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PRODUCT
REVIEWS



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Netezza Performance Server™ 8000 Series

Epsilon Speeds Customer Analysis with the Netezza Performance Server

REVIEWER: Mike Coakley, vice president of Marketing Technology Products for Epsilon.

BACKGROUND: Epsilon is a relationship marketing company specializing in the strategic development, deployment and management of online and offline solutions. With leading technology and functional experience, Epsilon delivers solutions with bottom-line impact and gives clients an edge in improving their direct dialogue with their most valuable prospects and customers.

PLATFORMS: The Netezza Performance Server (NPS™) appliance runs on Red Hat Linux.

PROBLEM SOLVED: Epsilon is using the Netezza Performance Server appliance – the world's first purpose-built, tera-scale data appliance optimized for the business intelligence (BI) needs of data-intensive organizations. The NPS appliance enables us to consolidate our campaign management and customer segmentation data marts. Historically, these queries have been run on Epsilon's proprietary Event System, but the combination of price/performance offered by the NPS system enables Epsilon to provide clients with an open, scalable, relational system with off-the-shelf tools for data access and campaign management that previously was price prohibitive.

PRODUCT FUNCTIONALITY: Performance of the NPS 8100 to date has shown in some instances more than 30 times the performance of a similarly priced Oracle-based system. For example, a full table scan of 30GB executes in less than 10 seconds. As a result, campaign management queries that took three hours using a competing technology now take only three minutes with the NPS appliance.

STRENGTHS: We have seen dramatic results since we began working with Netezza. For example, with the NPS appliance we are now able to complete a complex SAS query that took more than two hours on a Sun/Oracle system in just 13

MANUFACTURER



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minutes, reduce update join challenge from three hours to three minutes, reduce data load times from 11 hours to three hours and reduce database refresh times from more than four hours to less than one hour. We also have significantly reduced database management time, and the system does not require constant management of space allocation or temporary space. SQL tuning has become much less of an issue. Even poorly constructed SQL runs extremely fast. Upgrades to the Netezza software are performed in less than 30 minutes. Our findings of the NPS system's low TCO are consistent with projections – our upfront costs with the NPS appliance were minimal in comparison to other products on the market, and early indications are that production environments can be maintained using far less staff time.

WEAKNESSES: The user SQL command line interface is not a problem for the experienced user, but it does need to be made more intuitive for the novice.

SELECTION CRITERIA: Quite simply, Epsilon chose the NPS system because it blew away the competition in our initial tests. The price/performance of other systems could not even compare with that of the NPS appliance. In

order to remain competitive, we need to be able to provide complex data analysis to our clients. The NPS appliance's scalable and reliable architecture performs more sophisticated analysis in a fraction of the time of competing technologies, helping us to deliver better value to our customers while also lowering our costs through data mart consolidation. The major advantages of the NPS appliance are found in its two key architectural advancements: 1) An Intelligent Query Streaming™ design that optimizes the flow of information by placing silicon processors near the storage device. The appliance's architecture intelligently filters and processes records immediately as they come off the storage disk, bringing over only the relevant information for each query. This allows processing that would usually overwhelm a general-purpose server to occur right at the source of the data, delivering a tremendous boost in performance; 2) A unique Asymmetric Massively Parallel Processing™ (AMPP™) approach that combines the processing power of SMP with the scalability of MPP. It applies SMP and MPP where they are most beneficial in the design, delivering tremendous real-time performance and scalability.

DELIVERABLES: On the Netezza Performance Server, we run a series of complex and ad hoc analysis for our clients. Report formats and data sets vary to meet the individual user needs. The flexibility of the NPS system has been demonstrated without changing our business processes, data acquisition mechanisms or application tools.

VENDOR SUPPORT: Netezza has been an exceptional partner. They have demonstrated commitment and flexibility at every stage of the project. Their dedicated team of highly talented individuals is always available to answer questions.

DOCUMENTATION: Netezza's documentation is comprehensive. Perhaps more importantly, the NPS appliance's simplicity and design ensure that little effort is required to maintain the system.