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Emirates NBD: Speeding Analysis While Slashing TCO with SAP® Sybase® IQ Software

Partner

Sybase Products M.E.

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Company
Emirates NBD

Industry
Banking

Products
Full-service banking

Web Site
www.emiratesnbd.com

SAP® Solutions
SAP® Sybase® IQ software
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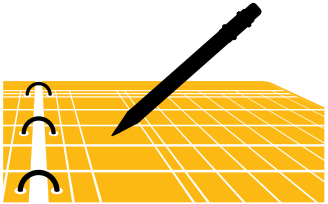

Skillful analysis of data helped Emirates NBD become one of the largest banks in the Middle East, but growth and increasing demands were overwhelming the software that managed that data. Throwing expensive hardware at the problem was a temporary fix at best, so Emirates NBD did something smarter instead: it switched to SAP® Sybase® IQ software. The speed and compression technology are helping the bank **save on total cost of ownership** (TCO), and analysts are getting results to start their day – not after lunch.

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Banking on SAP Sybase IQ

With total assets worth AED 308.3 billion (US$83.9 billion) as of December 31, 2012, Emirates NBD is the leading banking institution in the Middle East region. Dubai-based Emirates NBD is a full-service bank, providing banking services of all kinds to individuals and corporations around the world. Emirates NBD is part of Emirates NBD Group Companies, which comprises several other financial services institutions as well.

Like banks everywhere, Emirates NBD has been accumulating data about its customers and their transactions for many years. It performs extensive analysis on this data to support decisions about sales campaigns, loan risks, and many other business and marketing issues. Because of the bank's size and rapid growth, and because its IT group also serves the needs of the other members of the group, its data management and analysis challenges are particularly daunting.

The database software that the bank employed in the past was not keeping up with the complexity. As a result, analysts experienced delays of up to five hours in receiving reports they needed. At first the IT team tried speeding up the process by strengthening the hardware infrastructure, moving to multiple database instances over eight servers. Not only was this approach expensive, but it had its own technical challenges that made data management problematic and further impacted user satisfaction. As the database grew to 14 terabytes in size, storage expense became another issue.

14 terabytes

Size of uncompressed database

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Making a wise investment

Knowing that database demands would only increase, the management team decided to stop trying to make up for the shortcomings of its existing database software package and replace it instead. "Our vision was to move to an enterprise data warehouse based on database software well architected for our particular challenges," says Vijay Kunnath, Associate Vice President for Emirates NBD's Group IT department. "We wanted to provide better support to our decision makers by giving them faster response to queries. Foreseeing an exponential increase in the volume of data to be managed due to changing business dynamics and upcoming integrations, we also wanted a database software solution that would provide the necessary scalability to keep up. In addition, we wanted to cut back substantially on the hardware required to support the software."

"Our goal was to improve the effectiveness of our data warehouse while reducing its cost. That's what we did with SAP Sybase IQ."

Vijay Kunnath, Associate Vice President, Group IT Department, Emirates NBD

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Financing the future

Kunnath's team carefully examined and evaluated software from three leading enterprise data warehouse vendors. "SAP Sybase IQ really stood out compared with the others in terms of its flexibility and ability to satisfy our exacting requirements," reports Kunnath. "Its platform-independent performance and level of compression were unmatched, as was its ability to be smoothly integrated into our existing infrastructure. By choosing SAP Sybase IQ, we knew we would be minimizing the effort entailed in migrating from our previous technology. We also appreciated the value of the columnar nature of its database, one of the reasons its performance is so good."

250 analysts

Regularly accessing the new enterprise data warehouse

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A partnership to be treasured

Emirates NBD performed the implementation with help from Sybase Products Middle East (SPME). The team employed SAP Sybase PowerDesigner® software to help with migration of data from the legacy application and create the necessary tables in SAP Sybase IQ. The SPME team assisted on the following:

- Migrating database models from the previous system to SAP Sybase IQ using SAP Sybase PowerDesigner
- Migrating and tuning Informatica ETL jobs to work with SAP Sybase IQ
- Migrating and tuning reports in third-party software

Comments Tony Achkar, managing director of Sybase Products Middle East, "SPME supported the team in the migration and tuning of thousands of jobs and reports. SPME's experience in migration projects helped the Emirates NBD team migrate from their existing systems to SAP Sybase IQ. We ensured that the transition period and the migration process concluded smoothly."

"The team completed the project on plan without any major deviations," Kunnath adds. "Wholehearted, committed teamwork by our internal team and the consultants, along with the full backing and support of Emirates NBD management, made our new solution a reality."

"SAP Sybase PowerDesigner will come in handy again in the future for data modeling purposes."

