



SyncSort

Success Story: General Parts

General Parts Slashes Sales and Inventory Data Processing Time by 96% Using SyncSort

Organizational Profile

- A distributor of CARQUEST replacement automotive parts, supplies and tools
- 40 distribution centers and approximately 2800 stores

Business Need

- Reduce elapsed time of sales and inventory data processing

Environment

- Sun E450 with 4 CPUs
- Oracle 8i

Benefits

- Cut down database processing time by 96%
- Slashed processing time from one month to 22 hours
- Replaced all C programs and most Perl scripts
- Easily integrated into their dimension management and facts preparation application

"Because of the power of SyncSort, we can rapidly do all of our dimension management and facts preparation."

Mike Ames
Managing Consultant
General Parts, Inc.

The Challenge:

General Parts, Inc., is a distributor of CARQUEST replacement automotive parts, supplies and tools for every make and model of foreign and domestic car, truck, bus, and farm or industrial vehicle. At their corporate headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina, the company receives inventory and sales data from its 40 distribution centers and approximately 2800 stores in the U.S. and Canada. Processing all of this data was taking a full month and the company needed to find a way to improve on that performance. Mark Walley, the Data Warehouse Manager at General Parts selected SyncSort to help cut the processing time. Walley would receive approximately 3500 to 4000 files a day, ranging in size from 5MB up to 50-60MB. The data was originally pre-processed using custom Perl and C programs and then loaded into their database for analysis. They replaced these programs with SyncSort.

The Solution:

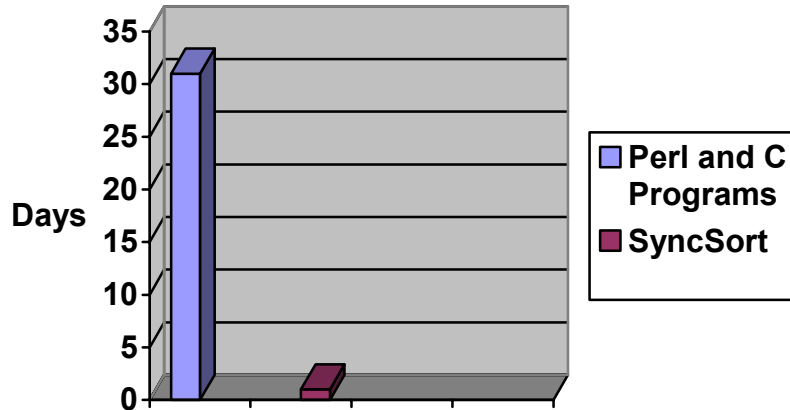
The procedure now begins with several servers using modems to dial into the individual stores and distribution centers in order to pull the raw database down. Those files are loaded into a Sun E450 with four processors. SyncSort processes the data, performing all of the company's dimension management and fact preparation. Mike Ames, a managing consultant on the project, explains, "Essentially what we do is to use SyncSort to prepare the files for loading. We perform all of our dimension management first and then handle our facts preparation. For the fact preparation, we'll have a part number and we'll use SyncSort to join it with our parts file. Once the dimension management and fact preparation is complete, we'll have separate parts, customer, line item and inventory flat files ready for loading into the Oracle 8i database."

The Benefits:

Ames believes the impact of this new process on General Parts' business has been immeasurable. "The company went from not knowing which stores had what inventory to being able to quickly check inventory. They also are able to improve their negotiations with vendors because they can find out the exact number of parts they've ordered in the past. Now the data warehouse also provides an up-to-date snapshot of sales. For example, we can go in and see how much sales a particular store has had in the past three months. The new process has had a huge impact."

Overall, SyncSort was able to reduce the processing time by 96%. "The original system that we replaced was doing all of this processing in a month," Ames stated. "We brought in SyncSort and did everything in 22 hours. Because of the power of SyncSort, we can rapidly do all of our dimension management and facts preparation."

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About SyncSort

SyncSort is a high-performance application accelerator that improves the performance of multiple applications and reduces elapsed time for a broad range of applications. It speeds ETL transactions by up to 90% and facilitates data mining and click-stream processing. SyncSort merges, aggregates, cleanses, and converts data. Other features include filtering, pattern matching, and partitioning. SyncSort will save you time in operations like data warehousing, data mining, data marts, CRM, ERP, DSS, BI, Oracle Financials, and legacy migration. Using Visual SyncSort, SyncSort applications can be created through a Windows-like GUI. For more information or to arrange for a free trial, call Syncsort at (201)930-8200 or visit www.syncsort.com.