EMA Radar Report for Workload Automation Q4 2021

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ARVATO SYSTEMS

Workload Automation 2021

Customer Perspectives

"We like the staging or product planning features that allow for tomorrow to look different than today, and this can be staged in advance."

Overview

Arvato Systems' streamworks is once again Strong Value. The streamworks platform is based on more than 30 years of data center operations experience wrapped up in a very modern architecture. stream-works stands out for being developed and operated by a data center services company. They were using it before they were selling it to others. All the support personnel actually work on the product in operations roles. streamworks bridges the gaps in new bimodal, hybrid IT environments by offering generic interfaces via REST and message queues and workload analytics, and by supporting continuous delivery processes. Arvato continues to mature streamworks with enhancements supporting cloud-based jobs, increased support for containerized workloads, and other important improvements.

streamworks is a Windows-based, cross-platform workload automation solution supporting all major operating systems, including mainframes. streamworks integrates with business applications, ITSM solutions, LDAP, Java, virtualization, and cloud environments via configuration views in the user interface by using standard APIs and job libraries. streamworks has a fault-tolerant, robust, easy-to-maintain infra-structure made to perfectly scale from small setups to high-performance, high-availability environments. streamworks is open to use the customer's preferred technique for Windows HA, whether it is Windows Cluster or VMware virtualization. The platform offers one single point of control for planning, maintaining, operating, and monitoring job streams, which can be accessed using intuitive, configurable, graphical user interfaces or by using a REST-based API.
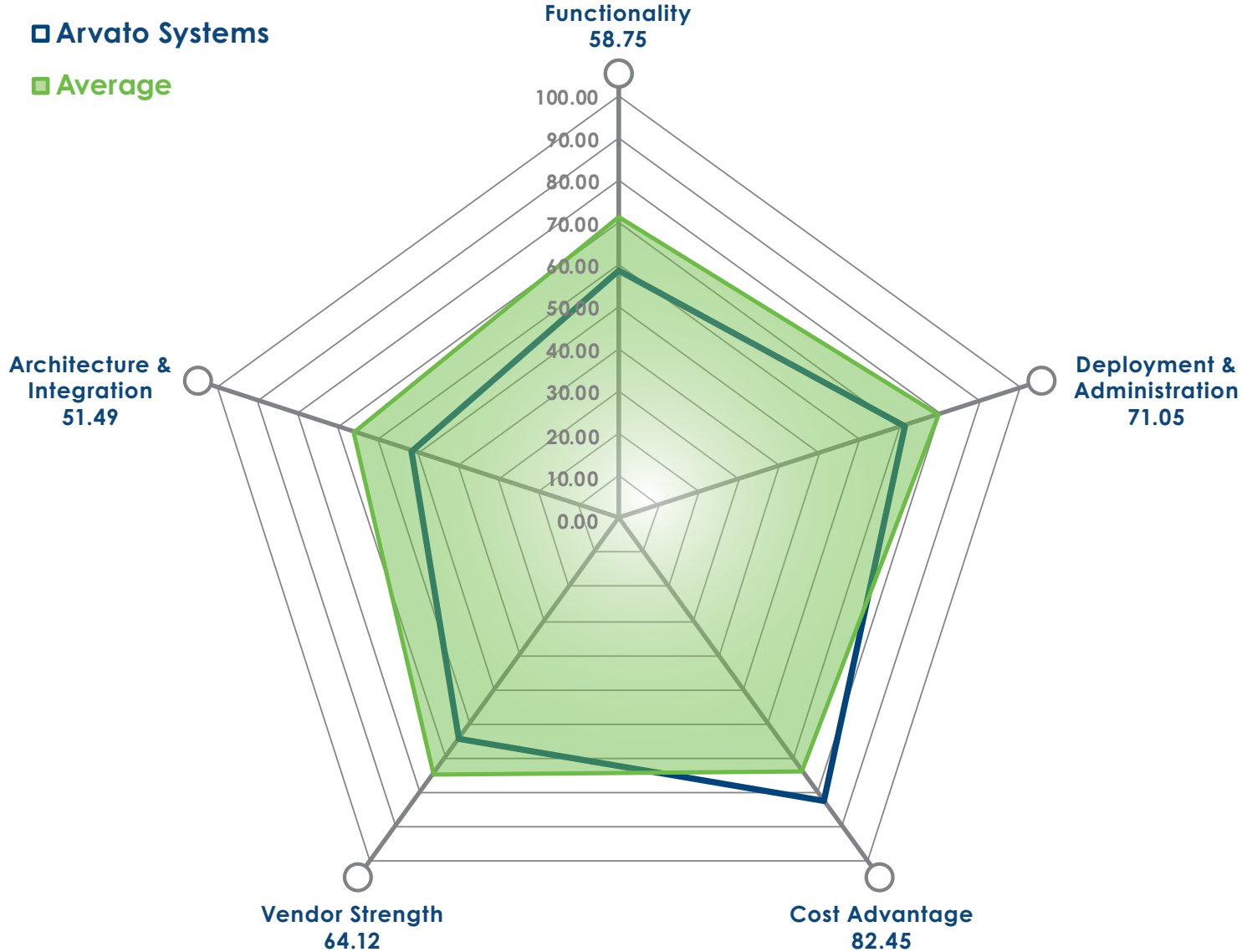
All system- or tenant-wide configurations like users, agents, calendars, time zones, variables, and internal parameters can be performed from one central view. streamworks provides integrated file transfer, job libraries, log parser, and lots of additional logic and functions to reduce the efforts for designing complex, cross-platform, time- and event-based job streams. Jobs and job streams can easily be moved between envi-ronments by using implemented streamworks functions, like the export/import interface, environment variables, and workflow capabilities.

