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Insight / Networking

SolarWinds and ServiceNow ride the wave of networking pain points to fortify positions

Analyst: Nikolay Yamakawa 15 Jul, 2014

The results of the recently completed Networking Wave 11 study show that SolarWinds and ServiceNow are capitalizing on the evolution of pain points that networking professionals are facing in 2014. The vendors have strengthened their positions in a number of markets, with the highest enterprise spending intentions in the network management category. SolarWinds fortified its lead in network performance management, network-based application performance monitoring/management and in network fault monitoring. ServiceNow took the pole position in the configuration management database (CMBD) space, where SolarWinds maintained second place for implementations between the studies.

The 451 Take

Pain points faced by networking professionals today are not the same as a year ago – monitoring is the most common challenge in 2014. SolarWinds and ServiceNow were able to capitalize on the evolving set of pain points by fortifying their positions in enterprise network management markets with the strongest spending intentions in 2014.

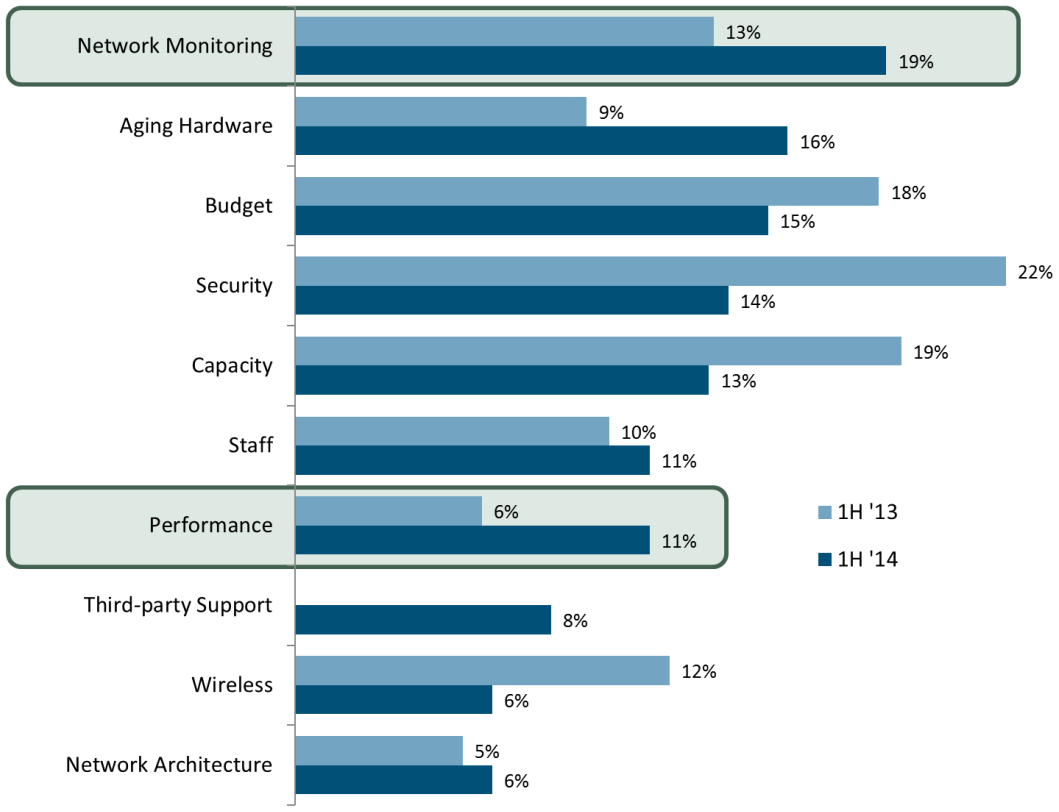
Network monitoring becomes the most common pain point

Monitoring climbed atop the list of top networking pain points at large and midsize enterprises in 1H 2014, leaping ahead of security, capacity and budget, which were the top three in the prior study. The evolution of networking pain points reflects the interdependent transformation that is happening across the enterprise IT function. Having a 'single pane of glass' view of the underlying infrastructure is one of the most challenging functionalities in networking that SolarWinds and ServiceNow are helping industry professionals to achieve.

- "One of the challenges today is monitoring, visibility. Basically today it's not enough that you say it's not the network [that's a problem]. It's how do you fix the problem? It's the end-to-end visibility; we're struggling with coming up with a set of tools. We have tools, server guys have their own tools, [I have my tools], I say it's not my problem. [We need] something that will stitch up whether the problem is the server or the network or something, a pane of glass that will guide you [to] what services to look at [to fix the problem." – LE, Healthcare/Pharmaceuticals
- "[Pain points] Managing all the devices – we don't have a single pane of glass. Cisco Prime for APs, Nagios, etc. Looking at SolarWinds and Quest." – LE, Consumer Goods/Retail
- "Visibility monitoring – issues with single pane of glass monitoring." – LE, Consumer Goods/Retail

Network monitoring is now the most common pain point with 19% of selections, up from 13% in the prior study, while performance has nearly doubled in selections from 6% in 1H 2013 to 11% in 1H 2014. The two pain points are often related, since better visibility into underlying infrastructure can pinpoint problem areas affecting the performance.

