialist, multi-cloud provider enhances visibility, scalability, and reliability of cloud infrastructure as Opsview frees up IT team to concentrate on enhanced services by saving thirty support hours per month.



The Challenge

To provide a holistic view of the health of over eighty technologies and thousands of endpoints. The traditional nature of UKCloud's original IT monitoring platform meant that UKCloud was no longer deriving the value or service required and was at risk of missing critical incidents and outages. Consequently, UKCloud's CloudOps team was forced to spend more and more time writing scripts to support its evolving technology choices and rapidly scaling platform, essentially building a bespoke monitoring service. UKCloud's team did not have the time, the resource or the desire to write bespoke monitoring scripts on an ongoing basis, so they looked for an off-the-shelf solution which would provide visibility, reliability and scalability all in one, operator-friendly package.

Another challenge the team faced was that they needed a technology partner who could provide effective IT infrastructure monitoring and automated alerting, covering a very diverse range of digital environments, so that UKCloud could identify and resolve issues before any downtime or customer impacting issues occurred.

Finally, UKCloud required a multi-tenanted, on-premises solution that could be run in their secure datacentres, backed by local, security cleared personnel.

To summarise, UKCloud was looking for:

- Multi-tenant, on-premises, secure software
- Improved observability and control across multi-cloud technology stacks
- Holistic view from a single pane of glass
- Improved support team productivity through out-of-the-box capability and automated monitoring
- Scalability and reliability to support their planned business growth

SUMMARY:

● PROFILE

UKCloud provides secure multi-cloud infrastructure and services to organisations in regulated and secure environments in the UK public sector. UKCloud's mission is to enable customers to reduce the time, cost and risk of their digital transformation, delivering better services for citizens and better value for taxpayers. IT monitoring is vital in ensuring reliable service provision and security for users; their mission critical services must be available 24/7, so outages and downtime are not an option.

● LOCATION

UKCloud is the only UK sovereign strategic cloud provider with UK government approved secure datacentres, based in Farnborough and Corsham, and operates thousands of IT infrastructure endpoints, across the most secure and sensitive environments.

● INDUSTRY

Focused exclusively on the UK public sector, UKCloud's multi-cloud platform supports hundreds of organisations, from central government to local councils, from healthcare trusts to police constabularies.



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DAVID FIELD, HEAD OF AUTOMATION AND SERVICE RELIABILITY FOR UKCLOUD.



The Opsview Monitor solution

A rigorous and extensive proof of concept (PoC) conducted by UKCloud ensured that Opsview Monitor met all their requirements but was also able to do far more than the incumbent solution. This included demonstrating that infrastructure issues that had been missed by the previous solution were picked up by Opsview Monitor. It became clear that Opsview Monitor would be capable of monitoring much more than originally expected, and the monitoring remit was expanded to all parts of UKCloud's IT estate.

As a result of the successful PoC, UKCloud decided to form a strategic partnership with Opsview, with its monitoring capabilities covering UKCloud's entire current and future IT estate. UKCloud leveraged Opsview Monitor's rapid deployment, immediately providing better visibility across the whole estate. The complex implementation was rolled out during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, yet it was all done quickly and remotely with support from Opsview's consulting experts to ensure best practice.

Opsview Monitor was instantly able to provide enhanced observability. In fact, Opsview's ability to monitor across a very wide range of technology out-of-the-box meant UKCloud now had a holistic view into how operations were performing and could see any potential issues before they might spiral into customer-impacting problems. Immediately the team was able to derive more detailed and yet more relevant information from each monitored endpoint across Windows and Linux, quadrupling the amount of monitoring data available for analysis.

Opsview Monitor's flexibility has also enabled UKCloud to introduce automation improvements. For example, UKCloud uses Opsview Monitor to alert when an SSL Certificate will expire and provides automation to facilitate renewal. These certificates are crucial to security, and failure to renew them before expiration could provide a potential backdoor to bad actors. However, with Opsview Monitor on the case, the UKCloud team does not need to use staff to manage this important activity, enabling better use of their skills. UKCloud has also integrated Opsview Monitor with its Configuration Management Database (CMDB) meaning it is able to have a clear record of infrastructure performance and availability, resulting in better service level measurement and return on investment.

