



About our customer

A multinational video game and digital entertainment company with over 6M subscribers experienced exploding growth when the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

To ensure that their customers have the best experience possible, the provider knew they had to be vigilant about their IT Ops and keep downtime to an absolute minimum. With BigPanda the customer is doing exactly that.

How BigPanda beat the competition to help an online gaming network automate IT Ops

In the online gaming industry, player experience is everything. For this BigPanda customer, ease of use and reliability of the gaming experience dictates organizational priorities. In order to improve player experience, they are continually enhancing their tools, techniques and processes. BigPanda is thrilled to help the network deliver on this stated goal.

Customer challenges

It's a familiar pattern: as the game network's environment grew more complex, it also became more fractured. The NOC routinely turned to six separate teams for the data it needed to monitor, identify and resolve issues, which made for cumbersome operations. As many as 217 P1 and 19 P0 incidents arose per year, with Mean Time to Detect metrics of 84 and six minutes, respectively. The service interruptions associated with resolving these issues were longer than they should have been because of their resource-intensive, manual processes for incident management and investigation.

Outages and performance degradations resulted in average losses of \$29K per minute at the low end and up to as much as \$150K per minute during a major event, such as a game launch. Costs grew in part due to the outdated monitoring solution escalating too many issues to the L2 and L3 levels. Team inefficiencies were made worse by dependence on a large number of one-step playbooks, consuming resources and making it more likely that critical alerts went unaddressed, and outages followed. Equally as costly, when player experience suffers, so does the network's brand reputation.

As user volumes grew rapidly, the organization launched an initiative to continually improve player experience. The customer wanted to implement an autonomous Level-0 layer that could help them bring millions of alerts under control—including 19M per day from Sensu alone. The team looked at Moogsoft in the past, but found their black box machine learning solution to be lacking. BigPanda started working with the NOC team to map out a plan to streamline incident management and improve outcomes.

Customer objectives



Implement an autonomous Level-0 layer

Enrich alerts with runbooks, enabling automation in incident management, reducing costs and decreasing MTTx



Enable proactive KPIs and metrics

Start gathering KPIs and metrics to identify and resolve issues before they can impact the business



Automate repetitive low-value tasks

Relieve operations personnel from time commitments such as acknowledging and silencing alerts



Consolidate views for upper management

Eliminate the need for decision makers to log into multiple resources to see the state of operations in real time



Eliminate alert flood in maintenance mode

Remove extraneous alerts from active incident console, enabling IT Ops to focus on high-priority issues

The BigPanda solution

The gaming network provider invited BigPanda to conduct a Proof of Value (PoV) in late 2019 with partner Trace3. Their objective was clear: automate the steps from detection to escalation and notification, enabling the customer to move toward autonomous operations. Adding an autonomous Level-0 layer to the NOC automates 24/7/365 workflows, for a more efficient IT Ops organization, faster incident resolution and maximum uptime. The overall result enabled smoother operations and an excellent player experience.

To demonstrate the capabilities of this Level-0 autonomous layer, the BigPanda PoV implemented a series of usage examples, including:

- **Autonomous Level-0 incident management:** BigPanda eliminated the need for human involvement when executing 1-step incident responses. By handling these tasks autonomously, BigPanda reduces operational costs and MTTx.
- **Daily workload automation:** BigPanda automatically handles low-value matters such as creating tickets and paging human operators, freeing a significant amount of NOC resources who can devote their attention to more value-added tasks.

- **Maintenance mode alert suppression:** BigPanda allows for scheduled maintenance plans, where alerts associated with maintenance operations are taken off of the active incident console. This means teams can focus on urgent alerts, rather than being flooded with inconsequential alerts and paging resources unnecessarily.
- **Operational KPIs, problem management and network health:** BigPanda provides operational KPIs and metrics that give clear visibility into the health of network services and systems as well as MTTx data. This insight helps the NOC improve services and identify where to focus resources for maximum impact.

Drawing on BigPanda’s Level-0 autonomous layer and rich, enterprise-grade integrations, the provider is targeting a 10% reduction in outages while also reducing the drain on resources involving L2 and L3 engineers into common incident resolutions.

Building blocks to improved gamer experience

The objective	– Improve performance and availability of business services	
Positive business outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improved internal and external customer satisfaction – Improved revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improved brand loyalty – Improved SLA achievement
Required capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Automation of manual incident management workflows – Machine learning-driven correlation of noise into actionable insights to improve MTTx – Machine learning that can be understood, tested, controlled and trusted by existing teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Advanced analytics for performance tracking and ongoing optimization – Unified operations console for all fragmented tools, teams and clouds
Differentiators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Open Box Machine Learning: correlates alerts to proactively identify incidents – Domain-agnostic enterprise-class integrations: across tools, processes and technologies – Operational analytics and reporting: for KPI-based tracking of results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rapid time-to-value: achieving go-live in weeks not months – Support for customer’s existing tools and processes: unifying them using a single pane of glass

Moving the NOC to work-from-home in 24 hours

The customer's NOC team leader says, "If you'd told me a year ago that I would have a NOC that worked from home, I'd have told you that you were out of your mind." That was before he got a call from senior management one Sunday night in March 2020 telling him to have the entire staff working from home within 24 hours. Much to its credit, the team made the rapid transition successfully.

At the same time that COVID-19 compelled operations teams to work remotely, stay-at-home orders brought droves of users online, causing traffic on the network akin to the holiday season, but more prolonged. The NOC organization rose to the challenge; in addition to making the transition on the tough schedule mandated by the pandemic, they delivered on key KPIs to achieve four-nines availability in the month of April. As of late May, not a single outage had created customer-facing disruptions.

The BigPanda difference

BigPanda proved itself on the big stage, in a dire time for businesses and for the world. Our autonomous Level-0 layer stepped into the position of a digital first responder with resounding success. The provider has achieved results that include both better player experience and more efficient operations.



99.9%

availability while
working from home

50%

increase in user
growth easily handled

75%

of incidents
resolved at L1 layer

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