



How MSPs Deliver Innovation and Cost Reduction through Automation

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DRIVERS FOR AUTOMATION

Lower Delivery Costs, Meet SLAs, Drive Innovation

During these economic turbulent times, pressure is increasing on MSPs (Managed Service Providers) to deliver IT services to customers, faster and at a lower cost. The need to remain competitive, increase standardization and meet enterprise demands for innovation and continuous optimization is accelerating interest and adoption of process automation in the outsourcing market.

In recent years, task automation has been added to most data center tools to simplify and expedite functions within a particular application or silo. However, delivering an IT service such as on-boarding a new user, provisioning a service and even remediating an incident almost always spans multiple silos. In an effort to standardize IT service delivery, many MSPs have implemented best practices such as ITIL. However, the actual delivery of services is still largely manual. As such there is particular interest around IT Process Automation (ITPA), and its ability to improve SLA performance, enforce best practices and automate services for customers.

WHY IT PROCESS AUTOMATION MATTERS TO MSPS

IT Process Automation (ITPA), also known as Run Book Automation software provides a platform to design and run IT processes. Standardizing the IT processes that underpin IT services means best practices can be deployed across any customer environment, regardless of the underlying vendor infrastructure. This is achieved by orchestrating and integrating the existing IT tools.

Automation across Multi-Vendor Environments

Opalis provides solutions to address the needs of customers with complex multi-vendor environments. Opalis has developed productized integrations to management vendors including Microsoft, IBM, BMC, CA, VMware, EMC, and Symantec. This enables customers to automate best practices such as incident triage and remediation, service provisioning and change management process, and achieve interoperability across tools.

OPALIS AND SYSTEM CENTER

System Center lowers the cost of delivering datacenter services through integrated, end-to-end management of physical and virtual environments. Through adopting System Center, customers are able to standardize their datacenter management environment for significantly lower costs than competitive solutions while implementing best practices that can deliver thousands of dollars of operational savings each year. This is delivered through simplified management of the datacenter via an integrated set of tools that automate server management and optimize the use of server and datacenter resources.

As a part of the System Center portfolio, Opalis extends automation, optimization and simplification through process automation. Opalis workflow processes orchestrate System Center products and integrate them with non-Microsoft systems to enable interoperability across the entire datacenter.

The combined offering reduces the cost of delivering and managing datacenter services by:

- Defining and orchestrating processes across System Center products
- Integrating and orchestrating non-Microsoft tools as part of a complete workflow
- Engaging with Service Manager to automate the human workflow elements

BUSINESS BENEFITS

IT Efficiency = Lower Operational Cost + Faster Service Delivery

Opalis has demonstrated significant operational cost reduction for several outsourcers. Two large Europe-based Global MSPs have seen significant financial results, with up to **40% cost savings and 90% faster service delivery**. This was achieved by automating standard service offerings around infrastructure and data center management including incident management, change/compliance and provisioning (network, server and storage).



Identify New Business Opportunities

The benefits of automation extend beyond standardizing and automating existing IT services. With the Opalis automation platform, new services can be easily developed and delivered to customers. Removing latency and cost is achieved by automating manual processes. With Opalis, MSPs can integrate any system to any system and capture user-logic. This opens up new business opportunities as **customer-specific problems are as simple to automate as standard service offerings**.

Commercial Approach

Opalis solutions have the lowest total cost of ownership for enterprise class multi-tenancy environments. Taking into account software licenses, hardware to support the environment, all aspects of the delivery lifecycle, multi-vendor integration, ongoing platform support/operations and ongoing development and deployment of IT Process Automation policies, the advantages of choosing Opalis stand out.

HOW THE OPALIS AUTOMATION FABRIC DELIVERS MSP REQUIREMENTS

The Opalis Automation Fabric is comprised of unique data bus and intelligent workflow capabilities, which enable script-free integration and orchestration to automate context adaptive processes. This provides the flexibility required to leverage existing customer IT investments, apply and enable rapid implementation, and quick return on investment!

