SB Payment Service Automates Log Management and Boosts Operational Visibility

SB PAYMENT SERVICE CORP.

Executive summary

A leading online payment and financial service provider under the Softbank Group, SB Payment Service Corp. offers more than 40 types of electronic payment methods, supporting billions of retail stores in Japan and leading to a total transaction of over 2.5 trillion yen in 2017. As business grew, however, the company faced challenges in monitoring the increasing number of servers. Since deploying two Splunk solutions, it has seen benefits including:

- Streamlined operations and resources monitoring
- Enhanced operational performance management
- Faster response to system failures and user requests

Why Splunk

As business continued to grow and thrive, SB Payment Service had to manage a surging number of servers to support its databases and frontend, merchant-facing applications. It was a labor-intensive task to extract and correlate logs from multiple servers just for answering a single inquiry from a merchant. Monitoring server status was equally time consuming. As the Operations Group had to go through a vast amount of text-based information to trace an incident, real-time anomaly detection was out of the question and system-status monitoring was limited to experts because of its complexity.

These challenges drove the company to seek a new solution to automate log management and optimize server monitoring. Impressed by Splunk's global expertise and solid international reputation, SB Payment Service had no hesitation in adopting Splunk's technologies despite its limited track record in Japan's log analytics market at that time — as early as 2010. After using Splunk Enterprise, SB Payment Service saw a real difference and decided to bring in Splunk IT Service Intelligence as well.

Automated log management boosts efficiency and facilitates operations

Splunk Enterprise offers a central analytics platform which automatically collects, stores, indexes, correlates and analyzes logs in

Industry
- Financial services

Splunk Use Cases
- Log management
- Business analytics

Challenges
- Inefficient operations due to labor-intensive log analysis and correlations
- Complexity in server monitoring with time-consuming, human-based workflow
- Ineffective system failures tracking and anomaly detection

Business Impact
- Streamlined operations with automatic, proactive log management and analysis
- Enhanced efficiency due to intuitive, visualized server management
- Effective performance management with full visibility into business operations
- Accelerated response to issues and fault management

Data Sources
- Logs of gateway devices (for external connections)
- Application server logs
- Database server logs
- Web server logs

Splunk Products
- Splunk Enterprise
- Splunk IT Service Intelligence

real time. Not only does it offer alerts and insights to allow users to quickly uncover performance problems, but it also visualizes system status in graphic form on an intuitive dashboard. SB Payment Service can now keep a vigilant eye on the atypicalities and malicious incidents occurring within its server infrastructure, resolving issues right away and responding to inquiries in a timely fashion.

The company also enjoys instant information access with Splunk's Search Processing Language, which is easy to learn and use. Gone are the days when the team would spend a day handling a single request. By entering a keyword into the search box, the operator gets the log information immediately.

The Operations Group can get end-to-end visibility at any point by simply scrolling down the dashboard screen, and can easily monitor all servers in real time. This enables Operations to understand their resource usage patterns, and also allows the team to optimize resource usage accordingly to provide a better end-user experience.

Operational performance visible at a glance

In order to make the monitoring process intuitive enough for even non-tech-savvy users including business managers and C-level executives, SB Payment Services has further deployed Splunk IT Service Intelligence (ITSI) as a cost-effective add-on to Splunk Enterprise.

An AI-powered analytics tool, ITSI enables users to map IT services with key performance indicators to easily pinpoint what matters most, and to see how these services are correlated through a graphical interface. Every item is color-coded to indicate whether the service is running smoothly, whether a warning is on and whether an error has occurred. In other words, users can now monitor system health at a glance. The tool is also very user-friendly — it only took the Operations Group half a day to set up everything.

"Although there are other visualization tools similar to the Splunk solution, its log analysis function is absolutely unmatched. Everything is done automatically, giving us total peace of mind."

Akira Suzuki, Operations Group, System Operations Department
SB Payment Service Corp.

SB Payment Services is also impressed by ITSI's deep dive feature, which enables users to proactively drill down into the culprit of issues while digging out the root cause of service degradations through correlation analysis. Users can also trace incidents in chronological order and easily collaborate with each other by sharing new information to deep dive into, facilitating problem solving and troubleshooting.

Accelerated response to incidents and inquiries

ITSI not only allows users to monitor data on the Splunk platform, but also works well with other visualization tools SB Payment Service has deployed. This allows the Operations Group to access multiple points of the heterogeneous environment on a single dashboard and drill down to details of problems, obtaining comprehensive insights into the root cause of incidents and tackling the problem in no time.

Moreover, SB Payment Service is making full use of ITSI's machine learning function to learn patterns and eliminate costly false alerts by identifying anomalies with advanced analytics. Meanwhile, the company is also planning to extend the use of the Splunk platform from the server level to networking devices to power a wider scope of operations.

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