

## QUESTION & ANSWER

### Computer Measurement Group teaches IT forecasting, modelling

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The Computer Measurement Group (CMG) just may be the oldest IT user group that you have never heard of. Founded 30 years ago, Turnersville, N.J.-based CMG first focused on managing various aspects of capacity and performance issues in mainframe environments. Today, CMG focuses on teaching admins how to use IT systems data for better forecasting and modeling and on improving service management in both mainframe and distributed environments.

Michael Salsburg, who volunteers as CMG's director and head of marketing, is the chief architect for real-time infrastructure at Unisys Corp. Recently, Salsburg discussed CMG and why IT professionals should get involved.

#### What can you tell me about [CMG](#) and its members?

Michael Salsburg: Right now we have about 1,000 members, most of them from large companies that have the resources to have full-time IT employees who are dedicated to performance and capacity issues. Typically, most members are enterprise architects at the equivalent.

Essentially, CMG is an education and networking organization. We are a nonprofit group run by volunteers. We encourage members to write "experiential" papers: papers that describe their personal implementation experiences, whether they were successful or failures. With distributed computing -- and Linux and Windows -- we're trying to get beyond configuration issues to provide information and advice as to how IT can provide a scalable infrastructure and deliver the services needed by the business.

#### How do members interact and share ideas?

Salsburg: Members can share and present their papers at regional meetings. We also have an annual conference where members can meet face to face, share ideas and network with other IT professionals who have the same concerns. Part of the annual meeting is an education track that teaches attendees the basics of measurement and analysis.

#### What do you mean by "the basics of measurement and analysis"?

Salsburg: We teach attendees about measurement numbers and what they mean. For example, in Windows, you'll get a series of numbers for CPU utilization -- the same goes for other operating systems as well. The training at the CMG conference focuses on teaching attendees what those numbers mean and what they can do with them. We'll teach you how to deal with time-based data and where it makes sense to use standard

deviation. Then we'll cover modeling and forecasting so attendees can do what-if scenarios: "What if I'm having a performance problem?" "If I add faster disks, will that handle my problem?" Those are the kinds of practical things an attendee will learn.

### **Are there any particular issues that members have in common?**

Salsburg:

We're trying to get beyond configuration issues to provide ... advice as to how IT can provide a scalable infrastructure.  
Michael Salsburg, director, the Computer Management Group

A lot of the members are saying that their CIO has heard that server virtualization is hot, and our members need to understand issues related to performance before going from P to V [physical to virtual environments]. They need to know what the workload is that's executing on a server. Very I/O-intensive applications may not be good candidates to virtualize. When you have an I/O-intensive workload, you may easily need more than two times the number of CPUs in a virtual environment.

So members are interested in understanding workloads and how they deliver service management in a virtual environment. Other areas of interest include service-oriented architecture, ITIL [the IT Infrastructure Library], forecasting and modeling, business performance management and the visualization of performance management information. And as our name suggests, people are still interested in measuring and capacity and performance management.

### **CMG has changed focus since its inception. Do you see its focus changing in the future?**

Salsburg: I expect there will be more focus on optimizing IT operations because there's real money involved there. And I see the whole area of performance and measurement expanding to include systems management. As companies start dealing with virtualization a lot more, there's significantly more complexity on the management side.

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