- **Unbiased Connectivity** – no rip and replace or vendor lock-in
- **1-Click Integration** - pass data between target systems without code, scripts or variables
- **Intelligent Workflow** –create context-adaptive workflows that change and branch based on real-time data.
- **Multitenant Architecture** – Keep customer data secure
- **Script-Code Free** – Integrate and orchestrate systems without fragile, hardcoded scripts

Unbiased Connectivity

Need: Standardize the process across multiple environments without jeopardizing the investments made within the vintage environment and allowing investment in new domain technologies without significant infrastructure changes

Opalis addresses the “When” and “What” of automation and the management tools in the environment provide the “How”. When viewed as a whole this provides a complete picture for integrating people, process and technology in the context of efficiency and consistency. This means Opalis preserves the existing investment in tools that the MSP specialists are already successful with while adding the opportunity to streamline operations and integrate/migrate technologies as opportunities afford themselves.

1 Click Integration

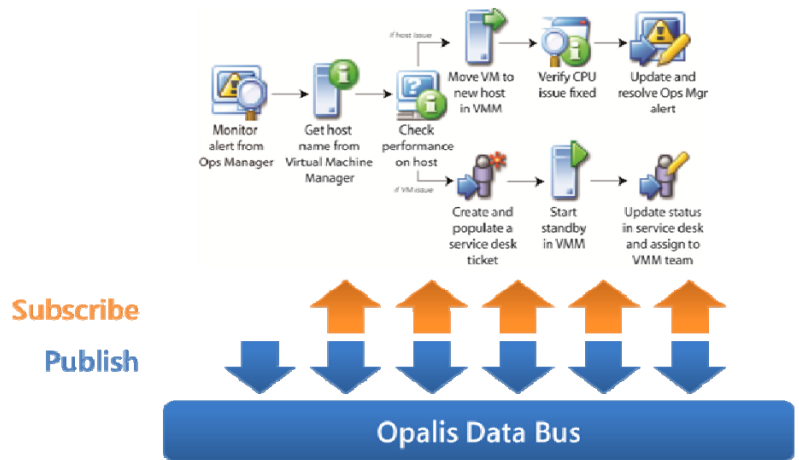
Need: Hide the complexity and reduce the need for specific application expertise to reduce costs and improve resolution time.

This requirement is common from MSPs that have cross-silo processes but few cross-silo knowledge experts. Opalis workflows do not require continuous ongoing support from product specialists. In essence, the 1-click integration capability allows Opalis to serve in its role as an orchestrator. With Opalis, the people composing processes don't require deep product-domain knowledge.

Data Bus

Need: Enable systems to share and pass data without hardwired scripts.

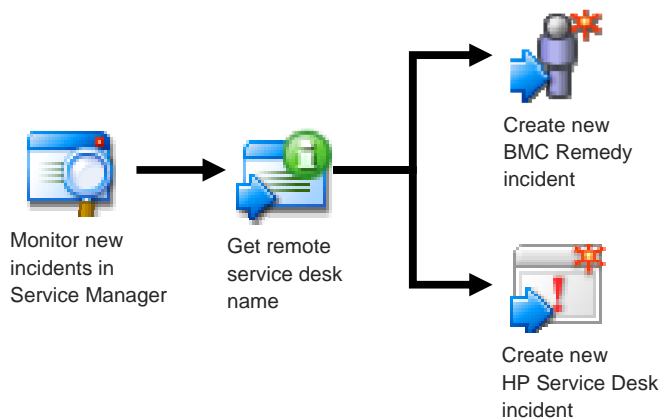
Opalis is the only vendor with a publish/subscribe data bus. The data bus is how Opalis integrates systems, without scripting or code. The data bus collects data published when a workflow object runs. Details such as time, status, output, strings, fields, etc. are added to the data bus at run time. This data can then be used by subsequent workflow objects to dynamically configure them. It can also be used as logic to control branching.



Intelligent Workflow

Need: Encode the knowledge within the process and let the underlying tools interact

Opalis can abstract process complexity and simplify the routing of an incident or event to the correct tool. The process below shows a workflow where an incident record from Service Manager is processed by Opalis. The workflow reviews the data contained in the incident to identify the correct remote Service Desk where the incident is to be processed. In this use-case a network event could be routed to one remote-provider helpdesk while incidents associated with a voice network could be routed to another. This is one of many examples that underscore how Opalis can help MSPs make better and more consistent use of its underlying framework of service management tools.