Networking Pain Points – Time Series of Top Categories



Q. What are your top networking-related pain points? List up to three.
1H '13, n=152; 1H '14, n=161.

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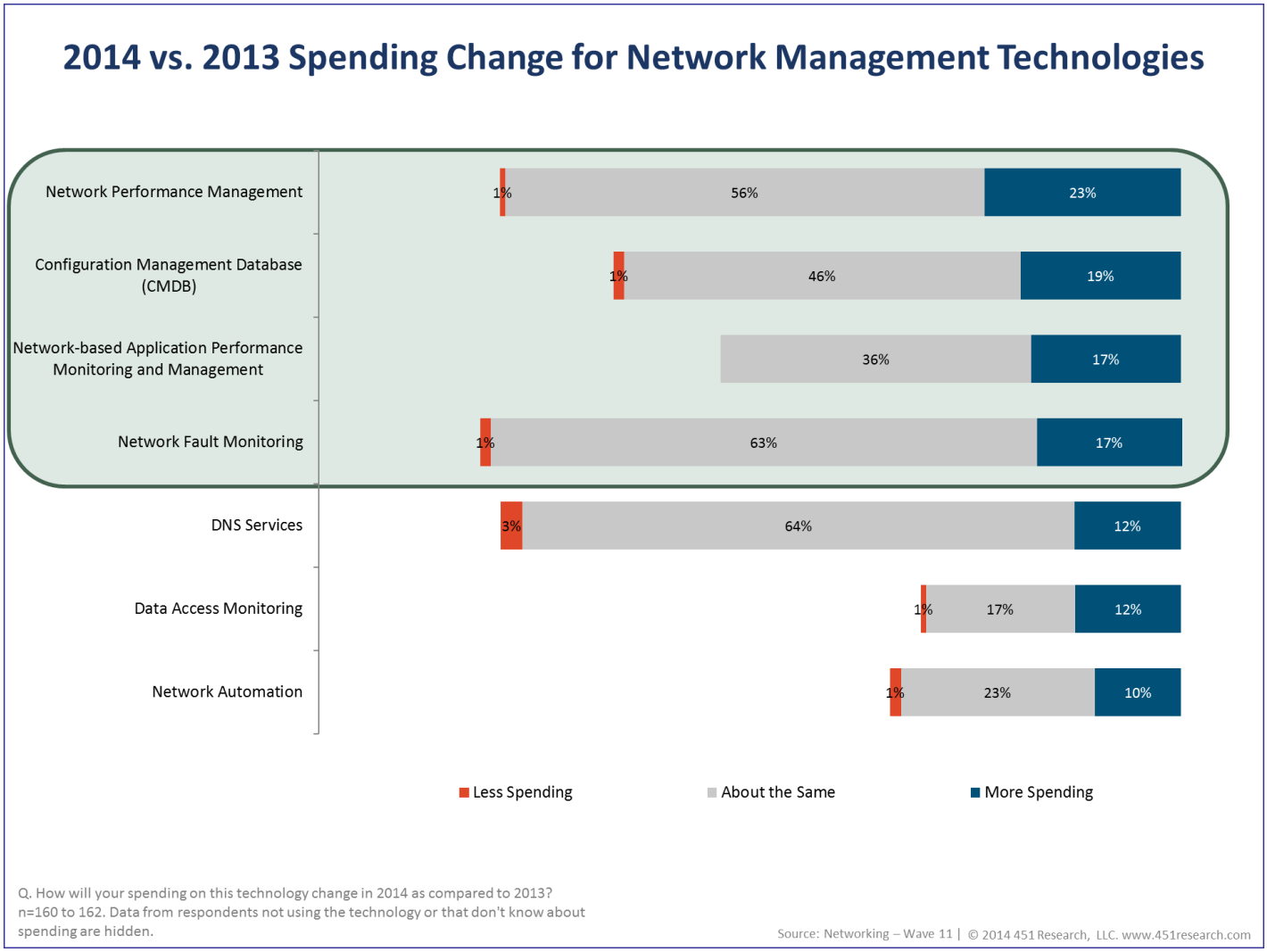
The variety of monitoring tools used by enterprises today and integration issues between these tools are pushing networking professionals toward consolidation. Managing false positives in network monitoring also remains a challenge at some enterprises, as does the difficulty in pinpointing application performance issues in cloud infrastructure.

- "More related to infrastructure, too many monitoring solutions that don't integrate well with each other so you can get a holistic picture of application performance end-to-end." – LE, Energy/Utilities
- "Monitoring and alerting – false positives; how to manage and get rid of them." – LE, Materials/Chemicals
- "Performance issues. Difficulty pinpointing the cause within firewall and distribution level." – MSE, Education
- "Now we're in a cloud environment, it's managing the minor, the partial issues. Applications running slow, usually so far they've had performance issues, tendency to blame the cloud infrastructure. In reality, it's back to the application vendor, incorrect configuration of the application layer, protocols, database interfaces. Old basic issues made cloudy." – MSE, Public Sector

Network management technologies have positive spending intentions in 2014

It will fall on the shoulders of vendors competing in the network management technologies category, such as SolarWinds and ServiceNow, to alleviate monitoring and performance-related paint points that decision-makers have on their agendas today. All of the technologies in the network management category have positive spending intentions in 2014 that outweigh budget cuts.

