

database

TRENDS AND APPLICATIONS

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Kore Technologies Expedites IBM U2-SQL Server Integration for Community College Kourier Integrator Used to Cost-Effectively Build Data Warehouse from Datatel Colleague

At the Mission College campus in Santa Clara, Calif., the IT team supports the technology infrastructure for not only that institution but also West Valley College in Saratoga. Both are community colleges operating within state budget constraints. The combined West Valley-Mission Community College District relies heavily on Datatel Colleague, an enterprise resource planning solution designed for higher education. The system holds all of the colleges' course offerings, student records, human resources and financial records, as well as budget information. Typically, there are 200 users on the Datatel system, and during registration periods for students that number spikes.

THE CHALLENGE

The information in the Datatel system, which runs on a UniData database platform from IBM, was scattered across hundreds of tables, making it difficult for end users to access information. The IT team wanted to continue using UniData for their main business system, but move data to a Microsoft SQL Server data warehouse for reporting purposes.

Initially, the District was using some simple UniData exports and manually loading those CSV files into SQL Server, a cumbersome and time-consuming process.

"Our goal was to create a data warehouse that would consolidate the vast amount of information that was in the Datatel system into a reasonable number of tables and fields into one consolidated system so end users could understand and easily navigate through the data," said Ron Smith, IT director for the West Valley-Mission Community College District.

THE SOLUTION

After evaluating half a dozen products, Smith's team turned to Kourier Integrator for U2 from Kore Technologies. "It was a big surprise to us, and when we found out how quickly it could solve some of our issues, we were just ecstatic," said Smith

Kore offers a comprehensive range of professional services and applications for the IBM U2 and Microsoft SQL Server databases. Kourier Integrator for U2 is an enterprise integration suite which provides extract, transform, and load (ETL) and enterprise application integration (EAI) capabilities for connecting IBM U2 applications to Microsoft SQL Server and other best-in-class applications. Using Kourier Integrator, the District's initial data warehouse was up and running in just a few weeks and within five months, it had a complete reporting solution for the student, human resources and financial segments of the warehouse.

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Key to the success of the implementation is Kore's SQL Accelerator, noted Kevin Cartier, webmaster for the District, "We didn't have to manually make our SSIS (SQL Server Integration Services) packages. We just ran their tool and it produced SSIS packages for us which made the implementation go much faster."

Moreover, on an ongoing basis, Kourier Integrator's Net Change Tracking allows the District to bring over only the records that have changed since the last refresh of their 60GB SQL Server database, said Cartier. For example, without Net Change a full refresh of a large file containing student attendance data could take six or eight hours. Using Net Change, large file updates only require a few seconds, allowing the data warehouse and reporting to be fully up-to-date every 15 minutes.

The use of Kore's technology to move data from the UniData database to SQL Server combined with IBM Cognos 8.4 for business intelligence has allowed the District's IT department to make better use of its resources. The new

solution enables data to be moved in a more timely manner, supporting the creation and development of reports for senior management. And, in support of other integration projects, data extracted by Kourier Integrator is used to update the District's content management system, which provides data to their Web sites.

EASY TO IMPLEMENT AND MAINTAIN

Since the Kourier Integrator installation three years ago, the District has gone through a seamless upgrade of Datatel. Initially on Datatel Colleague R17, when the District needed to upgrade to R18, the team was able to deactivate Kourier with the tools provided by Kore, perform the R18 upgrade, and then reactivate Kourier in the new environment without any problems. "Using the process of the 'suitcase' that is available through Kore, we did not have to recreate all of our jobs. We were just able to drop them back in," Cartier said.

"Kore understood the educational environment and the challenges that we were facing," reflected Smith. "We needed something that could be installed quickly, and was easy to learn and use. Kore offers value and low total cost of ownership for their product. In today's economy, with the community college system cutting our budget, this was a real value for us." ■

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