

Digital Experience Monitoring

A 6-point action plan



The age of the Digital Experience

Digital experiences are defining everything – both inside your organisation and outside of it.

The impact of global events has meant that digital engagement has been the only way for enterprises to engage with staff and customers alike, elevating its importance in sustained business success.

Therefore, it is essential that businesses accelerate digital innovation and discover new ways to enhance the digital experiences they offer, not just to remain competitive but to stay relevant.

The digital landscape today

3x

faster acceleration for **digital transformation** projects compared to pre-COVID-19 pandemic

75%

of technologists claim that their response to the pandemic has created **more IT complexity** than they have ever experienced

88%

of technologists predict that their **biggest challenge in 2021** will be the need to drive through **transformation at speed**



Digital Experience: a definition

Every individual digital interaction that a customer has with your business qualifies as a single Digital Experience.

From the time it takes an application to load to how easy your customer service ChatBot is to navigate, one customer can have any number of Digital Experiences in one single transaction.

Getting serious about digital experience

Getting serious about the digital experiences you offer goes beyond just levelling up with the competition. It's an opportunity to innovate and succeed in the experience-driven environment that is the modern digital playing field. Increasingly, businesses are recognising this and are aligning their digital experiences with their desired business outcomes. Gartner predicts that by 2025, [70% of business initiatives](#) will require IT & Operations (I&O) leaders to report on the business metrics from digital experience – a figure that's up from less than 15% today.

Digital experience matters to everyone

While many key business outcomes are outward-facing, the rise in remote working has rightly seen many organisations evaluate their inward-facing digital experiences. After all, it's just as crucial to delight staff with experiences that make their lives easier and more productive as it is to ensure deeper customer interactions are taking place online.

Regardless of whether it's for your internal staff or external customers, the expectations for an excellent digital experience remain the same:



