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## PremiTech's Passive End User Experience Monitoring Agent Is Performance-Oriented

The Forrester Wave™ Vendor Summary, Q3 2007

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PremiTech has revamped its old Citrix-based end user experience monitoring solution with a coat of new technology and an attractive software-as-a-service (SaaS) sales model. The company's Performance Guard 5.0 product scored highly in our evaluation, with a strong focus on problem-solving and performance root cause analysis.

### PREMITECH'S SOLUTION IS BEST SUITED FOR PERFORMANCE MONITORING

PremiTech specializes in end user systems management. Their passive agent Performance Guard solution is currently in its fifth release and is offered through a new software-as-a-service (SaaS) model. Headquartered in Denmark, the company was founded in 1999 and claims a global portfolio of over 200 clients.

Forrester evaluated PremiTech's current offering and strategy for passive agent end user experience monitoring against approximately 43 criteria (see Figure 1). Overall, the product has strong performance management features but lacks application debugging functionality, especially in terms of content errors. This means that the product is an especially good fit for buyers that:

- **Are concerned by true performance at the end user level.** Especially when it comes to evaluating the performance of standard applications and Citrix-based applications. PremiTech has a long history of measuring all the performance parameters that could be used to manage application performance issues.
- **Are attracted by the flexibility of software-as-a-service (SaaS).** SaaS is gaining ground as a distribution model. In many cases, especially when IT operations want data without the extra burden of deployment and a flexible licensing scheme, SaaS provides a solution that is ideally suited for hosted or outsourced applications.

To see how PremiTech stacks up against seven other competitors, see the Forrester Wave™ evaluation of the passive agent end user experience monitoring market.<sup>1</sup>



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**Figure 1** PremiTech's Solution Evaluation Overview

CURRENT OFFERING

Architecture	Performance Guard is an enterprise-class J2EE platform running on Windows/SQL Server consisting of collector, database, and reporting engines that can be separated for scale. The collector collects, transforms, and inserts data into the database, including centralized management of agents. The agent leverages standard software distribution. The reporting engine is self-contained, enabling server installation in one hour and full deployment in a day. Reports are HTML-based and accessible from any browser. There are 200-plus standard reports as well as health check reports with analytics for desktops, network, and Citrix systems.
Agent architecture	The agent installation uses standard software distribution mechanisms (executable file and MSI). After installation, the agent contacts the Performance Guard collection module specified during installation at any set interval (the default is 3 minutes). A single server can support more than 40,000 users. The collector checks for updates when the agent delivers data, making it centrally managed. It also uses the same agent for desktops, servers, and embedded XP.
Initial configuration	Performance Guard requires no upfront configuration. By default, it monitors all users and IT services all the time. The system automatically groups users by subnet. Standard enterprise applications are autodiscovered and grouped as are application ports and URLs. This also pertains to special infrastructure components such as the Citrix Presentation Server. The reporting interface is set up with a default of nearly 200 different standard reports. Active monitoring such as server pings and network trace-routes are supported in the same passive agent technology. This is also managed centrally.
Type of data collected	Performance Guard collects common desktop and desktop component resources such as CPU, memory, processes, and context switching. For the network, it collects activity, load, latency, trace-routes, and pings. For all applications, the agent monitors response time, availability, and load for application ports accessed at the network level. For Web applications, it is able to monitor at the application level for each unique URL accessed. For client/server applications, it can monitor specific transaction steps that can then be grouped in real holistic business transactions as these are performed by the real users.
Updates and changes	For default monitoring, no changes are required. For Web applications, new URLs will automatically be monitored unless explicitly filtered out. For client/server applications, if the instrumentation is done, the solution automatically starts recording the new functionality. Setting up more complex applications, including advanced Web application filtering, is done as a service by PremiTech or consulting partners. Straightforward adjustments to the default monitoring like URL filters can take anywhere from one hour to a few hours of consulting.
Desktop load	Performance Guard uses less than 1% of the desktop CPU. As a result, the agent can be implemented in low-performance embedded XP thin clients without a noticeable user performance impact. Network load is about 2 KB to 3 KB every three minutes. This can be set lower, helping to ensure the collection server scales in enterprise deployments.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

**Figure 1** PremiTech's Solution Evaluation Overview (Cont.)

CURRENT OFFERING

Reporting links/interface	Reports are generated by the Performance Guard server and accessed through a standard browser without adding load to desktops or servers. The reports use few kilobytes of network capacity (typically 20 KB to 40 KB per report.) Performance Guard, by default, archives daily reports as HTML or PDF documents and stores these on the Performance Guard server for historic documentation purposes. This is done without adding network load unless accessed on the desktop, Citrix, or other servers. In addition, the data also resides in the database for custom reporting purposes for as long as requested.
Monitoring capabilities	The agent collects response time, availability, load, and network quality for all users and all IT services and applications all of the time. Specific to each desktop or server, it collects common desktop resources from a hardware and software perspective. Network data includes bandwidth, network load, latency, trace-routes, and speed. Citrix data includes all hardware and software resources, users, sessions, login times, ICA network latency, back-end application response time, and availability, among others. For user behavior, Performance Guard monitors Web functionality accessed by all users as it does for client/server applications. The agent captures nonavailability and reports this to the server.
User monitoring capabilities	Performance Guard, by default, monitors all transactions by all users all of the time, at both the network level and a level above this. It also monitors Web and client/server business transaction monitoring. For Web applications, it default monitors the average time that it takes for a Web server to respond to a user request, and for client/server applications, it uses instrumentation to capture the time that it takes a transaction or each of the subcomponents in a transaction to respond to user requests. These components are then grouped into a holistic transaction.
Real-time capabilities	Performance Guard automatically suggests thresholds that can be adjusted and creates alerts displayed in a dashboard if violated. From the Performance Guard dashboard, the alarm report can be accessed with a single-click drill down. The dashboard has default views for alert types, locations, or applications. Custom views can be created by uploading a custom image upon which alerts are posted. Alerts can also be sent to email or in real time to a third-party central console (e.g., OpenView, Unicenter, etc.) In enterprise deployments, alerts are based on a group of users to avoid alert storms.
Console integration	Performance Guard has a dashboard for alerts that show a summary of alert type, by application, location, or custom views, in which case the dashboard can receive an image upon which the customer can place the alert points dynamically. The detail of the alert is accessed directly from the dashboard. Alerts can also be sent via email, or as SNMP traps to other consoles or third-party tools. In all cases, the SNMP trap contains pertinent information for routing the alert as well as references back to the Performance Guard server to see drill-down details on the alert.
Reporting capabilities	Performance Guard has good archive, export, and performance management capabilities but does not focus on transaction debugging and content error handling.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

