



Success Story: InfoLab

InfoLab Speeds Clients' Data Warehouse Applications Dramatically with Multiple Functions of SyncSort

Organizational Profile

- Based in Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Helps companies leverage information to enhance their marketing programs

Business Need

- Process and reformat customer databases that range in size from four to 30 million consumer records

Environment

- Windows NT

Benefits

- SyncSort successfully ordered and reformatted the files without having to split them into multiple passes
- Replicates mainframe-type processing on the Windows platform
- Uses SyncSort for merge/purge operations
- An essential tool for processing data outside of the database as well as for processing extractions

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Don Waskiewicz
Chief Information Officer
InfoLab Inc.

The Challenge:

Ann Arbor, Michigan-based InfoLab Inc. helps companies leverage information to enhance their marketing programs. InfoLab's clients are primarily Fortune 100 companies serving consumers in the automotive, insurance, financial and retail industries, and with large databases of customer information, ranging from four million to over 30 million customer records. It was while managing one of these databases that Don Waskiewicz, InfoLab's Chief Information Officer, realized that he needed to come up with a new way to process the vast amount of information. "I was working with a national customer database that contained about 10 million consumer records, and I needed to have a tool that could quickly process and reformat these big files," Mr. Waskiewicz stated.

The Solution:

Mr. Waskiewicz selected SyncSort and was able to meet the challenge of processing this large database. SyncSort successfully ordered and reformatted the files, which were larger than four gigabytes, without having to split them into multiple passes. "I was also working on a project where I needed to do merge/purge operations. We were required to merge together data from different sources, processing matches one way and non-matches another way. I started testing some of the merge/purge tools in the marketplace but wasn't happy with any of them." The project consisted of taking a database of 90 million records containing the population of the United States and matching it to a customer database of approximately 30 million records. "Without SyncSort, I wouldn't have the ability to do the job at all."

The Benefits:

"SyncSort is one of our main tools for doing general data processing. We're continually finding new things to do with it," Mr. Waskiewicz stated. "For instance, I ran a job recently where I found out that each record in a file of 11 million had an extra byte in it. I simply needed to chunk off a byte at the end of each record. I used SyncSort to reformat the record. Ten minutes later, it was done and I'm back in business. Prior to that, I would have had to use a product such as SAS. Since I don't program SAS, I would have to talk to a programmer just so he could write me a program to do this. With SyncSort, I don't have to do that."

Mr. Waskiewicz found that SyncSort enabled him to do the type of work on NT that he used to complete on the mainframe. "SyncSort has allowed me to replicate mainframe-type processing on the NT platform with a small staff of people. It's a simple, easy-to-use tool that enables me to transfer operations that previously would have required writing complex programs. It's absolutely one of my favorite tools that I've discovered. I've been very pleased to find that

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I can now translate processes that I used to do in COBOL on an NT platform on a large scale. So many of the tools that I've used in NT have constraints such as two or four gigabyte file size limits. I don't have that with SyncSort, so that's a real relief."

SyncSort has become an essential part of InfoLab's toolkit for processing data before it goes into databases, as well as for processing extractions. "In the business we're in, our clients count on us to solve whatever problems arise. These are things we can do only because we have SyncSort. It's one of the tools that enables us to stay in business and continue to grow." In fact, InfoLab has expanded to include 14 servers running Windows 2000, using approximately five terabytes of raid storage for housing their clients' databases and doing data processing prior to entry into a database.

Mr. Waskiewicz added, "SyncSort is a part of every job stream we have. Whether it's as an integral component, or part of debugging or ad hoc type processing, or quality checking, everything we do includes SyncSort in one of the streams."

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.