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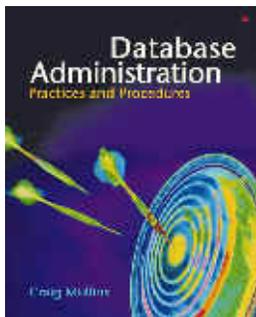
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The DBA Corner
by Craig S. Mullins

Data Management Made News in 2007

As I sit here writing this it is late November 2007, but this column will not be published until January 2008. With that in mind, I thought it would be worthwhile to take a look back at the machinations within the database market over the past year. Of course, if anything important happened in December, please excuse its exclusion.

So, what were the major database-related events and issues of the past year? Well, of all the big trends it would seem that consolidation of the business intelligence (BI) market was at the top of the heap. In early March 2007 Oracle announced its intent to acquire Hyperion Solutions for $3.3 billion. Next up was SAP AG, which announced its intent to acquire Business Objects for $6.7 billion. And then in mid-November IBM made its play and announced its intent to acquire Cognos for $5 billion. So by the end of the year the major independent BI vendors were swallowed up by giants to the tune of more than $15 billion. Not to be left out, Microsoft also unleashed its BI platform plans this year which include SQL Server, SharePoint Server, Microsoft Office (which incorporates Excel), and a new offering, Microsoft PerformancePoint Server, which serves as the applications layer of the BI platform.

And, of course, data- and application-related acquisitions made the news all year long. Oracle, as has been customary these past few years, led the way in 2007 announcing its intent to acquire the IP of AppForge, as well as Hyperion, LODESTAR, Agile Software Corp., Tangasol, Bharosa, Bridgestream and LogicalApps. And they tried to buy BEA Systems, but were turned down by their board. IBM was quite active, too, announcing its intent to acquire Softek Storage Solutions, Data Mirror, Princeton Softech, and Cognos. There were many other acquisitions throughout 2007 (for example, Microsoft's purchase of Stratature) but Oracle and IBM pretty much hogged the spotlight.

Then there is the case of the intriguing legal gyrations between Oracle and SAP, which are still unresolved. Early in the year Oracle slapped a lawsuit on rival applications software vendor SAP AG. Oracle alleges that SAP has "stolen thousands of proprietary, copyrighted software products and other confidential materials that Oracle developed to service its own support customers." Basically, Oracle is claiming that SAP repeatedly accessed proprietary information from

Oracle's customer support website and that SAP was not authorized to do so. If you want to read the complaint you can find it **here**. But it got more interesting in July when SAP acknowledged that one of its business units, TomorrowNow, had made "inappropriate downloads" of Oracle computer code for fixes and support documents. This will probably take a long time to wind its ways through the courts.

Of course, 2007 offered more than just acquisitions and lawsuits. All of the major DBMS vendors released new and improved versions of their stalwart database systems.

In early March, IBM announced that DB2 9 for their System z (mainframe) customers. The big new feature there is called pureXML, which allows you to store data as native XML without storing it as a LOB or shredding it into tables. And late in the second quarter IBM released a beta version of DB2 Viper 2. In June, IBM announced the next version of its Informix Dynamic Server (IDS) DBMS code named Cheetah. IDS 11 offers improved performance, better reliability and scalability, and better techniques for handling large volumes of data. And IBM also brought out a new version of their hierarchical mainframe DBMS, IMS Version 10.

In May Microsoft announced that the next version of SQL Server, formerly known by the code name of Katmai, will ship in 2008. General availability is scheduled for the second quarter.

And Oracle unleashed the latest version of its flagship database server, Oracle Database 11g in July. This is the first major new release of Oracle's DBMS in more than four years, so it is big news to the database community. Oracle touts this release as its most innovative ever with an impressive list of over 400 new

features. Additionally, Oracle claims to have submitted 11g to 15 million test hours after 36,000 person-months of development effort.

Now that is a lot of news for one year, but it doesn't stop there. Last year NCR Corporation spun off its Teradata Data Warehousing business as a separate company, creating another independent, publicly traded DBMS company with annual revenue of $1.5 billion. And though it did not happen, MySQL talked about an initial public offering creating yet another publicly traded DBMS company. A public MySQL could do for the open source DBMS market what a public Red Hat did for the open source operating system market.

So all in all it was an eventful year in the database marketplace. Here's hoping 2008 is just as interesting!

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Home.