

Ecora More Attractive to Large Enterprises with Auditor Pro 4.5

An ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES® (EMA™) White Paper
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Executive Summary

Focusing on the expanding IT management challenges inherent in today's complex enterprise-level organizations, Ecora has announced the release of Auditor Pro 4.5. With improved reporting functionality, greater control over data collection capabilities, facilities for tracking compliance status, and new integrations into third-party Help Desk and CMDB solutions, Auditor Pro 4.5 significantly increases its attractiveness to businesses with large IT implementations.

Addressing the Needs of Large Enterprises

Increased complexity has greatly magnified the IT challenges faced by all modern IT implementations, but with an exponential effect on enterprises with particularly large IT environments. The increased need to provide advanced connectivity through tools like Web services, SharePoint portals, and messaging, along with new technologies like virtualization, and an increase in server sprawl has not only broadened the need for specialized IT support, but has also increased the requirement for proper security practices. This has led to a greater utilization of firewalls, DMZs and restricted servers. Further increasing the complexity of today's network topologies is the need to circumvent those security practices to provide accessibility for authorized personnel through VPN connections, encryption services and remote access tools. IT managers are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain control over these complex IT implementations.

With improved reporting functionality, greater control over data collection capabilities, facilities for tracking compliance status, and new integrations into 3rd party Help Desk and CMDB solutions, Auditor Pro 4.5 significantly increases its attractiveness to businesses with large IT implementations.

As if the complexity problem were not challenging enough, the proliferation of regulatory requirement practices has become particularly commonplace in large enterprises, further burdening IT management and support staff. A 2006 Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) survey revealed that 96% of the respondents had implemented formal standards and guidelines for IT compliance management with more than half of these reporting the standards as critical to successful operations. Although tools are typically employed to automate standardized processes to ensure compliance is achieved, the reality of heterogeneous environments along with the broad range of IT requirements often evolve into the utilization of many disparate tools that are not integrated and require repetitive duplication of effort to manage effectively.

Recognizing these challenges, Ecora has augmented its already comprehensive Auditor Pro systems management solution with the release of version 4.5 to further simplify the IT management process, improve business processes through integration with other IT system management tools, and ensure the achievement and sustainability of regulatory compliance.

Ecora Auditor Pro

Founded in 1999, Ecora was established to ensure the accurate documentation of complex IT infrastructures. Recognizing the need for greater visibility into configuration changes in large IT implementations, Ecora established the Auditor Pro family of products to help businesses maintain reliable IT environments, prevent business debilitating downtime, increase security, and achieve regulatory compliance.

Ecora Auditor Pro enables prompt problem identification through regular polling of configuration elements and by tracking IT component changes. An agentless process is employed for this data collection to facilitate fast and easy implementation and to ensure quick return on investment. By providing the necessary information to perform true root cause analysis on recurring problems, this process enables a proactive method for IT management rather than relying on the ineffective break/fix cycle of reactionary firefighting. Not only are the number of overall IT problems reduced, but the path to resolution of new incidents is reduced since the cause of the problem can quickly be identified. Further, with “Who Made the Change” reporting functionality, Ecora tracks key data on the cause of change events. This adds accountability to the support process by identifying who is responsible for implementing a business affecting change.

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The collection of critical IT environment data is ineffective if not presented in a clear, functional format, and Ecora Auditor Pro provides very effective reporting features. The Web-based Compliance Center allows types of users to be associated with specific “roles” so that reports can be generated according to the job functions they perform. This is of particular interest to businesses needing to achieve regulatory compliance as IT professionals can quickly generate proof of compliance reports specific to the IT field under audit. “Out-of-the-box” regulatory report packs (including SOX, HIPAA, PCI DSS, and many others) further simplify the process of providing proof of compliance.

