

Apdex Alliance Final Product Certification Process

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1. Overview

The Apdex Alliance is a group of companies collaborating to promote an application performance metric called Apdex (Application Performance Index). Apdex is a numerical measure of user satisfaction with the performance of enterprise applications.

Corporate members of the Alliance that provide products or services that report application performance may present their results in compliance with the Apdex technical specification. A corporate member product or service that makes any Apdex claims must be certified by this process. To ensure consistency among the products displaying Apdex values, the association has adopted the certification process described in this document. This process is used to check each vendor implementation on a regular basis to verify that the Apdex product or service meets the requirements of the Apdex technical specification.

Only Apdex Alliance members in good standing that have complied with this certification process may use the Apdex term or brand in association with their product or service.

Goals

The certification process has the following goals:

- Ensure that all Apdex-verified devices and services are measuring application task time as defined by the technical specification.
- Ensure that if a product handles exception conditions (optional features), then they are handled as described in the specification.
- Ensure that all Apdex verified devices and services present the Apdex value as defined by the technical specification

Non-Goals

The certification process does not ensure that two vendor's products or services, placed side by side on the same network measuring the same application, will deliver exactly the same results. Vendors have different approaches to measurement that will lead to somewhat differing results, based on the measurement technique they employ. Measurements compared between vendors are expected to be similar, but not identical.

2. Certification Authority

The Apdex Alliance designates a Certification Authority (CA) to implement the certification process. The CA is responsible for conducting the process described herein.

3. Certification Cost

The cost of certification is handled in two ways. First, the regular dues of the Alliance members cover the cost of developing and maintaining a certification process (e.g., drafting, approving, and updating this document). Second, the direct cost of certifying any specific product is paid by the vendor for the product directly to the Certification Authority per a fixed fee set by the Apdex Alliance.

4. Certification Process

The process that the Alliance has defined in order for a product or service to be called “Apdex Compliant” is made up of two phases:

Phase 1 – Pre Certification Review

Phase 2 – Demonstration to Verify Product Functionality and User Interface

All information provided by the Apdex member throughout the certification process will be kept confidential by the Certification Authority if so requested.

4.1. Phase 1 – Pre Certification Review

4.1.1. Information Transfer

The Apdex Member (AM) that wants to be certified signs a certification process contract with the Certification Authority (CA), and pays the certification fee. The AM must state that they have or will soon have a certifiable product or service, with specific dates for market introduction if the product or service has yet to be delivered. The AM solution will either be:

- A product that measures and reports Apdex values. Customers will buy this solution as a software or hardware product.
- A service that measures and reports Apdex values. Customers will buy this service as a report, typically web based.

The AM provides clear descriptive information to the CA sufficient to allow the CA to understand the function of the product or service, and whether it is an appropriate candidate for Apdex certification.

4.1.2. Determining the Task Measurement Methodology

The CA has an in-depth discussion with the AM to understand in detail how the product or service measures application task timing. The AM explains which types of applications it can measure at the application level and how those measurements are implemented. Once the CA understands and approves of the methodology, the approach is documented in a letter by the AM, signed by an executive of the AM, and sent to the CA. This review satisfies the ‘Response Time Measurements’ section of the specification (section 3.1 in the “Application Performance Index - Apdex Technical Specification,” September 22, 2005).

4.1.3. Features Review

Once the CA has received the above information, a conference call is arranged with the AM to review the product or service, and clarify any outstanding questions. The CA then

goes over the certification demonstration checklist, and eliminates any *optional* parts of the Apdex specification that the product does not support. The output of this review is an agreed upon checklist of Apdex specification items that the product/service supports. The CA and AM then establish a schedule and venue for the demonstration phase.

4.2. Phase 2 – Demonstration to Verify Product Functionality and User Interface

The AM hosts a demonstration of the product or service to show that it conforms to the Apdex specification. This demonstration is attended by at least one member of the CA. The demonstration can be done either in person or via a web portal such as Webex. All required sections and those optional sections that were identified in the checklist defined through the Features Review (see 4.1.3) must be demonstrated and approved.

Required: The AM must demonstrate each of the following functions, showing that they meet the requirements of the current Apdex Specification.

- Defining a Report Group
- Threshold Settings
- Dealing With and Indicating Small Samples
- Dealing with Exceptions
- Displaying the Apdex Value Uniform Output

Optional: The AM must demonstrate each of the following functions, if they have chosen to implement them in their service or product, showing that they meet the requirements of the current Apdex Specification.

- Displaying the Apdex Value Subscribed Output
- Additional Reporting Rules

5. Certification Document

At the end of the successful certification process, the CA notifies, in writing, the Alliance administrator that the specific product or service was reviewed and that it meets the requirements of the technical specification and this compliance document. If the product/service fails certification, the CA documents the deficiency in a letter to the AM. The AM can appeal the deficiency ruling of the CA to the Alliance Board of Directors.

The administrator then issues a *certificate of compliance* document and post the fact that the specific product is compliant on the Apdex Alliance web site. The certification identifies the specific product name and model (software release) that was reviewed and certified. Once this certification is in place, the AM may use Apdex branding terms that have been agreed upon by the Apdex Alliance.

6. Certification Renewal

Alliance members are required to undergo this process for a previously certified product when any of the following events occurs.

- A new Apdex Specification is approved that the member now claims it supports,
- The vendor makes substantive changes to the user interface of the Apdex reporting software,
- Two years have passed since the product was previously certified.