Within the network management technologies category, network performance management has the largest percentage of enterprises planning to increase spending, equating to 23% vs. just 1% planning to curb spending and 56% with flat budgets. CMBD has the second-highest number of enterprises with spending increases in the category amounting to 19%, followed by network-based application performance monitoring/management and network fault monitoring with 17% each.



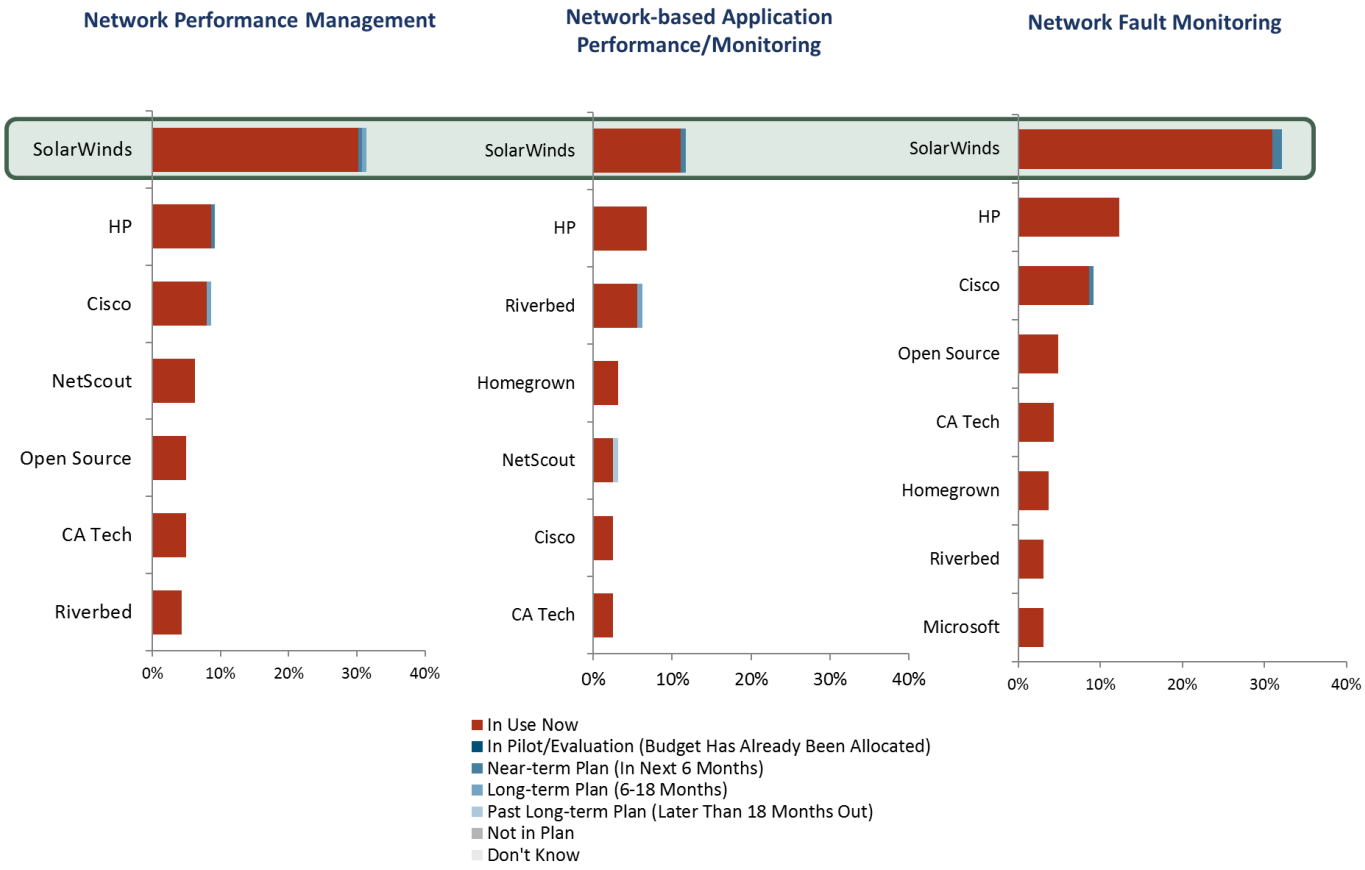
There is currently a plethora of vendors that are vying for attention in the network management space. Enterprises often use more than one offering to achieve the desired results, but consolidation is already on the minds of many networking professionals as they bump into integration challenges and pursue new levels of efficiency. A recently published 451 Research report, 'Cloud, mobile and end users drive consolidation in the performance management space' (client login required), discusses how consolidation is expected to continue in the IT performance management market going into 2014.