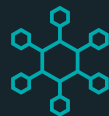
Fast



Responsive



Frictionless



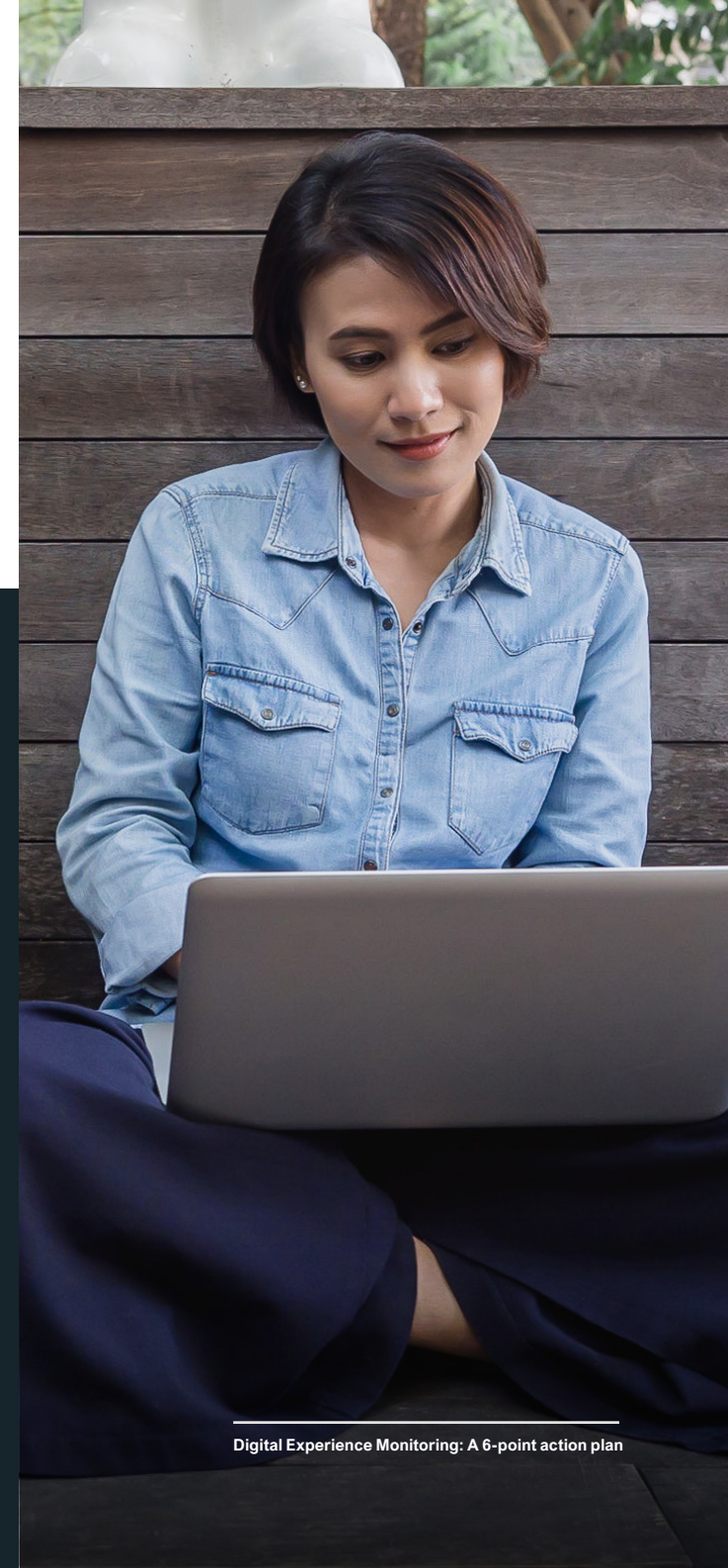
Cohesive



Consistent



Intuitive



Delivering high-quality experiences is tough

Many factors knit together to deliver the best digital experiences for your customer. Frequently, no singular action can be taken to improve the experience, so understanding the function of all the components behind it is essential. Achieving this relies on knowing the relationships between each part of your application stack, your network, and beyond. This interconnected set of apps, systems, networks, cloud services, and even the public Internet needs to be monitored and managed for the best results.



The Visibility Challenge

The rate at which businesses have had to digitise has meant that their IT environment has expanded quickly, and in many cases, chaotically. The resulting ecosystem creates enormous management challenges for delivering positive digital experiences. Point monitoring tools cover some of the landscape but fall short on integration and accuracy of reporting. Blind spots are appearing all over the distributed architectures organisations are now operating. The knock-on effect is increased Mean Time to Identify (MTTI) and to Resolution (MTTR) for issues and a rise in blame-shifting amongst IT teams. The new reality is that IT professionals need full-fidelity visibility into their entire architecture. Without this, meaningful insight into how performance issues with apps and services impact the customer experience and business KPIs is impossible.

Contemporary monitoring needs to transcend hybrid and multi-cloud environments, provide cross-stack insight, and look beyond the confines of your own network. Unfortunately, when it comes to your business-critical digital experiences, visibility gaps aren't acceptable.

Simultaneously, IT teams must also be able to:

- Justify every technology investment
- Innovate with confidence
- Appropriately harness the cloud
- Demonstrate ROI on spending