**Figure 1** PremiTech's Solution Evaluation Overview (Cont.)


CURRENT OFFERING	
Product scalability	Installations of more than 40,000 users can run on a two-server installation. The solution is limited not by the number of transactions captured, but also by the number of end users reporting performance data and the number of users generating reports. For this reason, the Performance Guard server consist of collector, data store, and reporting modules that can be run on separate servers for scalability.
Integration with other products	Performance Guard integrates with standard systems like HP OpenView, IBM Tivoli, BMC Patrol, and is CA Unicenter Smart-certified. Alerts are sent in real time using SNMP traps or directly to the systems management console through that console's agent.
Implementation scale	The majority of Performance Guard implementations are for all users: 100% deployed to typically 2,000 to 40,000 users. For these implementations, customers monitor both Web and client/server applications and in many cases also Citrix- or VMware-deployed applications. In some instances, the implementation is Citrix-centric, and the customer monitors all users and all applications that they access.
Time and cost of implementation	The Performance Guard server takes less than one hour to install, and a complete installation with agent deployment through a standard software distribution system takes less than a day. The product is offered as a service where customers receive the software, implementation, configuration, and setup, as well as consulting advice for a flat fee of \$10,000 for the first month. If the customer likes the solution, they can continue to rent it or procure it as a license. If it is procured as a license, installation and setup typically take a day.
STRATEGY	
Focus	PremiTech only offers Performance Guard.
Planned evolution	The vendor has a strong product road map with significant improvements scheduled. Exact details are confidential.
Go-to-market strategy	Performance Guard's main focus is service delivery. This means customers procure the product including services for implementation and results on a monthly basis. License purchase is also offered. Partnerships with complementary vendors like CA, BMC, HP, and IBM are in place to build better-integrated solutions.
Pricing	The product is well-priced in comparison with other solutions detailed in this evaluation.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

**Figure 1** PremiTech's Solution Evaluation Overview (Cont.)

MARKET PRESENCE	
Installed base	The vendor has more than 200 customers, including e-Trade, AAA, HSBC, CIBC, State Street Bank, Costco, and Mary Kay Cosmetics.
Employees	Confidential.
Revenue	Confidential.
Cash	Confidential.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.



Go online to download additional in-depth data and scores for this vendor and other vendors included in this Forrester Wave evaluation.

## SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

### Online Resource

The underlying spreadsheet for Figure 1 is available online. The spreadsheet includes more detailed data and scores for this vendor.

This detailed data and scores for this vendor are also available online through an Excel-based vendor comparison tool that provides detailed product evaluations and customizable rankings.

### The Forrester Wave Methodology

We conduct primary research to develop a list of vendors that meet our criteria to be evaluated in this market. From that initial pool of vendors, we then narrow our final list. We choose these vendors based on: 1) product fit; 2) customer success; and 3) Forrester client demand. We eliminate vendors that have limited customer references and products that don't fit the scope of our evaluation.

After examining past research, user need assessments, and vendor and expert interviews, we develop the initial evaluation criteria. To evaluate the vendors and their products against our set of criteria, we gather details of product qualifications through a combination of lab evaluations, questionnaires, demos, and/or discussions with client references. We send evaluations to the vendors for their review, and we adjust the evaluations to provide the most accurate view of vendor offerings and strategies.

We set default weightings to reflect our analysis of the needs of large user companies — and/or other scenarios as outlined in the Forrester Wave document — and then score the vendors based on a clearly defined scale. These default weightings are intended only as a starting point, and readers are encouraged to adapt the weightings to fit their individual needs through the Excel-based tool. The final scores generate the graphical depiction of the market based on current offering, strategy, and market presence. Forrester intends to update vendor evaluations regularly as product capabilities and vendor strategies evolve.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Forrester evaluated four independent vendors of desktop-based end user experience monitoring solutions across 43 criteria and found that the technologies used are relatively equal and well-adapted to the intended market segments, while the major differences lie in the way they report information. Serden Technologies and Knoa Software lead the evaluation but only just. Serden's strategy of providing extensive data-mining functionality gives its solution a slight edge in the ability to serve more than one market segment, and Knoa's current offering appears more mature than its peers'. PremiTech and Symphoniq closely compete, both forming part of the Leader category. While there are many other solutions on the market most are relatively old or very much application-specific. Focusing this evaluation on small creative vendors dedicated to passive agent experience monitoring as opposed to large multifarious enterprises allows us to examine this space's most innovative and generic technologies and leads us to a more balanced comparison. See the September 27, 2007, "[The Forrester Wave™: Passive Agent End User Experience Monitoring, Q3 2007](#)" report.