- "We have everything, but don't use much of it efficiently. Some point solutions and network-wide implementations." – LE, Energy/Utilities
- "We have too many solutions and need to consolidate." – LE, Healthcare/Pharmaceuticals
- "We struggle with all the offerings, what is the correct combination that would work for us?" – MSE, Education

SolarWinds fortifies its position in the network management space

SolarWinds has fortified its lead in a number of technologies from the network management category, including network performance management, network-based application performance/monitoring and network fault monitoring. The company has more than three times the selections of second-place HP in network performance management and in network fault monitoring. HP was able to climb ahead of Cisco to second place in both technologies in between the studies, while SolarWinds increased the difference in implementations, further separating itself from the second-place vendor between 1H 2013 and 1H 2014.

Selected Network Management Technologies



Left Chart, n=162. Middle Chart, n=162. Right Chart, n=162.

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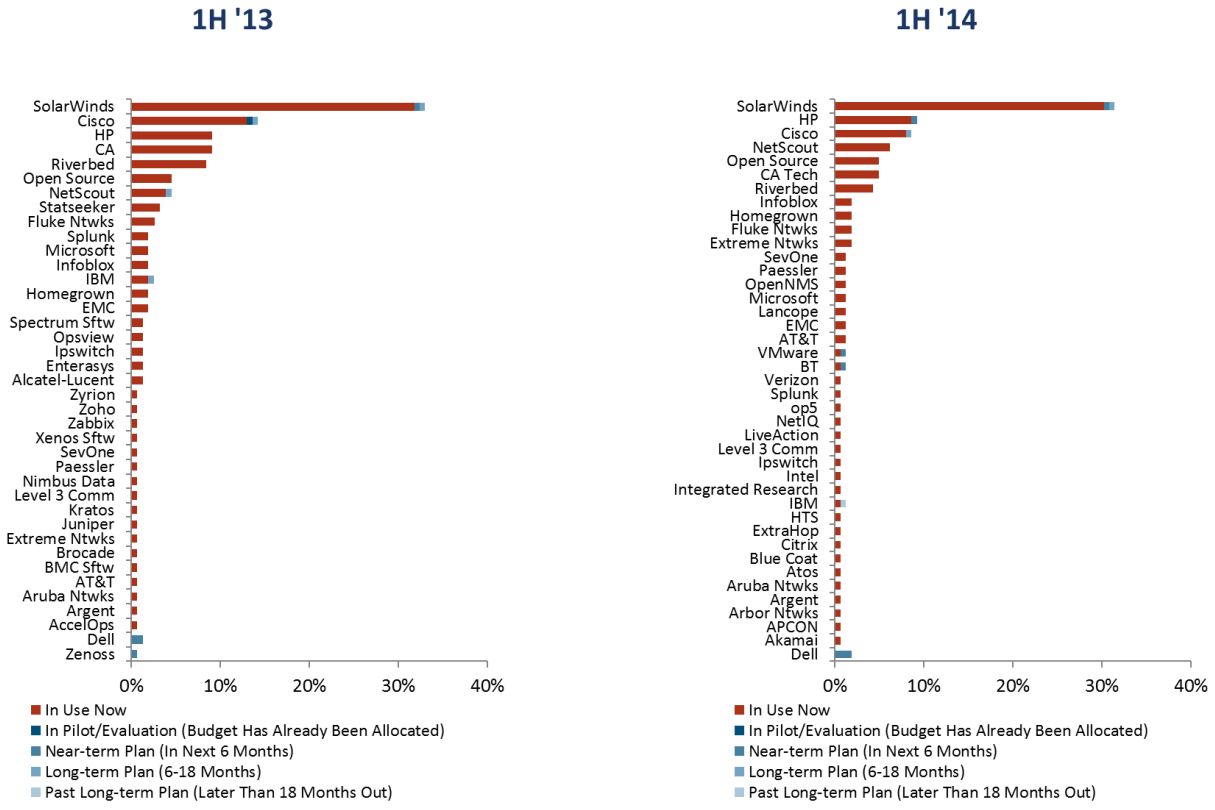
Network Performance Management – Time Series



1H '13, n=154; 1H '14, n=162.