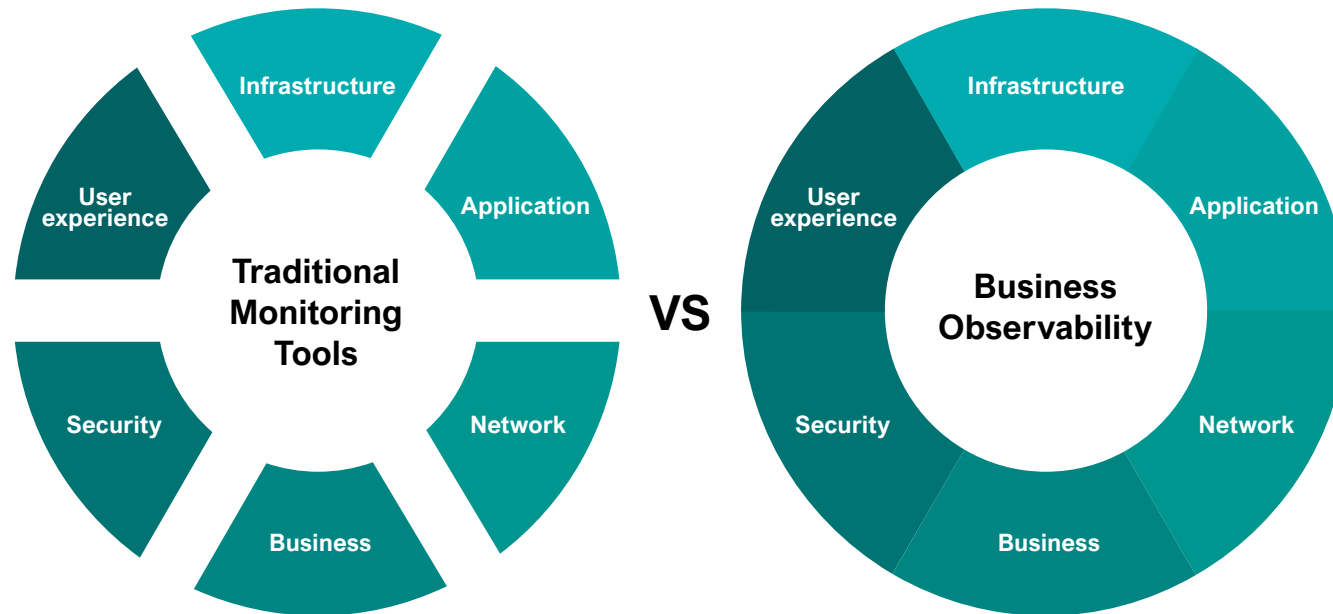
Without a wide-ranging view of what's going on in your environment, meeting these demands is challenging. The answer is Digital Experience Monitoring (DEM) and business observability. This requires deep visibility into every interconnection and understanding which link in the chain is eroding the experience you want to deliver. With this insight, IT teams get in front of the problems and can start to make informed decisions about everything to do with the experiences their customers receive and the investments they make in technology.



The rise of Digital Experience Monitoring and business observability

Digital Experience Monitoring has evolved from network monitoring, application performance monitoring, and End-User experience monitoring to allow businesses to achieve 360-degree visibility. With DEM, companies can connect the dots between IT and business value and begin to truly understand the business impact of good and bad digital experiences.

The result is total business observability over your entire service chain:



A single version of the truth

It's commonplace for a single digital experience to span many stakeholder groups within a business. For example, a customer opening a new account at a bank would be a significant action for sales, customer services, and compliance teams, each of whom benefits from insight into the quality of parts or the whole experience. Likewise, IT teams are invested in ensuring the same digital experience occurs smoothly for the customer. When the experience degrades, app, server, database, and network groups all face a war room to diagnose the issue and remediate.

The all-encompassing visibility of DEM enables cross-functional teams comprised of both business and IT personnel to gain a richer understanding of the factors influencing each digital experience. Working collaboratively with insights into operational and business impact, it becomes easier to define a coordinated response and establish a smoother path toward improvements that positively influence business measures like client retention, brand endorsement, and higher employee satisfaction.

With DEM, businesses can go deeper, monitor more, and deliver outstanding experiences.

So how do you roll-out DEM?

Having a solid action plan will get you there faster.

Example in action



The Natilik National Bank

The NNB wouldn't turn a customer away from one of its branches, so why would it accept a buggy mobile app or website that frustrates users and encourages them to look elsewhere?

Ensuring a great mobile app or web experience has a positive ripple effect on the entire business:

- Fewer calls into customer service team.
- More mortgage applications processed.
- Trusted reputation maintained
- Business growth and higher customer retention.

If you hadn't already guessed, the NNB is our fictional bank... we'll be hearing more from them later.