Multi-service desk incident routing

Multi-tenant Architecture

Need: Keep customer workflow data secure and separate

Opalis solutions are based on years of real world experience and have been put to the test in a number of Global Outsourcing companies who were early adopters of the technology. Opalis is the only ITPA vendor in the market today that offers the architecture necessary to meet the unique needs of an MSP and provide Cloud-scale deployments.

Opalis' rich multi-tenancy capabilities provide the ability to centralize management of IT processes while automating customer specific activities across external infrastructures. With Opalis, IT processes can be repurposed and customized for each customer. Customer data and configuration is partitioned so information is secure. This simplifies deployment and reduces customer on-boarding and maintenance costs.

Script-Code Free

Need: Enable dynamic, context-adaptive workflows that do not require development resources to build or maintain

Many other ITPA solutions come with limited pre-built integration capabilities. This means extensive services are typically required to deliver a working solution. Even where pre-built integrations are available extensive services are still typically required in order to customize/develop the solution to meet the needs of a specific implementation.

By contrast, **Opalis provides a solution that can be utilized by Process Architects without any programming skills**. Furthermore, Opalis provides the broadest set of pre-built integration capabilities in the market. These integrations are typically engineered so that any changes required to address specific implementation needs are done through configuration in the product (i.e. forms based, GUI driven) as opposed to software development. **Opalis Integrations are dynamic and are able to detect and leverage customizations** made on the integrated systems/applications without the need to re-program the integration.

Additionally, the Opalis solution includes release management capabilities making it easy to migrate workflows into production and change existing workflows in a risk free manner.

These capabilities significantly reduce the Total Cost of Ownership of an Opalis implementation and enable the ITPA delivery function to rapidly respond and adapt to the changing requirements of the business and customers. In practice this will enable an organization to realize millions of dollars of additional business benefits with Opalis versus alternative ITPA solutions.

STANDARDIZE & AUTOMATE IT SERVICES

Automate Common Customer Processes

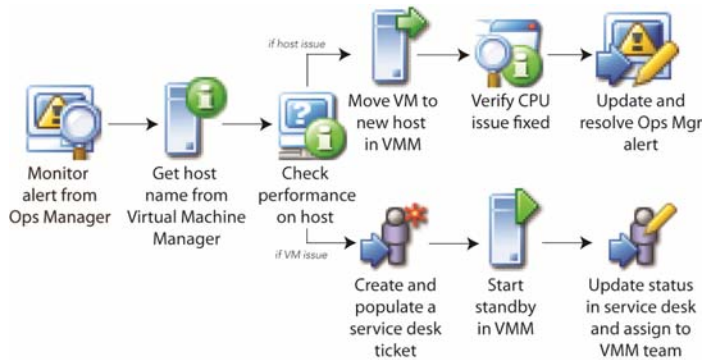
Most MSPs offer a variety of standard management services for incident, maintenance, change and provisioning. Using Opalis, MSPs are defining best practices that automate offerings and can be applied to all customer environments.

Use Case	Business Challenge	How Does Opalis Address This?
Incident Validation, Triage and diagnosis	Personnel dedicated to the identification incidents and creation of tickets. Error prone and SLA impacting Resource costs and SLA impact of manual process	Monitoring of event management systems for incidents. Automation of validation, triage and diagnostic activities. Creation and population of incident tickets in Service Desk
Known Incident /Problem Remediation	Personnel dedicated to the resolution of incidents/problems and update of tickets. Error prone and SLA impacting.	Monitoring of Service Desk for tickets which meet pre-defined "Known Problem" criteria. Automate actions to remediate "Known Problem". Document actions taken and close tickets.
Service Desk To Service Desk	Personnel dedicated to the creation and ongoing management of tickets with customers and 3rd parties. Error prone and SLA impacting.	Monitor tickets in originating Service Desk. Transformation of data so that information can be mapped in target Service Desk and creation of ticket. Update of corresponding tickets through lifecycle to closure.
Provisioning	Delivery of new services takes several weeks to plan and deliver. Resource intensive activities which cross multiple organizations, e.g. servers, networks, storage, and applications teams. Customers have higher expectations around agile Service Delivery	Decompose Service request and automate fulfillment steps through orchestration of point systems which support the silo's associated with provisioning process. Including activities which require human intervention via Service Desks, email etc.
Daily Checks	Significant resources dedicated to routine manual activities in the data center to keep services up and running and meeting contractual obligations with customers.	Automation of routine activities and integration with Service Desk to handle exceptions. Automation of audit reporting for demonstration of compliance to customers.