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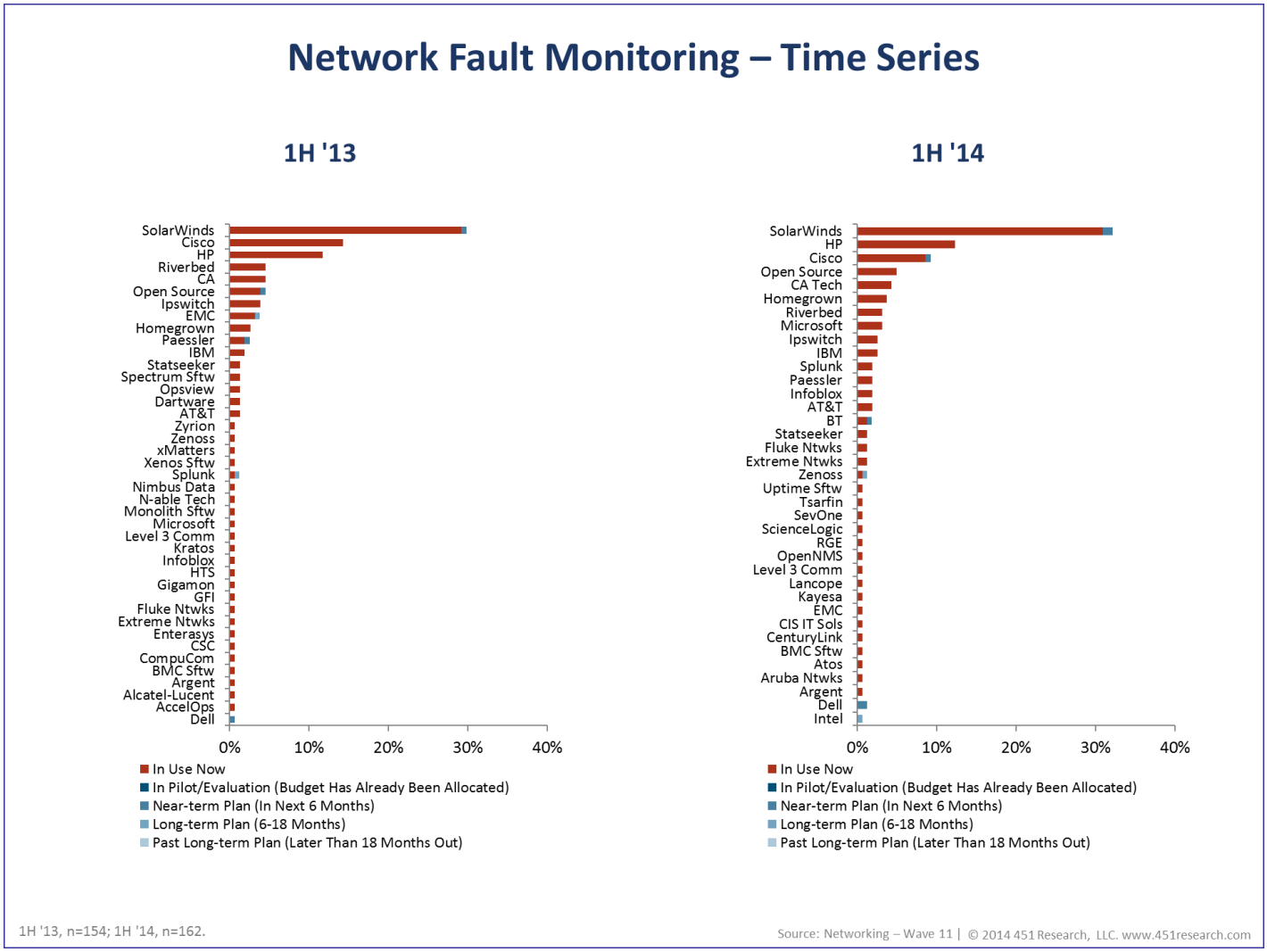
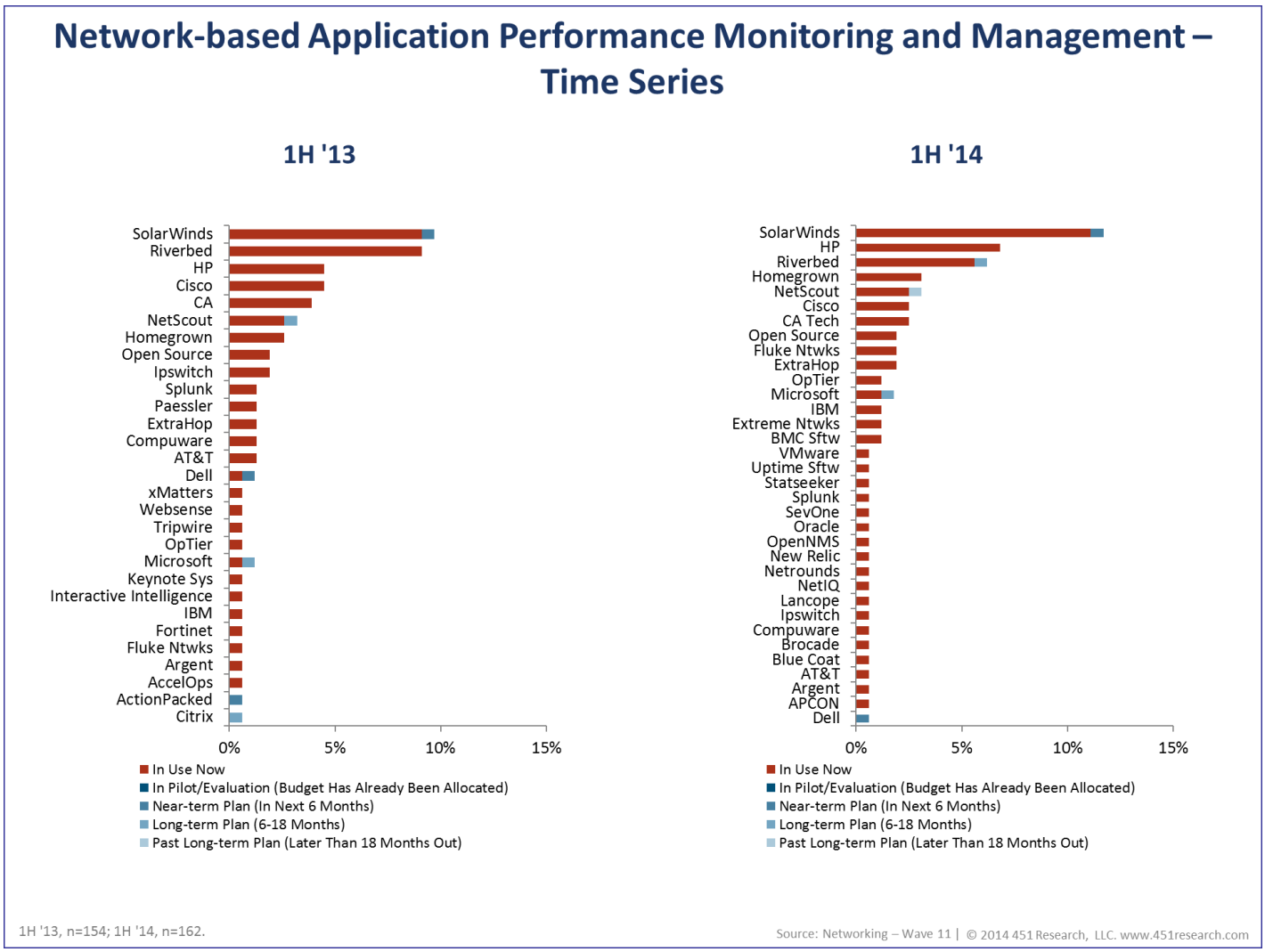