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The whole runtime environment can easily be monitored via specific views for job status, agent or file transfer status, incidents, or forecasts. streamworks has extensive logging features; any single transaction performed by a user, job, agent, or the system itself can be accessed via the user interface. Furthermore, all log files can be exported from the database for audits or archiving. The integrated, full-featured reporting engine (MS SQL Server Reporting Services), which can be accessed via fat client, web client, or batch, offers workload analytic capabilities. The web-based (HTML5) self-service portal addresses the needs of the business users, giving them the options to start and monitor job streams, to view reports, and to use a graphical visualization of multiple job streams, including critical paths.

Arvato Systems is the global IT services subsidiary of Arvato, a global services company headquartered in Gütersloh, Germany. Arvato itself is a subsidiary of Bertelsmann, which is a media, services, and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. streamworks started as an internal solution to workload automation needs within the IT outsourcing operations of Arvato Systems in 2006. By 2008, Arvato Systems began selling streamworks as a product for license and use by others. They also created a reseller relationship with Beta Systems.
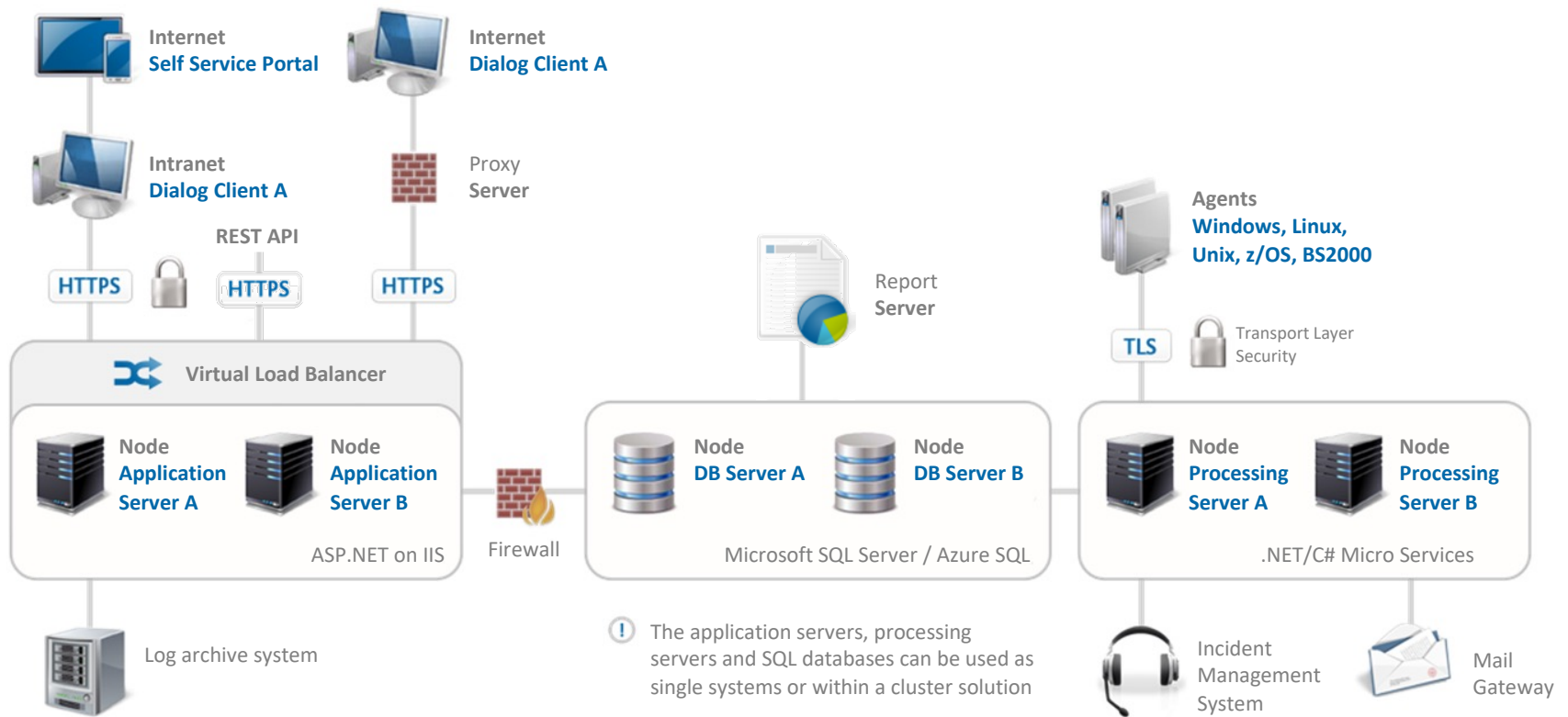
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Architecture

streamworks
Workload Automation

Infrastructure

Key Features Summary

Designed by a Data Center for the Data Center

streamworks is planned, designed, developed, and operated by an IT service provider's data center with a strong focus on cost reduction in IT operations and the data center. Seventy percent of the three-year TCO of a WLA solution is the effort and needed workforce in daily operations. streamworks keeps those efforts low so it can be operated at a very low TCO.

Fast Install and Low-Impact Upgrades

Installation can be done from scratch within 3-4 hours. Downtime for a release update is at maximum two hours and can be reduced to less than 60 minutes by a high-availability infrastructure setup. The engine consists of standard windows services, which can be (un)installed within minutes. The DB is updated by an update script. Agents do not need to be updated when updating the engine. For updates, the agent software can be deployed using the streamworks file transfer and can be changed on an agent site without any downtime or restart.

Master/Real Job Stream Definitions

streamworks uses a unique Master/Real concept to reduce efforts for designing and maintaining multiple similar job streams. A Master job stream contains nearly all needed definitions, but cannot be executed. Users build Real job streams by taking the Master template and adding the missing information (e.g., name of specific database) within minutes. This is more than a copy because the Real job streams are always connected to their Master. If the Master changes, all connected Real streams are changed, too. Thus, mass changes need to be done just once.