BANK



6 Steps to Building a Bullet-Proof DEM Action Plan

1. Decide what success looks like

There are a few indisputable successes that DEM brings to any business:

- ✓ The elimination of siloed monitoring
- ✓ Real-time business dashboards that monitor the here and now
- ✓ A unified perspective across all business functions

After that, it gets a little more bespoke.

First, get your users' perspective. Understand what they genuinely want and what frustrates them. Perhaps it's uptime, dwell-time, or latency?

If you're still unsure what to focus on, spend time with key stakeholders, even ask your customers to understand their desired outcomes better, and get to grips with the most pressing priorities. As with many budding improvement initiatives, opposing opinions can slow down progress, so an outside perspective and the objectivity that brings might be helpful.

Having consulted with all the right people, you can set some smart goals that they can realise.

Key reflection points:

- What first triggered the interest in improving your digital experiences?
- Which experiences do you most want, or need, to impact?
- Will your focus be internal or external?
 - **Internal workflows** are often easier to define and influence, but the pay-off may be less impressive.
 - **External experiences** may take longer to wrestle into shape but often provide a clear correlation with important business metrics like revenue and profit.



Example in action

Natilik National Bank focuses on improving its banking app

In-app feedback has revealed to NNB that their customers don't enjoy their mobile banking app experience. When the app was launched, customers averaged 6 weekly logins, but over the last 3 months, this has dropped alarmingly to 3. They fear they are losing customers from the service and potentially from their business altogether.

Reported issues have revealed limited app capabilities, including missing information when applying for loans and credit cards, excessive wait times when requesting account balances, app-crashes, and disproportionately more issues on Android versus iOS devices.

NNB has decided to enhance its mobile app experience dramatically. Their goal is to:

1. Enrich the app with more capabilities.
2. Increase security features.
3. Eliminate performance bugs and achieve 99.99% app uptime on all mobile platforms.
4. Reverse the trend on weekly sessions and achieve a customer average of 8 weekly logins.

2. Understand your starting position

Understanding where to start means baselining your performance today and looking at what advances are realistic.

Initially, the gains will be incremental and potentially not evident to those outside of IT, so hitting the quick wins first can help demonstrate ROI to the broader business and create some public approval.

The right tech is what enables you to do this baselining exercise.

3. Choose the right tech

Be sure to review the viable solutions and test and trial where possible. It's essential to select a solution that will work in harmony with your existing app stack and offer the range of visibility required to push your digital experience forward. Importantly, don't get distracted by technology insight alone.

Understanding the business value of IT is critical and is the real jump you need to make. Look at tools that offer accuracy and real business context by helping with the heavy lifting necessary to connect IT and service issues with the customer experience.

The goal is to deploy tools that provide answers, not surface more questions.



Example in action



NNB needs to see the wood for the trees

With so many customer issues reported with their mobile banking app, NNB needs an honest appraisal of how it's performing.

This means monitoring the performance over a sustained period of time to establish what "normal" is.

Point monitoring solutions don't cut it, so after evaluation, they choose their favoured DEM tool. Critical to them was something that went beyond just infrastructure monitoring and started to join up issues with the actual experience their customers are receiving.

4. Discover what you don't know about your existing stack

Once you've determined the best-fit DEM solution for the business, you can start to uncover the depths of the workflows surrounding your digital experiences. Possibly for the first time, you'll be able to visualise the entire process and where the interconnects, internal, and external dependencies exist. It's likely to reveal unforeseen reliance that certain key transactions have on other apps or services.

You'll exactly pinpoint where things are breaking down, even when the Internet is responsible for what your customers are experiencing. Achieving this level of business observability enables you to get ahead of issues, setting up meaningful alerts that warn you of impending challenges before they impact your business, rather than reminding you it's too late to act.

Example in action



A breakthrough discovery!

The new DEM tool quickly reveals the intricate interconnects that are occurring behind the scenes. The NNB IT team can see a helpful visualisation of their customer experience and the typical transactions that take place.

