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HP Unveils Neoview Data Warehouse and BI Services

By Clay Ryder

HP has unveiled what it calls a next-generation data warehouse platform along with new business intelligence (BI) services focused on providing organizations with improved data access in order to make informed decisions, help reduce cost and risk, and accelerate growth. The new platform and services are core to the company's Business Information Optimization portfolio. The HP Neoview data warehouse platform is an integrated hardware, software, and services platform that acts as a business outcomes engine, providing customers a comprehensive view of essential business information, such as metrics on product sales, customer trends, or production and operational effectiveness. HP Neoview is built on HP Integrity and ProLiant servers as well as HP StorageWorks offerings and is configured and tested before delivery to enable faster integration into existing environments. It offers 24x7 availability with no offline Windows requirement, storage scalability to hundreds of terabytes, and efficient administration through HP remote management and monitoring capabilities. In contrast with legacy data warehouses, HP Neoview is designed for continuous operations in environments where decision making is seamlessly integrated into business operations at multiple levels and across numerous users within the organization. HP also unveiled a foundational set of BI services related to Strategy and Planning, Information Quality, Information Integration, and Information Delivery. Additionally, the company stated it is building on its relationships with the major BI software vendors including Ab Initio, Business Objects, Cognos, Informatica, MicroStrategy, and SAS, to enhance the capabilities of the HP Neoview platform. Together, HP and its partners plan to provide customers additional value through joint solutions, blended teams with specialized BI expertise, pre-tested/tuned configurations, and tight integration with HP technology.

Data warehousing combined with BI solutions can provide powerful tools for any organization; however, many organizations have not been able to undertake such an endeavor due to do the inherent complexity and sheer scale of effort necessary to effect an enterprise-wide solution. With the new Neoview platform, organizations may find it a tad bit easier to consider the daunting task of effecting an enterprise-wide data warehouse and BI solution. By basing Neoview on standard components such as servers, storage, and services, HP has removed some of the complexity stigma often accorded data warehouse and BI solutions. However, this is not to say that Neoview is in any way less than a complete solution. In fact the breadth of hardware + software + services combined with the sheer scalability of the platform illustrates quite the opposite. Many organizations have tactically deployed multiple data marts or have come into possession of disparate data marts due to merger activities. These standalone data marts at best offer a limited if not ineffective BI solution for the enterprise as a whole. The potential to consolidate these multiple data marts into a single data warehouse is one such potential of the Neoview platform and consulting services.

The scale of most data warehouse solutions implies that implementing Neoview is a task that most likely will be done in conjunction with external resources. The new BI services that are part of this announcement are well positioned to assist organizations in their planning and ultimate implementation of their data warehouse and BI

solution. We see these new services as further proof, along with the formation of the HP Business Intelligence Group business unit within HP Software, of the company's commitment to grow the BI market opportunity. For potential customers this is good news. NeoView, the Knightbridge consultants, and HP's existing relationships with the major BI software vendors offers organizations a one-stop shop opportunity to tackle the daunting task of implementing an enterprise-wide data warehouse with the knowledge and surety that expert consulting, process planning, and implementation resources are available. For HP, the ability to offer such a far-reaching solution bolsters its competitive standing in the services marketplace and may just catch the notice of the Big Blue services juggernaut.

IBM pAVE-ing The Way For x86 Linux Apps

By Clay Ryder

IBM has introduced an open beta version of the IBM System p Application Virtual Environment (System p AVE), a virtual Linux environment that enables x86-based Linux applications to run without modification on POWER processor-based IBM servers. This announcement follows the company's recent launch of three System p Web-tier servers that target the consolidation of x86 Linux workloads. The company stated that customer orders for System p5-560Q servers sold in Q1 2007 had an average of thirty logical partitions configured for Linux. System p AVE will allow most x86 Linux binaries to run on System p as well as BladeCenter JS20 and JS21 servers that are running a Linux operating system along with nearly 2,800 Linux applications that already run natively. This expands the number of Linux workloads that can be consolidated on these servers, thereby increasing the power, cooling and space savings customers can achieve. These applications should run unmodified as the system will recognize at runtime that the application is a Linux x86 binary and automatically execute it in a p AVE environment. System p AVE creates a virtual x86 environment and file structure, and executes x86 Linux applications by dynamically translating and mapping x86 instructions and system calls to a POWER Architecture processor-based system. Through caching techniques, application performance can actually increase the longer it executes. The company indicated that it expects ISVs that do not currently support native Linux on POWER to be able to expand their opportunities to include POWER-based servers by leveraging existing x86 Linux binaries, media, and documentation, not needing to maintain a unique product offering for POWER technology. IBM also stated that it intends to leverage its Chiphopper program to help ISVs support System p servers with the x86 Linux version of their application. Customers and ISVs can now download and test System p AVE. IBM plans to make System p AVE generally available in the second half of 2007.

