

# Aternity Announces Frontline Performance Intelligence Platform v5.0: No End User Left Behind

## Abstract

In May of 2011, Aternity Inc. announced the release of version 5.0 (v5.0) of its Frontline Performance Intelligence (FPI) Platform. The new version features multiple enhancements aimed at giving Line of Business (LOB) and IT stakeholders visibility to end-user behavior and application performance – “From the Edge on In.” Equipped with comprehensive application and desktop coverage, advanced, real-time analytics, and massive scalability, Aternity FPI Platform v5.0 is focused on reducing business disruption, increasing user productivity, and optimizing support resources. Real-time analytics enable proactive problem detection and probable cause analysis of end-user issues.

With General Availability (GA) scheduled for June of 2011, these enhancements provide comprehensive visibility to Windows applications running on physical or virtual desktops for ubiquitous End User Experience (EUE) monitoring.

This ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES® (EMA™) Impact Brief covers the details of Aternity’s announcement and positions it in context to a dynamic and constantly changing Application Performance Management (APM) industry landscape.

## Aternity Announces Frontline Performance Intelligence Platform v5.0

On May 24, 2011, Aternity Inc., headquartered in Westborough, Massachusetts, USA, announced the latest release of the Aternity Frontline Performance Intelligence Platform v5.0. FPI monitors, aggregates, analyzes, and reports on the three key elements that together define the user experience – application performance, device performance, and user productivity.

The Aternity FPI Platform analyzes, monitors, and generates autonomic performance profiles (or baselines) for every transaction. It leverages these profiles to maintain rolling baselines of “normal” performance behavior. When problems occur, the Aternity FPI Platform dynamically isolates impacted transactions and users and identifies both business impact and probable cause. This gives IT an immediate awareness of user-impacting problems before “frontline” users call the Help Desk.

Focused on monitoring and managing applications delivered to “internal” business users, this distinctive solution has been enhanced with innovative new features. They extend Aternity’s client-side APM capabilities with added support for Rich Internet Application (RIA). They also deliver Microsoft Outlook monitoring and reporting.

V5.0 adds new capabilities supporting faster Mean-Time-To-Repair (MTTR) with the addition of the End User KPI Dashboard, Real-time Application Profiler, and Boot Profiler. It features enhanced analytics supporting incident detection logic “calibration” and the ability to define incident detection priority by Line of Business. Finally, v5.0 features privacy compliance and expanded scalability, ensuring that the Aternity solution can grow with the business. The Aternity Frontline Performance Intelligence Platform v5.0 will be available by the end of June, 2011.

## Industry and Market Background

The applications delivered by today's IT organizations are the lifeblood of many businesses. Large companies report that downtime can cost in excess of \$15,000 per minute for technology-dependent organizations, as applications drive revenue, productivity, and brand value.

At the same time, these services become increasingly complex every year. Yesterday's state-of-the-art consisted of building applications to run as Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) composite services. Today, SOA is mainstream and componentized business services encompass both public and private execution platforms. They execute across traditional on-premise tiers and private Cloud, as well as public Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and even Software as a Service (SaaS), via integrations and middleware.

This combination of criticality, complexity, and abstraction is driving companies to re-think application performance management strategies. Many IT organizations are in search of new and better ways to monitor and manage application environments so complex that they can no longer be efficiently managed without leading-edge automation.

Some of the best minds in the industry have examined this problem and concluded that the endpoint is one of the best vantage points for monitoring transactions of this nature. As execution spans public and private infrastructure, IT loses control of much of the execution environment. At the same time, IT still has responsibility for service delivery, so application monitoring and triage become key capabilities for managing both vendor and user relationships. EUE management solutions, such as Aternity, are uniquely suited to deliver these capabilities.

## Announcement Details

Aternity's flagship functionality and key value proposition address the challenge of delivering visibility into the "real" user experience. The Aternity Platform combines real-time analytics with real user experience monitoring to automatically generate an "autonomic" profile, an advanced statistical model representing normal performance of each transaction within a specific application. Zero configuration and/or modeling are required on the part of the customer, and the model is leveraged by the Platform to deliver a wide variety of capabilities supporting a broad set of use cases.

An interesting differentiator is that Aternity not only automates the generation of performance baselines by location, subnet, target server, hardware configuration, etc., but also supports varying levels of deviation (from normal) sensitivity by Line of Business. For example, users in different locations, those using different desktop configurations, and/or those accessing different target servers will have different "normal" levels of performance. As another example, users in the same location with different levels of priority can have different levels of sensitivity defined (by the Aternity Platform) for incident detection based on baseline deviation. Stock trading personnel, for example, may require higher levels of priority and performance for certain transactions than clerical personnel developing reports using the same transactions.