EXAMPLE WORKFLOW PROCESSES

Incident Management

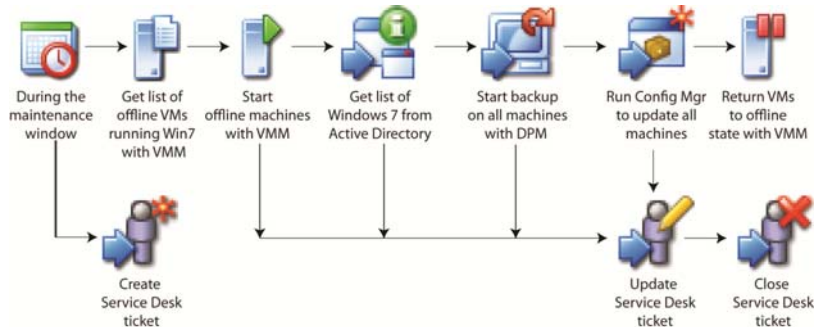
Opalis works with event management and monitoring tools to run automated diagnostics, triage and remediation actions to lower the amount of level 1 and level 2 tickets staff have to manage. In this example, Opalis monitors Operations Manager for a critical performance alert, running on a virtual machine. To triage the cause, it retrieves the host name and checks performance on the host and virtual machines. If the host is the issue, it initiates Virtual Machines Manager to migrate the VM. Once complete it verifies performance and updates/closes the originating alert. If the VM is the issue, it creates and populates a ticket in Service Manager, initiates VMM to start a standby VM and updates the Service Manager incident with new VM details.



Opalis monitors Operations Manager, runs triage and then takes appropriate action.

Change Management

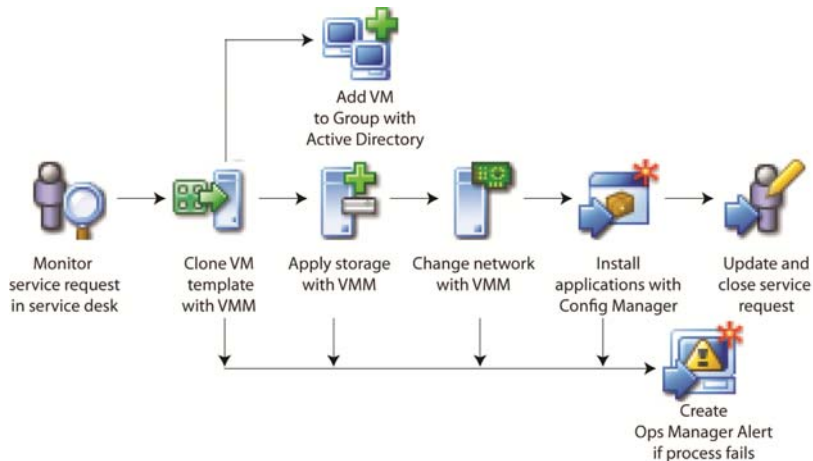
Opalis works with change management systems to automate request and enforce best practices =. Using Opalis, users can authorize, deploy and test change such as adding new services, patching systems, or running audits to detect configurations that are out of compliance. In this use case, Opalis coordinates a patching process during the maintenance window. It opens a service desk ticket, so all activity is tracked. It then queries VMM to get a list of off line VMs running Windows 7, it starts those machines. Opalis then reaches out to Active Directory for a list of computers running Window 7 and initiates Data Protection Manager to run a backup. Once that is complete, Configuration manager is initiated to update all machines with the patch. Upon completion VM's are returned to their offline state.