New Features in Auditor Pro 4.5

Ecora has enhanced many of the features and functionality of Auditor Pro with the release of version 4.5. Not only does this product expansion improve functionality and value for existing users, it also makes the product more attractive for a wider audience, including businesses with very large IT implementations. New and enhanced features include:

Reporting – Ecora has both expanded on its core reporting functionality for its supported platforms and added new support for additional platforms, including Cisco ASA, Z-Linux, CentOS and Oracle Enterprise Linux. The redesigned reports are easier to read and provide a more effective scope of information to ensure overall health of the IT infrastructure can be quickly determined at an executive level while disseminating critical problem identification information to technical support personnel. Reports can now be generated in PDF, HTML or CSV formats, and improved support is provided for printing and access by mobile devices.

Regulatory Compliance – The new Compliance Center provides a single interface for both customizable compliance dashboards and compliance trend information. This facility allows IT managers and auditors the ability to monitor trends in IT status to ensure the environment stays within the bounds of accepted standards.

Data Collection – Additional control over what data is collected allows businesses to fine tune their implementation for faster, more efficient performance and to reduce storage requirements. By customizing the data collection granularity to only include the data that needs to be managed and monitored, IT administrators can more quickly identify prob-

lems with those critical support areas, enabling a faster path to resolution. More frequent and broad data collection can also be enabled for systems that are associated with a greater level of risk, such as financial servers or business critical production servers.

Optional Agent – In order to address increasing security and business requirements requiring more complex network topologies, Ecora has provided an optional agent-based solution to supplement its agentless architecture. By utilizing an agent, secure servers, remote servers, and servers behind firewalls or on a DMZ can now be monitored. With Auditor Pro 4.5, this agent is available on Windows-based platforms, but support for additional architectures is planned for the future.

Integration – New integration with both BMC Remedy 6 and HP Service Desk 4.5 ensures unexpected change events are promptly reported to IT support staff and provides confirmation of planned, approved changes. Additionally, CMDB integration ensures configuration and asset databases are also kept up to date, made consistent across systems management tools, and are more reliable by eliminating the need for manual data entry.

EMA's Perspective

As businesses grow, they want to be sure that the tools they have implemented will scale with increases in both the business and IT requirements. Ecora's decision to develop solutions for large IT implementations not only broadens its appeal to large businesses, but also to smaller businesses that anticipate future growth and need a solution that can scale with them. The new Compliance Center, optional agent and improved reporting capabilities included in the 4.5 release of Auditor Pro help achieve this level of scalability.

Broadening the support to include additional platforms and providing integration with third-party solutions are arguably the most important inclusions Ecora has made in this release. Since the majority of large businesses have already implemented system management tools, Auditor Pro's value is increased if it is utilized to augment, rather than replace, an existing solution that does not provide the same level of compliance and configuration assessment capabilities, but does provide other system management functionality. IT managers are much better served by the implementation of integrated solutions than by relying on "swivel chair" administration and home-grown methods for utilizing multiple interfaces.

EMA recommends IT managers looking for a scaleable solution to reduce complexity and achieve regulatory compliance in both medium and large IT infrastructures implement Ecora Auditor Pro 4.5.

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About Ecora

Ecora Software provides Configuration Audit and Analytics solutions that allow a proactive view of the IT infrastructure and deliver actionable evidence ensuring critical business services remain operationally effective, secure, and compliant with internal standards and external regulations. Auditor Professional™ offers immediate value with its agentless architecture matched with rich report templates and pre-defined policies providing the foundation for effective change and configuration management. For more information, please visit www.ecora.com.

About Enterprise Management Associates, Inc.

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst and consulting firm dedicated to the IT management market. The firm provides IT vendors and enterprise IT professionals with objective insight into the real-world business value of long-established and emerging technologies, ranging from security, storage and IT Service Management (ITSM) to the Configuration Management Database (CMDB), virtualization and service-oriented architecture (SOA). Even with its rapid growth, EMA has never lost sight of the client, and continues to offer personalized support and convenient access to its analysts. For more information on the firm's extensive library of IT management research, free online IT Management Solutions Center and IT consulting offerings, visit www.enterprisemanagement.com.

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