The Aternity Frontline Performance Intelligence Platform v5.0 delivers enhancements in four key areas. They include:

- Enhanced Rich Internet Application (RIA) and enterprise Microsoft Outlook monitoring
  - *Web 2.0 "True Rendering" analysis:* For RIAs built on AJAX, client-side execution and rendering tasks are not visible to non-endpoint-based monitoring platforms. Aternity's new features deliver a fine-grained view of such applications, including start-to-finish transaction performance monitoring and analysis.

- *Microsoft Outlook*: Outlook is a difficult application to monitor and manage due to its architectural complexities. For example, Outlook can concurrently work with its local database as well as the Exchange Server, and it has a pluggable framework supporting a wide range of value-added services. Monitoring and troubleshooting are difficult without capabilities aimed at these unique features.

Google, Blackberry, or LinkedIn plug-ins, for example, can directly impact Outlook performance. Aternity, which previously monitored key Outlook activities like “Send Email” and “Open Email” has now expanded its Outlook monitoring to support additional environmental factors impacting Outlook performance. Examples include plug-ins, Microsoft Exchange Server connection status, Outlook OST/PST file size and location, email delivery size, Outlook add-ins, and number of items in the mailbox.

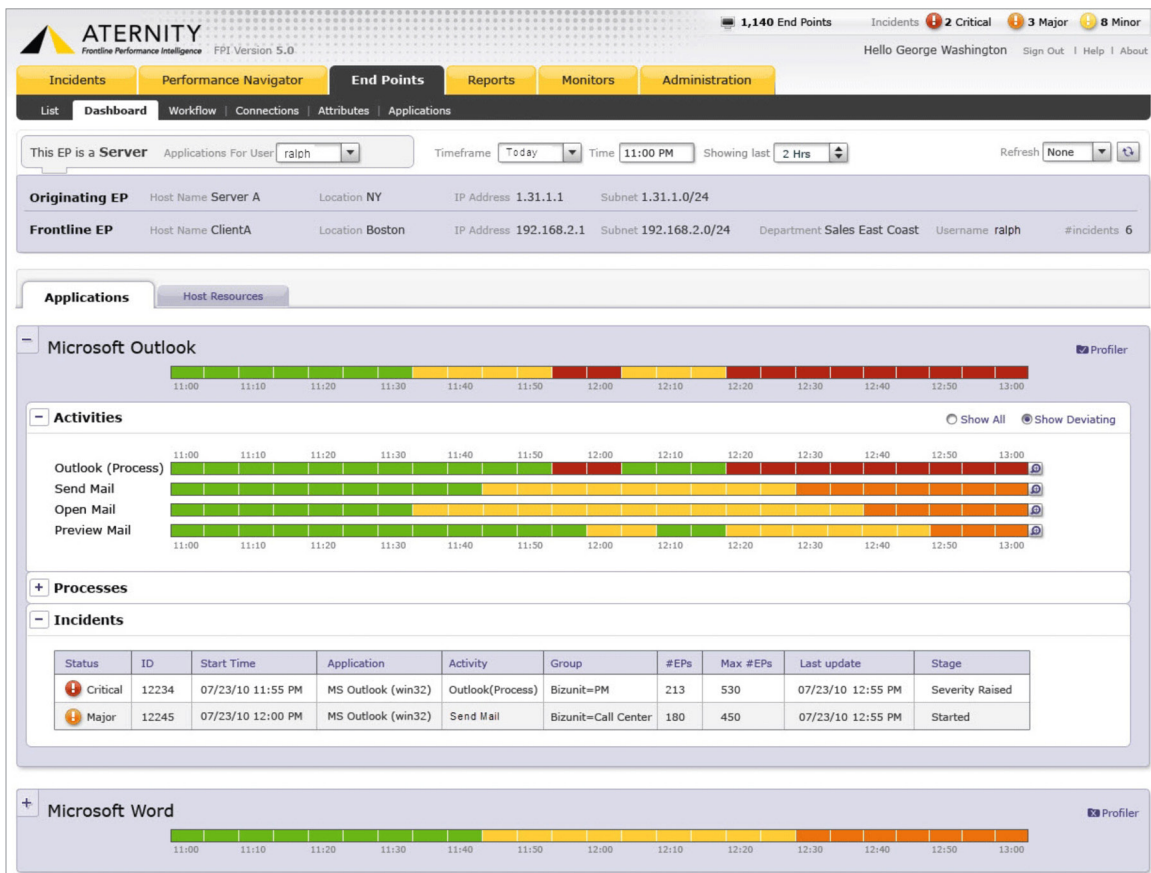
- Advanced, Real-Time Performance Analytics
  - *Incident Impact Analysis*: This feature “understands” the organizational impact of performance or availability incidents. Aternity v5.0 provides a deep-dive, “time machine” view of each incident with automated grouping of impacted users by location, configuration, role, etc. It also includes detailed drilldown into user-specific metrics (see Figure 1).
  - *Line of Business Severity definitions*: Different users, applications, and geographies have different levels of criticality. This new capability enables companies to define acceptable performance levels for different groups of users accessing the same application. This cuts down on “false positive” alerts, since the same transaction performing poorly can have different levels of criticality for group A versus Group B.