Opalis monitors a Service Desk and automates a change request to patch machines

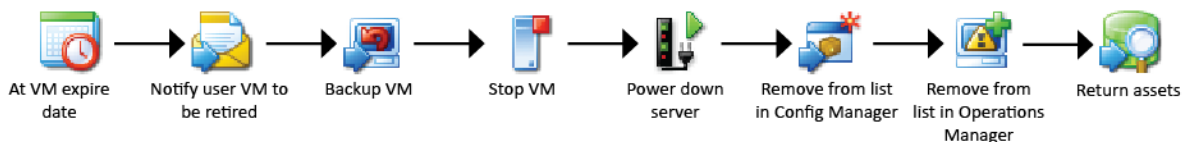
Virtual Life Cycle Management

Opalis enables MSPs to deliver on-demand services by provisioning and decommissioning virtual machines. The workflow below monitors a service desk for a new virtual machine request. Opalis takes the configuration requirements (memory, storage, applications) and feeds them into the virtual machine tools to configure storage and network settings. Once the VM is configured, it is added to directories and management lists.



Opalis monitors a service desk request and provisions a new server

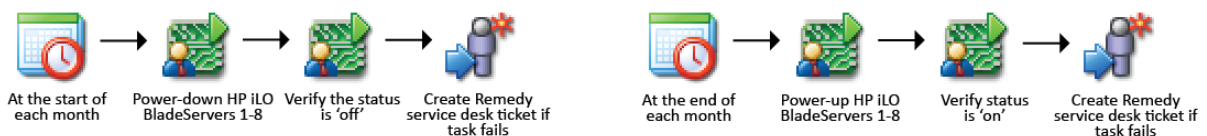
The workflow below, tears down a virtual machine when the VM is set to expire. Opalis notifies the user of the VM, initiates the backup software and then stops the VM. Once this is complete, the hardware is powered down and assets are returned.



Opalis tears down a virtual server and returns assets when the VM project expire time is met

Power Management

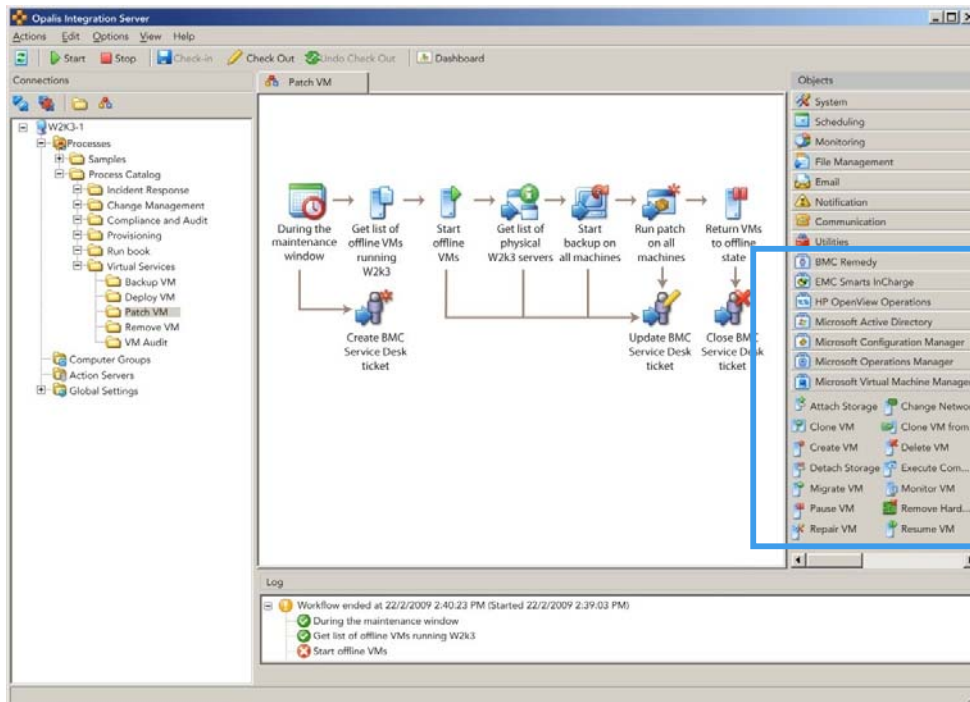
Many companies have implemented blade server solutions to remotely power on and off the blades within the chassis but due to the manual intensive nature of this activity many do not utilise this functionality. Opalis has the capability to orchestrate these chassis management products and can leverage this remote power management function to provide just in time server capacity – powering on machines only when needed as part of an automated end to end solution. For example:



OPALIS AUTOMATION PLATFORM

The Opalis workflow designer is where users modify out-of-the-box processes and create custom processes. Once the process flow is outlined, Integration is achieved by configuring the dialogs behind the workflow objects. The links provide embedded rule-based decision logic to direct workflows.

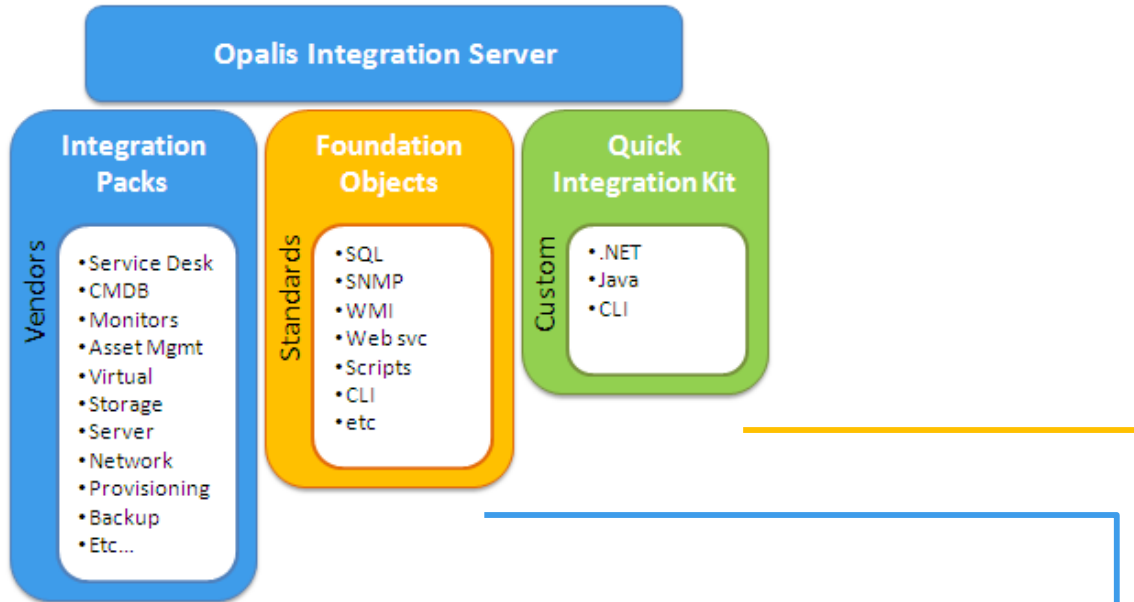
The object window contains a variety of objects that ship with the product, and an integration pack adds pre-built integration to specific vendor tools. Integration Packs are denoted with the 'suitcase' icon. Each Integration Pack contains a set of workflow Objects that are pre-configured to work with a given solution as part of an overall orchestration