In addition, SolarWinds received the highest number of selections for implementations in network-based application performance and management in 1H 2014, breaking away from Riverbed, with which it shared the lead back in 1H 2013. Riverbed is now third for implementations, as HP was able to secure second place for implementations in 1H 2014.



Ease of integration and value for the money are some of the factors that helped SolarWinds strengthen its competitive stance, but there is still room for improvement, according to our study participants. For example, improvements in customer training and a more intuitive graphical user interface (GUI) are a couple of the aspects that our commentator network believes SolarWinds can improve on. We will soon be publishing a Customer Assessment report from the recently completed Networking Wave 11 study that will include the latest customer ratings for SolarWinds.

- "They are very in tune with all vendors, very vendor-agnostic, play nice with all of 'em. A big selling point when you have a diverse network with multiple providers and equipment." – LE, Energy/Utilities
- "Nobody can beat the value proposition of SolarWinds." – LE, Telecom/Technology
- "Training for their applications. It has a lot of functionality, and they don't have a lot of training out there for it, it just kind of is, and it works. But there are advanced features that most people don't know about it. Only because of some in-house stuff they did recently do I know that it exists. Having that available gives us ability to monitor at a different level. Other things that go bump on the circuits I can track and send alerts out, didn't know I could do alerting off it or how to do alerting off it. And they're starting to do it [training]." – LE, Energy/Utilities
- "SolarWinds has good, reliable monitoring. Good overall product. Downside, it takes a lot of work at learning it. They really need to be a lot more intuitive." – LE, Telecom/Technology
- "SolarWinds can do a better job with offering a more intuitive, robust help system on their Web-based GUI." – LE, Telecom/Technology

SolarWinds draws a line between itself and HP in monitoring, but this line may not be permanent