Offering binary compatibility for popular applications on multiple hardware platforms is one of the elusive holy grails of IT. During the 1990s, one such quest was making Windows-based applications available on SPARC workstations, the ill-fated Windows Application Binary Interface (WABI) offered by Sun Microsystems. Unfortunately the experience of many users who tried to use WABI was that it was limited to a small number of approved applications and as result these users found that WABI really stood for What A Bad Idea. Another more successful endeavor to this end was the Java programming language and Just in Time (JIT) compilers that sought to eliminate the traditional binary and replace it with a transportable application that precluded the need for platform-specific compilation. While Java remains prevalent today, and has been far more successful than WABI, the performance of interpreted or JIT-based solutions is generally less than that of compiled binaries and the optimization that compilers afford the applications.

What is exciting about this announcement is that System p AVE is looking to tackle both of these issues, performance and portability, by supporting the efficiencies inherent with compiled binaries and providing portability to another platform without requiring modification to the applications. The use of a dynamic mapping onto a different architecture shares some similarities to the JIT approach of Java; however, when caching is brought into the equation, whole chunks of code can be simply recalled and executed in mass without going through the remapping process. Thus, for code that is executed frequently if not continuously, performance improves over time as more of the remapped code is resident in the cache. The thought of code that runs faster the more it is executed may seem counter-intuitive, but most IT professionals would have to admit that the thought is captivating.

So for the sake of argument, let's assume that p AVE works far better than WABI did and the beta successfully matures into a commercial product. The impact on end users, ISVs, and channel partners would be significant. Developers could continue to write Linux apps on their x86 workstations, and then take advantage of the scalability and efficiencies inherent in the POWER architecture when it comes time to deploy the app. ISVs would suddenly find themselves with a larger addressable market, especially in the higher end of performance needs, as they can simply deliver their existing product and expertise for another platform. VARs and SIs now have the option of selecting from thousands of additional applications to weave into a customer solution. Lastly, Big Blue expands the potential of its highly scalable System p, and BladeCenter offerings as consolidation platforms for x86 Linux applications at both the lower and higher echelons of IT scale. This sounds almost too good to be true; however, if it is successful, it would be quite the technical achievement, and more importantly one with potentially significant commercial impact.

IBM, SAP, and NextLabs Collaborative Effort Yields Export Control Solution

By Lawrence D. Dietz

NextLabs Inc., a privately-held developer of policy-based automated information control solutions, together with IBM, have announced the availability of eGRC for Information Export Control through collaboration with SAP AG. The information export control solution from IBM and NextLabs extends the export compliance capability of the SAP GRC Global Trade Services application. In addition, the solution manages the handling and export of technical information that is subject to International Trffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), Export Administration Regulations (EAR), or other federal regulations. Aerospace and Defense, high tech, and industrial firms face complex challenges complying with ITAR and EAR export regulations, which impose large fines and penalties for inappropriate disclosure of export-controlled information. Unfortunately, regardless of the dire consequences, there are no clear guidelines or standards. Mobile workforces, the Internet, and the global supply chain further compound the problem because transfer of information can occur in a variety of ways including the hard-to-track verbal transfers.

eGRC for Information Export Control integrates with TivoliIdentity Manager from IBM, SAP GRC Global Trade Services, and Compliant Enterprise from NextLabs. The solution safeguards information within the enterprise, supports compliance with export regulations, and limits access to controlled information to authorized users. The solution combines best-in-class software with best-practice recommendations and implementation accelerators, for maximum customer value. IBM Global Business Services will implement the solution and provide the design, architecture, policy, and data discovery services. The eGRC for Information Export Control solution is designed to address export control requirements dealing with the handling and protection of technical data. The solution consists of three major components: identity management, information access and handling control, and export license management. eGRC for Information Export Control addresses technical data export requirements by enabling project teams to quickly: define authorized users, identify controlled technical data, control technical data use according to defined business policies, control export of technical data corresponding with approved licenses and defined business policies, and provide a full audit trail detailing technical data-flow history to satisfy regulatory compliance requirements.

We find this solution particularly intriguing. It's not often that we see two industry stalwarts such as IBM and SAP mentioned in the same release from a third vendor. Clearly the solution is aimed at providing government regulators with a subtle assurance that its users are employing the highest order of due diligence in tracking and managing the sensitive data which comes under the purview of these regulations. As with many legal dictates, the regulations are generally silent on technical guidance so it's up to users and vendors to determine what constitutes due diligence and ultimately best practices. Relying on highly respected vendors is certainly an ingredient in the due diligence mix. In this case, the solution actively enforces export controls by interpreting environmental variables, business context, and context of use dynamically for appropriate document handling and disclosure. The technology becomes the enforcement mechanism by implementing the processes stated in corporate policies.

Sageza believes that subject-matter expert vendors such as NextLabs stake out a very defensible niche in their enterprise customers, and take advantage of some market protection through the support of larger, more generic providers of hardware, software, and services such as IBM and SAP. As more regulations are enforced via the

federal courts, we expect to see more such specialized solutions as cost-effective ways to ensure compliance and proper management as well as reduce the cost of dealing with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure changes dealing with electronic information.

