

Nippon Express Reduce Downtime with CCSS's IBM WebSphere MQ Monitors

September 24, 2008 – QSystem Monitor, the performance and application monitoring solution created by the IBM® i and System i™ specialists, CCSS, has helped logistics experts Nippon Express (USA) Inc to reduce downtime through vigilant monitoring of their important IBM WebSphere® MQ* environment. New York based Nippon Express rely heavily on the MQ application as it provides a direct communications channel to US customs, and as such, is an integral part of their business process. Any undetected problems in the environment can potentially seize this vital communications link and impact the otherwise reliable flow of logistics that Nippon's customers depend on.

The team at Nippon operate two System i platforms which directly support the business applications and productivity of over 1,500 users. Helping them to maintain their high standards of efficiency for these systems is QSystem Monitor, one of three CCSS solutions currently installed. With an immense capacity for monitoring virtually any component in the IBM i environment, QSystem Monitor recently added application monitoring to the rich list of functionality that already includes system, disk, network, job and availability monitoring. With this solution in place, Nippon is able to extend their pro-active approach to systems monitoring to their MQ environment with dedicated monitors for MQ Queue Managers, Listeners, Channels and Queues.

Shin Nakamura, Systems Analyst at Nippon Express, explains the importance of this functionality in their demanding environment, "We made some very significant gains with the CCSS solutions, from freeing up valuable disk space by removing millions of deleted records to achieving 84% time improvement in important data transfers, but like all System i shops, we're not immune to issues and unforeseen events. It only takes a single situation where downtime was saved and customers were spared the resulting inconvenience to quantify the value of a solution that prevents all that. We faced that very situation recently; fortunately QSystem Monitor alerted us and we were able to rectify the problem before there was any negative impact on our customers. The time and money saved by avoiding downtime was immediately obvious."

The recent situation at Nippon typifies one of the many circumstances that can lead to potential problems. In this case, a member of their applications team was troubleshooting some issues on an MQ Queue, and as a matter of routine, contacted the 3rd party vendor. As sometimes

happens, the vendor required remote access to carry out the troubleshooting task. QSystem Monitor immediately alerted Nakamura to the fact that the MQ application was down and he was able to restart it. An investigation of the problem determined that the 3rd party vendor had shut down the whole MQ subsystem in his troubleshooting exercise and had forgotten to restart it.

Nakamura says, “It could have been a lot worse; if QSystem Monitor was not installed, we could have been faced with several hours of downtime. In the logistics business, those few hours can mean the difference between a vital shipment leaving or arriving on time, or being held up in customs because we lost the comms link with them. Our reputation is built on efficiency so we can’t afford to suffer with these kinds of delays. Thankfully with QSystem Monitor in place, we don’t have to.”

Since implementing the CCSS solutions, Nippon has been able to measure that each operator spends 87% less time monitoring and, as this case shows, still keeps one step ahead of any system issues. In this example, a critical status monitor was tripped when the subsystem went down. These status monitors can be implemented throughout the application so when a problem is detected and a status monitor triggered, a team like Nippon’s can quickly pinpoint the cause of the problem and in many cases take action to prevent it from reoccurring in the future. Typically, Nippon is able to use the history logs to reduce problem resolution time from 60 minutes to 10 minutes. Performance indicators on MQ Channels including Bytes Received/second, Bytes Sent/second, Compression Ratio, Compression Time, Exit Program Time, and Network Time also offer valuable insights when analyzing or investigating issues.

WebSphere MQ monitoring is available in QSystem Monitor V12 (R9).

* IBM WebSphere MQ formerly known as MQSeries®.

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About CCSS

CCSS develops, supports and markets IBM i (on IBM Power™ Systems, AS/400®, iSeries®, and System i) performance monitoring and reporting, message management and remote management solutions. An Advanced IBM Business Partner, CCSS develops powerful solutions to support some of the world's most demanding IBM i environments across many industries including insurance, banking, pharmaceutical and manufacturing. All CCSS solutions are IBM ServerProven.

Existing customers that rely on CCSS's feature-rich solutions include leading organizations such as Volvo, Mattel, Newell-Rubbermaid, The Royal Bank of Scotland, Siemens Medical, RWE npower and Waterstone's.

CCSS is headquartered in Gillingham, Kent, UK with key regional headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA; Bonn, Germany and Makati City, Philippines together with a global agent network spanning Portugal, Brazil, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden.

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