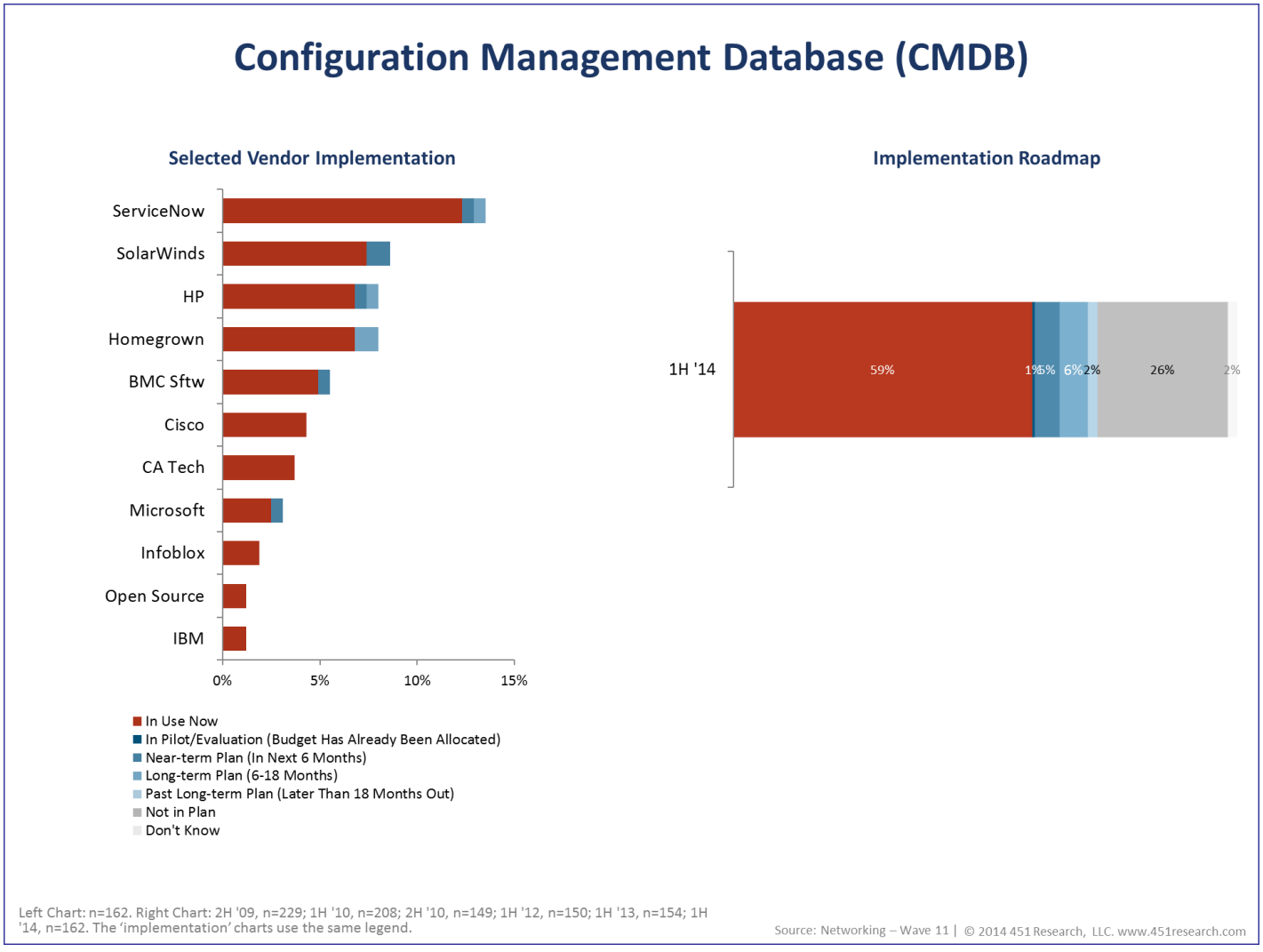
SolarWinds was able to draw a line between itself and other peers in the network monitoring space, such as HP, which gathered the second-most implementations in the three markets discussed in the previous section. Whether this line will remain permanent as monitoring needs evolve is yet to be determined. The tools that SolarWinds provides for network monitoring are lower-impact than those from HP and other peers. Some of these tools are offered free of charge, while others are less expensive than those offered by HP and other peers. It is possible that as monitoring

strengthens its lead as the most common pain point in large and midsize enterprises, decision-makers may need the higher-impact tools that HP, Riverbed and other competitors bring to the table. Riverbed acquired OPNET in 2012 and is now offering network monitoring as a feature of the broader offering.