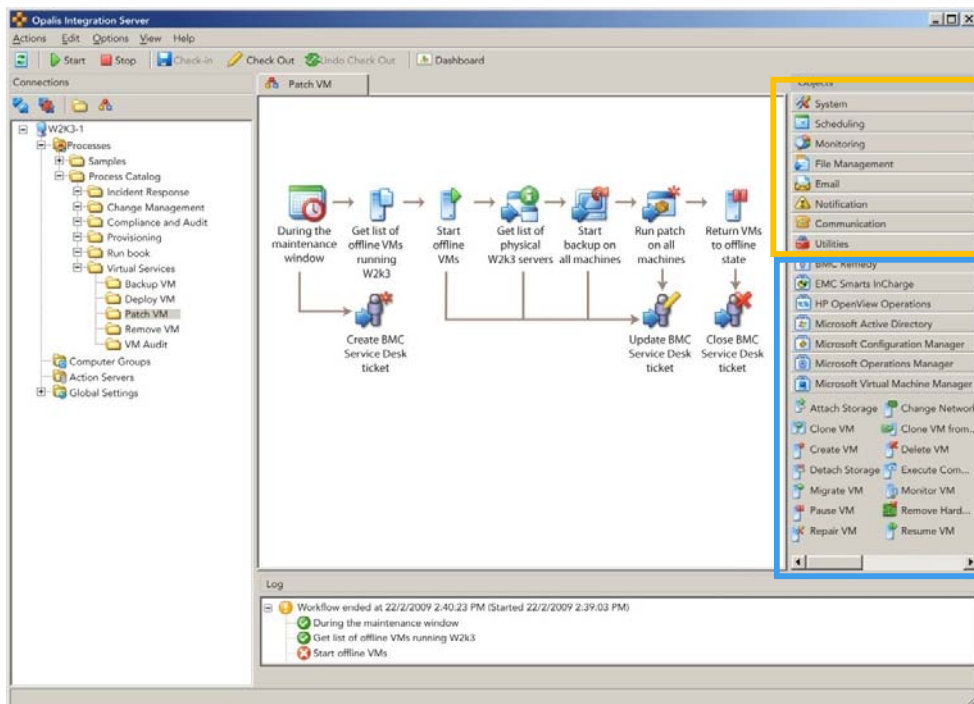
These objects do not need to be programmed by the end-user. They are reusable workflow objects that have been pre-configured to perform specific tasks. Each object in an Integration Pack, “*understands the required syntax, data structure, method (SOAP, C# API etc.) and return codes of the target application*” (to coin the wording offered in the definition established earlier in this document.)

Integration Methods

Opalis provides a rich set of integration capabilities to customers via Opalis Integration Packs, the Opalis Foundation Object Library and the Opalis Quick Integration Kit (QIK) SDK. These mechanisms provide customers with a powerful set of integration capabilities.



Integration Capabilities of Opalis Integration Server



Opalis Foundation Object Library

The workflow objects in Opalis Integration Server consist of over 100 reusable activity templates that represent the ‘building blocks’ of IT Process Automation. Examples of Foundation Objects contained in the library would be “Query WMI”, “Write to Database”, “Invoke Web Service”, “Copy File”, “Read Text File”, “Send SNMP Trap”, etc. The Foundation Object Library is common to all Opalis Customers, although different customers will make use of different objects in the library based on the needs of the processes they seek to automate. It is not uncommon for customers to use the Foundation Objects to build workflow-based integrations with tools in their environment for which Opalis does not offer an Integration Pack.

Opalis Integration Packs

Integration Packs are high-quality, integrations built and managed by Opalis. Each Opalis Integration Pack contains Opalis Workflow Objects native to the solution it was built to integrate. For example, The Opalis Integration Pack for EMC Smarts includes the workflow objects “Get Notification”, “Update Notification”, “Add Audit to Notification”, “Create Notification”, etc. Integration Packs are fully supported by Opalis, which means the complexity of connecting systems and updating integration when versions or configuration changes is also managed by Opalis. Customers looking to invest in IT Process Automation will typically purchase a 'la carte Integration Packs based on the needs of the processes they seek to automate.

Opalis Quick Integration Kit (QIK)

The Opalis SDK is available to Opalis customers and partners. The CLI Wizard doesn't require a programming background, although a basic understanding of command-line tools in general and pattern matching is helpful. It is likewise intuitive and easy to use. The SDK includes a packaging component that allows for the quick and easy packaging of integrations into Integration Packs that are easy to load into the Opalis Integration Server.

ARE YOU READY TO INDUSTRIALIZE YOUR BUSINESS

Standardizing and automating your IT services using Opalis, enables you to improve service delivery and meet SLAs, so you can achieve greater customer satisfaction. The ability to abstract the process from the underlying technology means you can centralize, document and automate processes that span customer environments. The ability to run processes over any underlying infrastructure provides huge flexibility when on-boarding new customers and future-proofs processes from breaking when underlying systems change. Are ready to industrialize your IT services, reduce costs, renew contracts and create innovation through automation?