CA and TriCipher Team Up for Credentialing and Security

By Lawrence D. Dietz

TriCipher, Inc., a provider of multi-factor authentication solutions that protect the online channel against fraud and identity theft, has announced integration of its Armored Identity Management solution with CA SiteMinder, an identity and access management product that protects critical IT systems and services with user authentication and authorization. Combined, the products protect user credentials in Web Access Management implementations against phishing, pharming, and malware. Customers can adapt authentication strength according to each application risk without any disruption. A key component of CA's Identity and Access Management solution, CA SiteMinder provides broad support for Web access management and Single Sign-On (SSO), providing users with seamless access to resources across networks of websites. As an added level of security, TriCipher's Armored Identity Management, combined with CA SiteMinder, makes it virtually impossible for attackers to steal the user's credentials, misappropriate valuable resources, or compromise critical business applications.

The existing options for authentication with IDM and SSO systems such as passwords, cookies, pictures, and tokens have been proven inadequate by fraudsters, while stronger forms of authentication such as traditional PKI, smart cards, and Biometrics have not yet realized their potential because they are difficult to use and deploy, and simply cost too much to make business sense. TriCipher Armored Identity Management integrates into CA SiteMinder without requiring any changes to customer applications. TriCipher Armored Identity Management offers a variety of authentication methods that easily integrate with CA SiteMinder. TriCipher's zero-footprint Browser Cookie and Certificate options provide mutual authentication through a custom authentication scheme extension to CA SiteMinder. TriCipher's ID Tool Plug-in enables strong multifactor authentication using the PC, portable device, one-time password token, smart card, or biometrics as additional authentication factors. TriCipher's ID Tool Plug-in integrates with CA SiteMinder through the standard X.509 certificate authentication scheme.

Sageza believes that a good offense is indeed good defense as well. TriCipher provides a unified authentication infrastructure that provides a secure, easy to use, and low-cost authentication system for B2B and B2C web applications. The combination of robust credentialing capability with a large vendor's identity management infrastructure is a good one. Conceptually end users benefit from both stronger authentication and a more robust defense against malware, phishing, and identity theft. The ability for third parties to combine the offerings, particularly vertical or industry-focused offerings such as the SHAZAM portfolio of services including integrated strong authentication, identity, and access management to 1,600 financial institutions, is a case in point.

Having said all this we are compelled to point out that long-term success in ventures between very large and very small vendors often turns on the quality of support and the responsiveness to large and demanding clientele. In the case of IDM and WAM, scalability is critical. CA and TriCipher will have to work together very closely to ensure that customer problems are solved quickly with a minimum of finger-pointing. It will also be interesting to see how these two products combine to counter the more focused and sophisticated cyber attacks that can be expected against their mutual customers. Overall, we applaud the combined effort and feel it offers a model for other large and small vendor combinations to consider.

The Green Team: HP and Wal-Mart

By Susan Dietz

HP and Wal-Mart have joined forces to offer free recycling for any brand of computer or selected peripheral. The act of purchasing an HP printer, the Deskjet F4140 Color Inkjet All-in-One Printer/Scanner/Copier, enables the purchaser to recycle any brand of desktop or laptop, scanners (including AiO), monitors, laser or ink printers, handheld devices, VCRs, digital phones, DVD players, copiers, fax machines, fax machine cables, mice and

keyboards for free. The serial number of the printer is used on a website, enabling the user to print out a free shipping label for the hardware to be recycled.

The offer expires May 5, but while it's being offered, if a person needs a printer, it might be worth thinking about. It is Earth Week, after all. However, it seems like quite a lengthy and potentially frustrating process to buy the printer, find the serial number, go to the HP website, print out a label, box up old hardware, and then drive it to the post office. Most likely someone would have to be pretty dedicated to follow all of the steps to the end. It seems almost as complicated as trying to get a mail-in rebate. Not to be cynical or anything, but since companies count on a certain percentage of customers to forgo the rebate, perhaps HP is counting on a certain percentage of customers to not bother with the "free" recycling, either. In most instances of recycling, the centers pay the consumer for bringing in their scrap metal, aluminum, glass, etc. Or there is simply a drop-off point consisting of large bins to throw the old newspapers into. Most recycling centers for everyday products don't charge the consumer, unlike some computer recycling programs. Meanwhile, however, the good press for both HP and Wal-Mart won't come amiss, and is being backed by the series of TV ads being run by Wal-Mart at this time trumpeting their current line of green consumer goods, even though HP isn't being mentioned specifically – at least not yet.

HP and Wal-Mart sharing the environmental spotlight perhaps signals a new aspect of the green computing trend: that of the buddy system. Partnerships and consortiums are nothing new, after all, and are still around because they seem to work. While we don't see the big manufacturers banding together to make recycling easier on the consumer, we think that big manufacturers will most likely create (if not already in the process of creating) attractive recycling programs for their channel partners to participate in, thus growing their green reputations and perhaps saving a buck or two while they're at it. Some already claim to be working with their suppliers to develop cleaner manufacturing methods, an effort we heartily applaud.

Healthy competition between companies racing towards innovation leads to better products for everyone's benefit. The recent consumer pressure and environmental awareness is leading companies to compete for more of the green market, a market that is expanding almost exponentially. This is a race in which everyone wins.