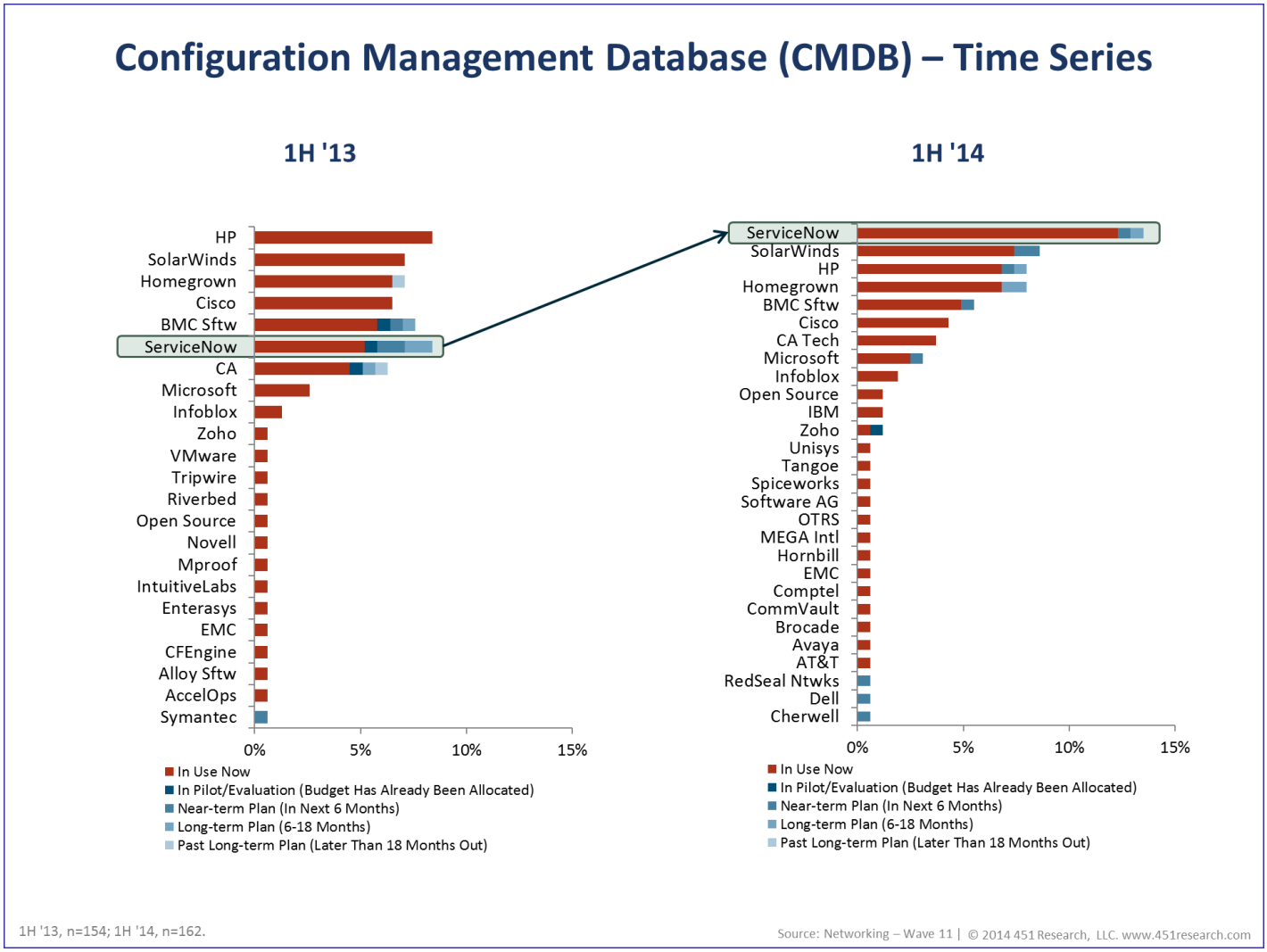
A recently published report by 451 Research, titled 'Network Visibility and Monitoring: What's Going on in There, Anyway?', discusses the network visibility and monitoring space in more detail and estimates the potential size of the market opportunity to reach nearly $3bn by 2018. Network monitoring is one of the few areas in networking where Cisco is not a dominant player. We can expect additional changes to unfold in this space that will test the line that SolarWinds was able to draw between its lead and the competition as enterprise needs evolve and consolidation continues.

ServiceNow takes the main stage in CMBD

ServiceNow raised the eyebrows of a few larger vendors, including SolarWinds, as it took the pole in the configuration management database (CMBD) market. A recently published report by 451 Research, titled 'ServiceNow continues to move beyond the helpdesk, IT,' discusses SolarWinds' proliferation in the enterprise space and touches on the automation component of its CMBD offering. The established lead is a positive sign for the emerging vendor, since CMBD has high upside potential in the network management category, equating to about 18%, on top of the 59% that are already using the technology.



ServiceNow displayed the highest number of selections for future project plans among CMBD vendors in 1H 2013 and has successfully converted them into in-use implementations in 1H 2014. The vendor climbed from sixth place for in-use cases to first place between the studies. The ability to replace several non-integrated systems with one offering helped ServiceNow to clinch a leading role in this expanding market.



- "ServiceNow replaces four nonintegrated systems for 2015 total rollout." – LE, Consumer Goods/Retail
- "Working on that now. Just because we had several different tools doing the job that this one vendor [ServiceNow] could provide everything all together. Just an enhancement of the service that we can provide." – LE, Materials/Chemicals

Changes in underlying infrastructure and interdependence between different resources are contributing to networking professionals' need for a 'single pane of glass' view of the IT ecosystem. Network monitoring is now the top pain point at large and midsize enterprises, while performance challenges are also gaining traction. The evolving set of pain points that networking professionals experience today are providing opportunities for some vendors and challenges for others as enterprises continue to switch their horses in search of more efficient operations.

SolarWinds and ServiceNow have many differences between them, but they also share something in common – both were able to capitalize on the evolving set of networking pain points to fortify their positions in markets with growing spending intentions. Whether the established lead is sustainable in the long run remains to be seen.

TheInfoPro maintains a Commentator Network of IT professionals, and conducts in-depth telephone survey interviews with respondents in regular waves of research. The latest wave of the Networking Study is being published in July 2014.

This report falls under the following categories. Click on a link below to find similar documents.

Company: ServiceNow SolarWinds

Other Companies: Cisco, HP, Nagios Enterprises, OPNET , Riverbed, Quest Software

Analyst(s): Nikolay Yamakawa

Sector(s):

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