Virtual Plan Data Instead of Specific Dates

streamworks' batch operation focuses on the customers' business cycle, not on specific dates or time windows. streamworks uses a virtual date called Plan Date to group all jobs and job streams belonging to one business cycle or day. The business cycle is finished when the last job stream is finished. A preparation process that builds copies of the design data and places them in the runtime area provides new business cycles and days. Job streams can be prepared days in advance, and the prepared Plan Date can be changed without impact on the design data. The go-live of batch releases during non-business days or hours can be prepared during business hours.

File Transfer Integrated Within Agents

The streamworks file transfer function comes as part of the agent software. No additional file transfer software on the agent server is needed. The file transfer is carried out using the agent communication via the streamworks server, so there's no need to make new holes in firewalls for servers with installed streamworks agents. Time is saved since less software needs to be installed and maintained on the server.

Strong Security and Audit Controls

streamworks includes strong security features, such as two-factor access to clients, client and agent certificates, extensive logging of any change or transaction, easy-to-use audit reports, and automated audit data export. All log files can be exported from the database for audits or archiving.

Support Staff Who Know and Use the Product

It's vital to have access to experienced support staff who actually use the product in the Arvato Systems data center. New customers get help and many best practices in building their operational concept. The support hotline connects customers directly to the administrators of the Arvato Systems streamworks installation, or to the 24/7 system operating in the Arvato Systems data center.

Single Point of Control

streamworks offers one single point of control for planning, maintaining, operating, and monitoring job streams, which can be accessed using intuitive, configurable graphical user interfaces or by using a REST-based API. The whole runtime environment can easily be monitored via specific views for job status, agent, or file transfer status, incidents, or forecast.

Fault-Tolerant Architecture

streamworks has a fault-tolerant, robust, easy-to-maintain infrastructure made to perfectly scale from small setups to high-performance, high-availability environments. streamworks is open to using the customer's preferred technique for Windows High Availability, whether it is Windows Cluster or VMware virtualization. streamworks is based on modern, modularized .net architecture, which can easily migrate to run in cloud environments using Kubernetes or microservices.

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Evaluation Summary

Deployment & Administration	
Ease of Deployment	
Deployment Time/Effort	Strong
Conversion Facilities	Limited
Job Discovery and Import	Limited
Staff Training	Solid

Support & Services	
Customer Support	Solid
Professional Services	Outstanding

Ease of Administration	
Console Ease of Use	Solid
Upgrade Process	Strong
Test Environments	Outstanding
Automation of Management	Strong

Cost Advantage	
Flexibility of Pricing Model	Strong
Pricing Scenarios	$$$
SaaS Availability	Outstanding

Architecture & Integration	
Architecture	
Business Focus	Solid
Scalability	Outstanding
Dynamic Workload Placement	Solid
Breadth of Platform Support (including agentless)	Strong
Breadth of Application & Database Support	Solid
Disaster Protection	Strong
Containerized Workloads	Limited
Container Deployment	Solid
Mainframe Support	Strong
Shared Server/Multi-Team Support	Solid

Integration & Interoperability	
Comprehensive API	Strong
Cloud Integration	Limited
CMDB Integration	Solid
ITPA Integration	Limited
Capacity Management Integration	Limited
MFT Integration	Outstanding
Big Data Integration	Limited
Social Media Integration	None
Heterogeneity Across Environments	Limited
DevOps	Limited
MLOps	None