**Figure 1: The Aternity FPI Platform v5.0 Incident Impact Screen**

This view provides a “time-machine” perspective with drill down from incidents into individual user metrics. This breaks down deviating performance measurements by influencing factors and enables faster identification of probable cause.

- Faster Mean Time to Repair
  - *Boot Profiler*. Enterprise users often complain that PCs take too long to boot. This tool profiles the boot and logon process across drivers, services, auto-run processes, and group policies, identifying the top resource consumers at each step for each user.
  - *Real time Application Profiler (RAP)*: RAP pinpoints the contributing components of poor application performance for any Windows application out-of-the box, including issues with Internet Explorer, JavaScript, anti-virus software, and malware, in physical and virtual desktop (VDI) environments.
  - *End User KPI Dashboard*: This dashboard delivers an accurate perspective of service levels by user. It enables enterprises to rapidly identify host resource consumption and trends and correlates business transaction performance with resource consumption – for both real-time and historical data (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2: The Aternity End User KPI Dashboard Screen empowers Help Desk staff**  
Multi-dimensional, correlated view of factors impacting end user experience focuses on enabling Help Desk staff to troubleshoot end user issues before they become systemic issues

- Privacy Compliance and Scalability:
  - *Privacy Compliance Auditing*: User privacy regulations differ between countries. This feature allows information identifying specific users to be suppressed while their performance-related user experience details are being monitored.
  - *Increased Scalability*: Aternity has extended “single instance platform” support to 40,000 concurrent users and its Citrix monitoring threshold to 250 Sessions per Citrix Server.

## Differentiators and Key Value Proposition

- *Complements data center-centric APM solutions*: v5.0 fills a gap for companies leveraging APM monitoring solutions that are data center-centric. Aternity adds comprehensive visibility into end-user experience, derived by monitoring and correlating application performance, device performance, and user activity.
- *Increased scalability*: Scalability to 40,000 concurrent users supports enterprise-wide adoption for even the largest companies.
- Supports strategic IT and business initiatives
  - Real-time awareness and diagnosis of end-user problems through comprehensive visibility and proactive problem detection automates proactive management and reduces Help Desk calls.
  - Automated, real-time application profiling and probable cause analysis reduce business disruptions and MTTR.
  - Enables better evaluation and prioritization of planned infrastructure investments by providing evidence that proves proposed changes substantially impact performance (or not).
  - Optimizes application adoption, user productivity, and business processes based on precise insights into how users use applications.

## EMA Perspective

EMA research finds that while companies have invested in a wealth of enterprise management tools, they still lack fundamental capabilities necessary for managing applications. Almost 40% of companies surveyed own between 6 and 20 tools, and 17% own 40 or more. Nevertheless, 40% of CIOs cite “lack of tools” as being one of their top three concerns when it comes to managing enterprise applications.

Most companies own a host of point solutions targeted towards specific technologies or “silos;” however, the combination of metrics, user visibility, and flow data necessary for quantifying the end-user experience necessitates new types of tools that deliver a more holistic view of the application environment.

Although EUE solutions address this problem, only slightly more than 25% of companies currently have such solutions in place. EMA is seeing interest in EUE solutions accelerating as companies encounter performance issues and downtime that cannot be adequately (and cost-efficiently) addressed with manpower alone or through data center-centric toolsets. The challenges of managing public and private Cloud are driving adoption as well.

In this context, Aternity’s product announcement is impressive in that it targets critical requirements expressed by many IT organizations. Providing quality analytics tools to Help Desk personnel tends to be a problem, for example, as such tools require user level visibility that many competing products lack. The ability to tailor performance impact and alerting based on user and/or user group is also a distinctive differentiator.

Aternity's broad coverage of end-user experience across almost any type of application or Windows-based desktop (physical or virtual) is noteworthy. It positions Aternity very effectively for monitoring public and private Cloud from the perspective of the endpoint.

These enhancements demonstrate that Aternity is continuing to address new industry trends and issues with a growing array of value-add capabilities. They also show that, despite its growing success, this company is still responsive to customer requirements.

One caveat is that this solution is not intended, nor does it address, external customers such as eBusiness consumers.

However, for companies seeking better automation targeted at applications delivered to internal users, EMA highly recommends a review of Aternity's FPI Platform and value proposition. More information is available at: [www.aternity.com](http://www.aternity.com).

### **About EMA**

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst firm that provides deep insight across the full spectrum of IT and data management technologies. EMA analysts leverage a unique combination of practical experience, insight into industry best practices, and in-depth knowledge of current and planned vendor solutions to help its clients achieve their goals. Learn more about EMA research, analysis, and consulting services for enterprise IT professionals, lines of business users, and IT vendors at [www.enterprisemanagement.com](http://www.enterprisemanagement.com) or follow EMA on Twitter ([http://twitter.com/ema\\_research](http://twitter.com/ema_research)).

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