

Adaptec Improves SAP R/3 Reporting With Seagate Info

Adaptec (Milpitas, CA) is in the business of making the movement of data between computers and the world as fast and easy as possible. Adaptec hardware and software are used wherever data must be transferred from a computer to a peripheral device or network, and its solutions move data between computer types (i.e., portable, desktop, workgroup, and enterprise) and peripherals (e.g., printers, scanners, optical drives, RAID disk drives, tape drives, CD-ROM and recordable CD drives, etc.) using high-performance industry-standard technologies (e.g., SCSI, IR, EIDE, PCMCIA) and emerging advanced technologies. A public company since 1986, Adaptec has had 54 consecutive profitable quarters, with annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion dollars.

Adaptec uses SAP's R/3 as an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, and within the company there is an increasing demand for access to data from SAP and other Adaptec database systems without having to depend upon the company's Business Information Services Group (BISG).

"We had a primary business problem of making data within the SAP system more readily available to users," says Brad Amodeo, manager, manufacturing applications for Adaptec. "SAP does supply a good number of standard reports; however, we required a number of custom reports that SAP did not provide."

To meet this requirement, Adaptec developed reports using ABAP, SAP's programming language, and retained consultants or permanent programmers to do the work.

"Our users have the need and the ability to retrieve and analyze data on their own," continues Amodeo, "but they didn't have a tool to easily retrieve data and allow retrieval and consolidation from multiple systems. Therefore, we had to retain experienced SAP programmers to do the work."

After analysis, Adaptec determined that the implementation of a companywide report writer would allow users to create their own reports, while allowing BISG to develop the more complex reports currently required in far less time than it would take to do so using SAP's programming language.

Weighing In for Seagate Info

Adaptec implemented SAP's query tool for certain users, but, according to Amodeo, it is difficult to use. "It is not a tool we will be able to deploy to most users," he says, "and does not address the need to query non-SAP data."

The company looked at the feasibility of hiring additional programmers on a permanent and contract basis, but they concluded that the recurring costs were too high to justify adding headcount to develop simple reports and data extracts.

"After weighing all the alternatives, we determined that an end-user report-writing tool was the best and most cost-effective way to provide users with the power to extract and analyze data on their own," says Amodeo.

Adaptec examined several leading report-writing tools, evaluating them on a set of criteria that included technical features, ease of use, and ability to meet Adaptec's business needs.

"After the review," says Amodeo, "the clear choice was Seagate Info."

An integrated business intelligence suite, Seagate Info brings together an organization's two most valuable assets—people and information. From OLAP analysis to ad hoc query to enterprise reporting, Seagate Info delivers a powerful suite of easy-to-use tools that enable reporting and data analysis based on individual needs and skills.

According to Amodeo, Seagate Info was chosen for the following reasons:

- 1) It rated the highest in meeting Adaptec's business requirements.
- 2) The users selected Seagate Info as the most user-friendly tool.
- 3) The program is widely used and meets many software vendors' report-writing requirements.
- 4) The cost was approximately one-half of that of the other final candidate.
- 5) Seagate Info works seamlessly with SAP and with all of Adaptec's other database systems.

Fast Implementation, Quick Return-on-Investment

After its selection in August 1998, Seagate Info was installed as a pilot within a month. SAP security was then linked to Info according to requirements set by Adaptec management. By year's end, the system was implemented in a companywide test, and the system went live February 1, 1999.

“Essentially what we looked at,” says Amodeo, “was a comparison of what we could expect from the use of Seagate Info once users were up to speed with the product versus using a skilled SAP programmer. In our proof of concept, the time saved by doing complicated reports in Seagate Info as opposed to SAP's ABAP was dramatic: reports that took an experienced programmer about two weeks to write in ABAP took about a day in Seagate Info.”

The overall financial savings to Adaptec were significant. The total cost for hardware and software for a corporatewide deployment of Seagate Info (250 licenses) was \$201,000. Upon reviewing past BISG requests, Adaptec determined that users would be able to increase their access to data via Seagate Info in a manner equivalent to the level of effort required by at least one highly skilled SAP programmer. The cost of one highly experienced SAP programmer for one year (40 hours a week, 48 weeks, at \$150/hr) is \$288,000. Based on this calculation, the investment in Seagate Info is recouped in seven months.

Powerful Benefits

“Implementation of the report writer will give our existing staff (i.e., users and BISG programmers) the capability to develop reports and extract data from SAP and other Adaptec systems,” says Amodeo.

“BISG staff will continue to provide production support by developing the more complex intermediate and advanced-level reports required,” he continues. “But these staff members' productivity will also be improved by developing reports using Seagate Info wherever possible.”