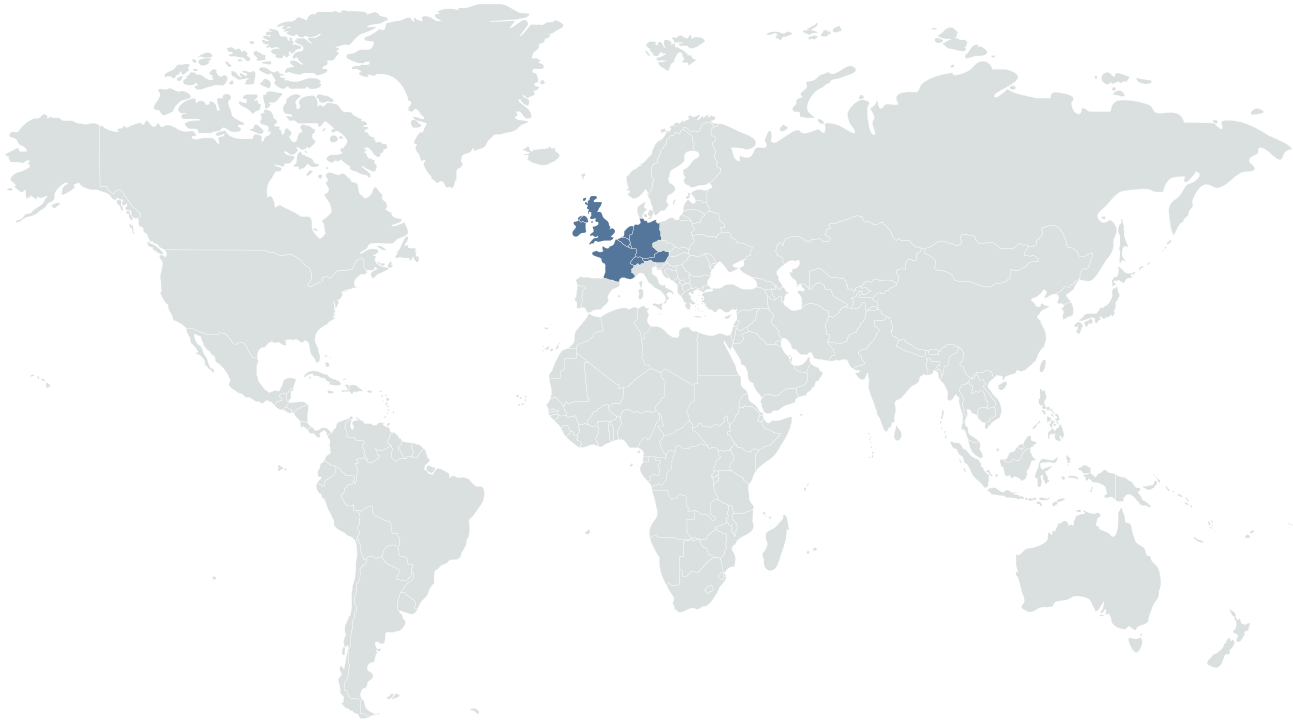| Functionality	
Features	
Automation Design Flexibility	Strong
End-to-End Monitoring	Solid
Compliance Management	Strong
Triggering	Strong
Self-Service Portal	Strong
Forecasting, Analytics, Reporting	Solid
Alerting	Solid
Security	Outstanding
What-If Scenarios	Limited
Conditional Logic and Auto-Remediation	Solid
Logging and Auditability	Outstanding
Business User Features	Outstanding
Big Data Support	Limited
RPA Orchestration	None

Ease of Use	
Simplicity of GUI	Strong
SLA and Policy Awareness	Solid
Root Cause Analysis	Solid
Mobile Device Support	Solid
Language Support	Solid
Available Help Resources	Strong

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Vendor Strength	
Vision	Strong
Strategy	Strong
Financial Strength	Outstanding
Research and Development	Strong
Partnerships and Channel	Strong
Market Credibility	Solid
Geographic Coverage	Solid

Active Clients

Product Available In:

English, German

Number of Customers:

👤 +

👤 = 100   👤 = 1000

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Favorite Features Mentioned in Customer Interviews

I like the user interface. It is very easy to use!

The REST APIs are very powerful.

We make good use of Logical Resources because we know what is available for jobs to start.

My favorite aspect is the recovery feature on the mainframe side.

We like their philosophy for Plan Date. The approach is good, particularly for jobs that might connect or overlap over multiple days.

I like that Master job and Real job allow for templating.

Plan Date can be set up to run a certain way and will not be affected by other changes implemented.

I like the Windows installer and the ability to customize it. Upgrade time is fast.

We like the staging or product planning features that allow for tomorrow to look different than today, and this can be staged in advance.

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