Vijay Kunnath, Associate Vice President, Group IT Department, Emirates NBD

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A wealth of advantages

Approximately 250 analysts regularly access Emirates NBD's new enterprise data warehouse, 50 of them concurrently, on average. For these users, the experience is much more satisfying than with the previous technology. Using self-service, they make ad hoc queries that access the database and return results quickly. For example, it takes an average of two minutes to execute a query that traverses through five years of data. This means that analysts can begin work in the morning by making queries and almost immediately receive the results they need to make plans and decisions. In the past, because of the five-hour delay in obtaining these results, they could not commence their planning and decision making until the afternoon. "Time to market is crucial in our business," says Kunnath. "That extra half-day can be a very important competitive differentiator. We're now able to respond more quickly to changes in the market or regulations."

The adoption of SAP Sybase IQ has been a boon to all the people involved in the analysis and decision-making process. "Our customers in the bank's business units are more satisfied now that they get information they need sooner and are more confident in our technology," says Kunnath. "Meanwhile, our analysts have been very positive and appreciative that we made the change. Looking back at the project, what made me the proudest was seeing the smiles on the faces of these people, the ones who really felt the difference across technology and the business."

2 minutes

Average time required to traverse 5 years of data

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Reaping an excellent return

SAP Sybase IQ has met all the bank's expectations for enterprise data warehouse performance. "It has brought us increased availability, improved speed, and extra efficiency in our decision-making process," Kunnath says. "This in turn has helped us focus more on figuring out how best to address our customers' needs, instead of having to spend effort on data management technology. We are making better use of advanced business intelligence functionalities and spending less time waiting for the results of complex queries. SAP Sybase IQ means faster data processing and less administrative overhead."

The deployment was also a complete success from a TCO viewpoint. "We are saving on processors and storage," reports Kunnath. "Instead of requiring eight separate servers and multiple databases, SAP Sybase IQ is delivering outstanding performance with just one instance. Furthermore, its compression algorithm has allowed us to compress the 14 terabyte database down to 4 terabytes. Since we're adding data at a rate of 200 gigabytes a month compressed, that's a lot of money we're saving. We also eliminated the headaches we were experiencing trying to gang servers together and run multiple instances."

1 server

Required, down from 8

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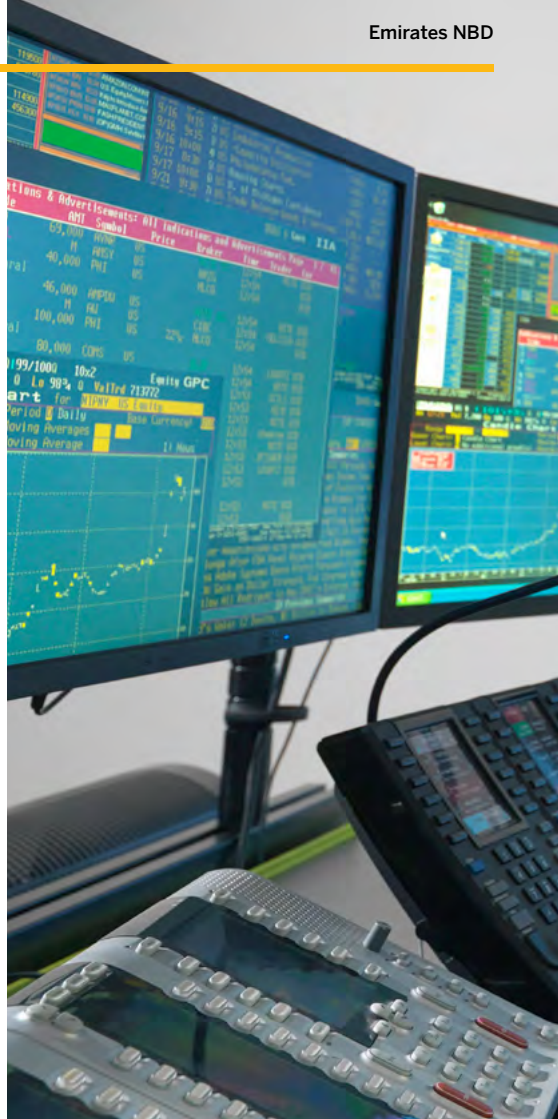
Currency for continued growth

Kunnath and his colleagues are very pleased with their decisions. "SAP Sybase IQ is an investment an organization could consider if it is facing challenges due to data volume and growth," says Kunnath. "It definitely will provide you better control and ownership over your most valued asset, your data."

The bank has aggressive plans for growing its enterprise data warehouse and expanding its use of advanced analytics, and it expects SAP Sybase IQ to play significant roles. "Moving ahead, we look forward to taking advantage of the vast amount of experience that SAP has and the support it will provide in our overall business intelligence road map and strategy," Kunnath concludes. "We consider SAP a valued technology partner."



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