Adaptec is currently running version 3.0 of SAP's R/3, and it uses all major modules—including manufacturing, sales and distribution, purchasing, human resources, materials management, warehouse management, forecasting, and financials.

“At present,” says Amodeo, “most of the Seagate Info reports are running off the sales and distribution, financial, manufacturing, and materials management modules.”

The number of reports per module is currently low, but as Adaptec personnel become familiar with the report writer, Amodeo expects that 10-20 reports will be run per module.

Currently there are 60 people developing reports.

“First we deployed Seagate Info to our technical team,” says Amodeo, “then to our business analysts, and then to ‘super users’ that analysts identified within the organization.”

According to Amodeo, reports are generated from a combination of batch and ad hoc queries.

“Most of the reports are ad hoc,” he says. “We’re helping users learn the SAP database, which has 10,000 tables and hundreds of fields. Seagate Info itself is highly intuitive and easy to learn; users haven’t found it difficult to work with at all.”

The largest reports are 200-300 pages in length (e.g., inventory reports), with smaller reports (e.g., purchase or sales order inquiries) encompassing a page or two.

The Adaptec Architecture

Adaptec is using Seagate Info in both its Web client and client/server forms. The company is running Windows 95 on a Pentium 233 with a minimum of 32 megabytes of RAM.

R/3 is running on an Informix database of 90 gigabytes.

Currently, Adaptec has deployed 75 of the 250 Seagate Info seats it has purchased, and expects to deploy all 250—worldwide—by March 2000. The system runs on a wide-area network, with servers (Dell 4200 servers with dual 300 Mhz Pentium processors, 530 megabytes of RAM, and 20 gigabytes of hard drive space) in Milpitas and in Brussels, Belgium. The company is also using HP net servers running Microsoft IIS4.

Excellent Reports

“We’ve been very satisfied with the performance of Seagate Info,” says Amodeo. “Benchmarked versus standard SAP, it reduces the demand on our CPUs.”

In the current Adaptec configuration, the Seagate Info server generates SAP code, uploads it to the SAP server, then pulls the data back down.

“Reports off the Seagate Info server itself have been excellent,” Amodeo adds, “and again with outstanding performance.”

Amodeo compliments Seagate on its sales and technical support, which he describes as “outstanding, especially when it comes to working with SAP.”

“One of the reasons we chose Seagate,” he concludes, “was because of their aggressive approach to implementing their products with SAP. We know from this that they’ll continue enhancing the product over time.”

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ADAPTEC JUMP PAGE

Adaptec (Milpitas, CA) is in the business of making the movement of data between computers and the world as fast and easy as possible. The company found itself in need of a report-writing solution to facilitate such movement within its own computer systems.

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To meet this requirement, Adaptec had developed reports using ABAP, SAP’s programming language, and retained consultants or permanent programmers to do the work. This was a time-consuming and expensive process.

After analysis, Adaptec determined that the implementation of a companywide report writer would allow users to create their own reports, while allowing BISG to develop the more complex reports currently required in far less time than it would take using SAP’s programming language.

Adaptec examined several leading report writing tools, evaluating them on a set of criteria that included technical features, ease of use, and ability to meet Adaptec's business needs. After the review, the clear choice was Seagate Info.

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- Adaptec users selected Seagate Info as the most user-friendly tool.
- Seagate Info is widely used and meets many software vendors' report-writing requirements.
- The cost was approximately 1/2 of that of the other final candidate.
- Seagate Info works seamlessly with SAP and with all of Adaptec's other database systems.

Implemented companywide less than six months after purchase, Seagate Info promises to pay for itself in less than seven months from the date of implementation.

"We've been very satisfied with the performance of Seagate Info," says Amodeo. "It's been outstanding, particularly when it comes to working with SAP."

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ADAPTEC QUOTES

“Using a highly skilled SAP programmer to meet our needs would cost us \$288,000; purchasing 250 licenses of Seagate Info costs about 70 percent of that—an investment we recoup in seven months’ time!”

“Seagate Info not only provided superior functionality, it was approximately 1/2 the cost of the other report writer that reached final consideration.”

“Seagate Info not only makes data more accessible and easier to work with for our users, it frees up our technical team to be more productive.”

“We’ve been extremely pleased with the performance of Seagate Info—benchmarked against standard SAP, it significantly reduces the demand on our CPUs.”

“Seagate’s sales and technical support has been outstanding—especially when it comes to implementing Seagate Info with SAP’s R/3.”

“A complicated report that would take two weeks to write with ABAP can be written in less than a day by someone experienced with Seagate Info.”

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