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MAY 13, 2004 | WWW.NWC.COM

For IT By IT

10TH ANNUAL WELL-CONNECTED AWARDS



● NETWORK COMPUTING has been recognizing outstanding tech products and services with its Well-Connected Awards for a decade.

By Mike Lee

Network & Systems Management

» Well, our Well-Connected Awards issue is finally an institution—10 years and counting. These awards take the pulse of the technology industry and reflect the best of what IT has to offer.

At NETWORK COMPUTING, we spend the year testing products and services in our Real-World Labs®, analyzing vendor claims and assessing the key technology markets. We grade each product with the same criteria you use to make purchasing decisions.

Although it would be ideal to perform all tests just before the awards are decided, that simply isn't possible. With the breakneck pace of product releases, some of our award winners will have revved by the time you read this. The awards are a snapshot in time, the best of what we evaluated over the past 12 months—and here's hoping the new versions are even better than those we tested.

Taking Care of Business

Network and systems management—and the programs comprising this area—have moved up the business stack. These programs now monitor and manage more of the business services and applications that matter. IT's ability to comment on how critical business processes are performing raises our visibility and enhances our contributions toward keeping our companies healthy. When management is done right, IT can use current technologies to offer a holistic view of transactions in language that business owners understand—rather than just commenting on bits and bytes, latencies and resources.

It's essential to use this seat at the table to help shape long-term IT strategies. But that's only part of the story. Mundane yet vital—and sometimes black-hole-like—tactical matters, like desktop management, patching, and systems and configuration management, continue to be fundamental elements for all IT shops, regardless of size or business type.

This category's winners and finalists span this gamut, from the most basic to the highly strategic. Some require the deep pockets and long-term commitment commonly associated with strategic applications, while others are more immediately available and useful, costing less than your daily Big Gulp to own and operate.

Systems Management

● **WINNER:** Heroix eQ Management Suite 2.0.* Heroix Corp., (800) 229-6500, (617) 527-1550. www.heroix.com

Heroix eQ Management Suite clobbered systems problems for us. In addition to hunting and gathering data using agents, eQ offers useful suggestions. The well-designed interface gives you an overview into systems performance networkwide, while letting you publish custom reports to any number of constituencies.

FINALIST: OpticNerve 3.1 (version 4.1 now available). Oculan Corp., (877) 643-3294, (919) 534-0500. www.oculan.com

HEROIX
Find it. Fix it. Forget it.

* Heroix now has Heroix eQ V3.0 available