The team realise that part of the lag time the customers have been experiencing occurs around the end of the working day when the server cluster running the account balance calls is also being used for a batch run. Two processes competing for compute are impacting the performance of the app.

5. Action focused change

Having total visibility removes a lot of the 'trial and error' from troubleshooting. When you know the root cause of your issues, it's possible to take informed steps towards remediating them. This might mean hosting a workload in an alternative location or rearchitecting an app to work with containers.

Identified spikes in demand or app usage mean you need to redistribute your resources at certain times. Once you understand the sources of friction in the experience, you can begin to adjust the capacity to support them. Even when there isn't a problem, the insights obtained help understand healthy performance baselines and positively challenge where to improve. Tuning every element of the process ensures ongoing incremental improvements to the digital experience while optimising cost and management overheads.

Example in action



Win! Routine services shifted to the cloud

With the compute competition understood, the IT team choose to move the batch run to the cloud. The mobile app relies on internal legacy apps that cannot so easily be moved to the cloud, so it remains as is.

Liberating the on-premises compute creates an instant performance boost to the mobile app, almost eliminating wait times as customers check their account balances.

6. Plan for operating in a next-gen architecture

As you look to raise the game on your digital experiences, the app architectures that power them will come under the spotlight. Multi-cloud, containers, microservices, and cloud-native apps represent exciting new approaches to deliver better app performance. Through DEM, you'll get to know the key characteristics of your most essential apps – resource requirements, call times, and even their contribution to business goals. Once you know this, you can begin to test whether switching things up will deliver a material gain for your business and then build a migration plan to suit. This way, you can stage your move to alternative app architectures, whether that's on-premises or in the cloud, at a pace that suits you and without compromising the customer experience along the way.

Example in action



User growth prompts NNB to refactor the app

Having enabled more capabilities through the app, resulting in a steady growth in users and an impressive upswing to 10 weekly logins on average per customer, NNB decides it's time to refactor their banking app so it can more easily be run in the cloud.

Doing this will help to future-proof the app and provide a closer correlation between the host infrastructure cost and the financial returns the business is seeing from the app.

Delivering DEM

DEM has enormous potential to positively impact all facets of your digital experience and business outcomes, but your journey to DEM will almost certainly present new challenges. We hope some of the guidance offered in this eBook will help you make the business case for DEM and chart your course to realise its many benefits.

Find good company

Getting trusted guidance on finding, deploying, and integrating the right technology for your organisation is essential. It means working with the right people.

That means harnessing proven tech, capitalising on the latest in business observability, and working with people who have the ideas and know-how to drive success.



Why Cisco?

6 consecutive years as a Gartner Magic Quadrant leader for Data Centre and Cloud Networking.



Why AppDynamics?

9 years as a Gartner Magic Quadrant leader for Application Performance Monitoring and the only vendor that can deliver true Business Observability.



Why ThousandEyes?

The only vendor that ensures end-to-end visibility of service delivery across corporate networks, the cloud and the public Internet.



Why Natilik?

- ✔ Leading Cisco, AppDynamics and ThousandEyes partner.
- ✔ Fast-track your success with our tried-and-tested approach to implementation.
- ✔ Poised to help you gain maximum ROI from your technology investments.
- ✔ Personalised customer experience from us as your confident guide to improving your business.
- ✔ We get results.
Just see [what our customers say](#) about our work.

Now, get hands-on

The fastest way to understand digital experience monitoring is to get hands-on with the tools that make it possible. There are many ways Natilik can make this happen, and best of all, every one is free.



Discovery session

A quick taster to give you the top line on digital experience monitoring in action. Share just 60 minutes of your time, and we'll show and tell you everything you need to know to decide if it's right for you.



Book a Proof of Value

A hands-on lab session where we'll show you what's possible from Cisco+AppDynamics+ThousandEyes and give you the chance to put us through our paces.



Free trial

If you want to go even further and install the tools onto your own network, we offer a 30-day trial that puts the tech to work for real.



Start your Digital Experience Monitoring journey

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