



Database Archiving Market: Part 2 — Vendors Applimation and IXOS/Open Text

Infrastructure Strategies

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In response to the growing interest in database archiving, we introduce some of the leading players in this emerging market.

As larger vendors such as EMC, Veritas, Network Appliance, and StorageTek “beat the drums” for information (or data) life-cycle management, the hype seems limitless, yet the reality is likely to leave many organizations wanting (see Delta 2322). However, the need for database archiving, a segment of the information life-cycle management market, leaves little doubt about the value of archiving. Organizations report improved database performance, faster backup/recovery times, and shorter application/database upgrade periods.

Archiving differs from purging in that the data being removed from the production database is still available for users to search via SQL. Archiving is also distinct from data retention, because the focus is not on how long the data should be kept by the enterprise but on how long the data should be kept in the production database.

Through 2007, database archiving will increasingly be adopted as a best practice in managing existing legacy applications and as a main point of emphasis in new application development. Currently, this market is populated for the most part by small, privately held software companies. In previous research (see Delta 2377), we enumerated several criteria by which organizations should evaluate the various vendors in this market. Although technical functionality certainly should be a large part of any organization’s database archive selection process, in this Delta and in the next Delta in this series, we introduce five of the early leaders in this market (see Figure 1 — vendors OuterBay, Princeton Softech, and Solix are discussed in Part 3).

Applimation

This vendor bills itself as an application life-cycle management company rather than a pure-play database archiving vendor. Applimation currently offers a comprehensive set of tools in support of Oracle’s eBusiness Suite (10.x, 11.x) bundled into two main suites of products. Applimation’s Informia suite includes its Informia Archive and Informia Subset products. Applimation attributes more than 50% of its new license revenue to its Informia suite.

Applimation’s Informia Archive, unlike its competitors in the Oracle application space, does not use the built-in Oracle Application purge routines, preferring its own optimized routines. Applimation does support all the same business rules as Oracle’s native purge for all Oracle Application suite modules from 10.7-11i. Data is archived to another Oracle instance and deleted from the production instance. Both production and archived data are transparently available to Oracle Application users.

Users have reported that the Informia Archive product offers greater control and visibility into the archive process than some of the competitive products. This is especially important for organizations with a highly customized Oracle Application environment. This improvement is possible because Applimation’s purge maintains all of its metadata and business rules in Oracle tables, making them easily accessible and changeable.

META Trend: Through 2006, as database management systems become more self-managed and self-healing, DBA skill sets must evolve to higher-value data management functions (integrity, consolidation, archiving, integration) and new technologies (e.g., document management, Web services). Through 2007, operationally focused tasks (e.g., monitoring, maintenance) will be outsourced to remote DBA providers. In addition, as the focus of processing moves toward complex analytic processing — with transaction processing becoming commoditized, open source, or lower cost — stripped-down proprietary solutions will begin to supplant proprietary enterprise database software for basic OLTP processing by 2008.

Applimation's Informia suite offers a database subsetting tool that is useful in creating referentially consistent subsets of the production database (with data masking) for use in building test databases. This is an area where true storage cost savings can be realized. The Informia Suite also features a growth monitor as well as functionality to encapsulate older archived data into XML format for data retention needs. However, Applimation lacks support for non-Oracle databases or applications. Although it offers Entity Builder for custom application archiving, IT organizations will have difficulty basing their entire database archiving infrastructure on Informia Archive until it can support a more heterogeneous database infrastructure.

As with any emerging market, vendor viability is highly dependent on momentum or presence within the market. Applimation is meeting internal sales objectives, but it is falling behind the competition in the key area of partnerships with larger vendors, which is inhibiting its visibility in this market. This may be due in part to its having an application life-cycle approach rather than an information life-cycle approach. Applimation recently announced its inclusion in the Veritas Enabled Partner Program to build integration between Informia and Veritas Data Lifecycle Manager. It may be too early to tell whether the market will prefer one approach or the other. We have seen Applimation left off client shortlists because of the impression that it is not a database archive vendor. Certainly, the company must expand both its database platform support and packaged application support quickly or risk falling behind in market presence. Applimation has announced support for PeopleSoft on Oracle to begin in the fall of 2004.

IXOS/Open Text

IXOS is the only publicly traded company on our list of database archive vendors. Recently acquired by Open Text, IXOS is more accurately defined as an application archive vendor, since its Suite for SAP Data Archiving and its Suite for Siebel Document Archiving/Data Archiving actually operate more on the application layer and not the database layer. In fact, the type of database back end is not a factor in using this tool. Currently, IXOS is the only player in this market that is supporting SAP and has enjoyed a longstanding relationship (since 1992) with SAP. Support for Siebel is relatively new (the past two years), but until several competitors' recent announcements of plans to support Siebel, IXOS had the only out-of-the-box solution in that area as well.

Because IXOS is not a "database"-centric archive player, it archives not to another RDBMS instance but to file formats supported by its application partners. The IXOS Suite for SAP Data Archiving is dependent on its larger content management solution, the IXOS Enterprise Content Repository (ECR). This means that a single common archive repository is used. IXOS ECR also supports other content and data archiving purposes. In the case of SAP, the company uses the SAP data archiving format. This enables users to access SAP archived data via the SAP application or via the SAP Data Retention Tool (SAP DART) for tax-relevant data. It supports SAP from Version 3.x-4.x. For Siebel, archive data is stored in XML format and is transparently available to users of the Siebel application (Version 6-7.7). In both instances, IXOS relies on the native purge routines provided by the application vendors. Overall scope of its solution is limited, relative to archiving. IXOS offers no archive monitoring (similar to others in the space) except for archived data growth, and does not offer a database subsetting tool. It can support custom archiving using its IXOS Document Pipeline tool. However, IXOS's overall content and data management approach is a differentiator in this space, and IXOS's solutions may appeal to organizations that are approaching archiving from an overall corporate content view.

Bottom Line

With data volumes growing at 125% annually, the market for database archiving is poised to grow substantially. Several strong solutions exist. We recommend that users focus on vendors that demonstrate both broad support and knowledge of database archiving, in order to simplify vendor and infrastructure management.

Business Impact: Database archiving will ensure acceptable performance and availability of critical applications.

Figure 1 — Archive Vendor Capability*

Vendor	Applimation	IXOS	OuterBay	Princeton Softech	Solix
<i>Packaged Applications Supported (Non Custom)</i>					
Oracle eBusiness Suite	X		X	X	X
PeopleSoft			X	X	
SAP		X			
Siebel		X			
JD Edwards					
Lawson					
Clarify				X	
Retek					
<i>Databases Supported</i>					
Oracle	X	N/A	X	X	X
IBM DB2 UDB (Unix/Windows/Linux)		N/A	X	X	
IBM DB2 UDB z/OS		N/A	X	X	
Microsoft SQL Server		N/A	X	X	
Sybase		N/A	X	X	

N/A — Not Applicable

* Vendors OuterBay, Princeton Softech, and Solix are discussed in detail in the next Delta in this series.

Source: META Group