As a UK-based, sovereign cloud provider, UKCloud also gained full benefit from Opsview's local customer service team. Being able to offer a support model that allowed the UKCloud team to access customer support and engineers in the same time zone was a huge help in rapidly resolving questions, with Opsview providing a personal level of support not seen with other vendors.

UKCloud felt that Opsview enabled a symbiotic relationship: "We can get the team on the phone straight away, which is extremely reassuring when there is a problem in process", said David Field, Head of Automation and Service Reliability for UKCloud. "Opsview Monitor was rapidly rolled out live and provides us with the assurance that we have a complete view of what is happening across our IT estate. Most importantly, Opsview rapidly gained trust across our business, as it just gives us so much more information and intelligence than before. It's transformed our IT operations and enables new product options for our customers such as UKCloud's Managed Monitoring as a Service."

• SOLUTION

Opsview Monitor was chosen to provide automated and centralised visibility of the health of the entire UKCloud IT estate, alerting UKCloud staff to every potential IT fault or incident in their customer's systems. It was essential that the solution be easily implemented to immediately provide time-savings to the UKCloud CloudOps team. Bringing together IT health status from across a complex multi-stack estate into a single pane of glass, providing a modern monitoring solution that scales with UKCloud's growth and provides an attractive and intuitive user experience for the UKCloud CloudOps team.

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• BENEFITS

Opsview Monitor has delivered a step-change in the reliability of incident detection and alerting which has saved UKCloud at least thirty support hours per month by removing the requirement to write the many scripts needed to ensure its previous legacy monitoring solution could even support its wide range of technologies. UKCloud estimates that 60% of the monitoring team's time was devoted to maintaining and managing the previous solution – with Opsview Monitor's proactive approach to IT monitoring - this reduces to just 10%. This saving, plus the ability to identify and fix issues quickly has enabled UKCloud to free up team time to concentrate on enhanced service provision to customers and on-board more customers without increasing staff resources.

The result – “it’s like leaping forward twenty years in terms of UI design”

Opsview has revolutionised UKCloud's IT monitoring capabilities, enabling it to monitor from a business service level, down through applications, to all individual components of the technology stack - unmatched granularity that was not available in the previous product. For example, the support team is now able to monitor individual network ports on switches or data traffic flows. They are also able to see what patches need to be applied in what components across the entire infrastructure, ensuring security is maintained. Plus, with everything displayed via a real-time single pane of glass, the user experience has been transformed.

“Using Opsview Monitor is like leaping twenty years into the future in terms of UI design”, continued Field. “It’s easy to understand, it’s visually appealing and it’s much nicer to use.”

Opsview has also changed how the CloudOps team operates for the better. “They’re much more self-sufficient, as they can now use standard templates. We used to lose at least thirty hours per month just writing scripts to support the previous monitoring software, and even then, issues were missed which led to downtime and customer dissatisfaction. This meant, on average, 60% of the team’s time was just spent on monitoring, which was not sustainable. Now, with Opsview, it’s more like 10%” explained Field.

Notable benefits of Opsview for UKCloud include:

- **Improved incident detection**, accelerating resolution times
- **Single pane of glass visibility** for a wide range of technologies and end points
- **Secure on-premises software and services** to deliver the confidence and integrity required by UKCloud’s customers
- **Unhindered growth**: Opsview is able to scale in line with UKCloud’s ambitious customer acquisition plans
- **Team performance and motivation**: time has been freed up, letting the support team focus on growth areas; working with the confidence that if an issue were to occur, Opsview Monitor would alert them instantly and Opsview’s team are on hand if more assistance is required.

“It’s been like a breath of fresh air having Opsview as a partner. With time and cost savings derived thanks to Opsview’s comprehensive solution, the team now has the confidence of the entire business and customers alike.” concluded Field.



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