

E-Guide

SAP takes on Oracle in database war

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SAP and Oracle are going head to head in the highly competitive database market. In this E-Guide, discover what steps SAP has been taking to differentiate their products from Oracle. Plus, learn about SAP's new in-memory database, HANA.

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By Cliff Saran

SAP has taken one step closer to separating its products from rival Oracle's market leading relational database, with a strategy to deliver database technology and real time analytics.

The ERP company said it would build on the data management and movement products it acquired when it bought Sybase two years ago.

SAP said the evolutionary and non-disruptive integration of SAP and Sybase products would enable its customers to transact, move, store, process and analyze data in real time, while reducing costs with common design and landscape management capabilities. The SAP database and analytics capabilities will lead to big data applications and analytics, and enhanced support for cloud and mobile applications — all with minimal customer disruption, claims SAP.

Cheaper than Oracle

SAP is offering its Business Suite ERP application on the Sybase ASE relational database. SAP plans to offer new and existing customers with a full application and database software stack, along with integrated maintenance and synchronized releases.

SAP is positioning Sybase as a cheaper alternative to Oracle's relational database for powering its ERP software. Adrian Simpson, CTO at SAP, said: "Money is tight. We are offering customers a cheaper cost base for their

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database. It is half the cost of Oracle and is charged through annual maintenance.”

Mike Davis, senior analyst at Ovum, believes SAP's decision to cut its reliance on the Oracle database makes commercial sense. He said: "Oracle is the preferred database partner for running SAP ERP. SAP has invested a chunk of money in databases, buying Sybase, which was once Oracle's biggest competition in the database market."

Davis believes the move for SAP would benefit its customers: "It is good to see serious competition against Oracle and IBM. It is all very positive and sensible for SAP to look to displace its main software partner."

Oracle has been in a legal battle with SAP over copyright infringement, relating to a company SAP bought called TomorrowNow. It is seeking \$1.3 billion from SAP and is appealing against a recent ruling that reduced the damaged to \$272m.

The role of HANA

HANA is SAP's in-memory database designed to accelerate big data analytics. To tie in with the strategy announcement, SAP released NetWeaver Business Warehouse, powered by HANA . It also plans to launch a \$155m venture fund for start-ups, to build on the new platform and a \$337m incentive program for customers to switch to SAP HANA.

"SAP is redefining the database market by combining the innovation and expertise of SAP and Sybase," said Hasso Plattner, chairman of the SAP supervisory board.

"At its core is the innovative and now proven in-memory database SAP HANA, which helps customers access and deliver information at unprecedented speeds, up to 100,000 times faster than before, and enables them to envision fundamentally new ways of running their businesses. Customers can run existing systems more efficiently while easily embracing new technologies."

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To encourage businesses to use HANA, SAP is offering free consulting through the SAP HANA adoption program. For any new customers migrating from legacy databases, SAP said it would provide consulting services for customers to adopt and implement HANA. It is also offering an 18-month exchange program to enable users to swap of their HANA licenses to any other previously licensed SAP product if they are not satisfied, SAP said.

At the moment, HANA sits alongside existing databases but, according to Simpson, SAP will make HANA the underlying database for its enterprise software.

Weijun Zhang, deputy director of Shanghai Volkswagen said: "SAP NetWeaver BW powered by SAP HANA would drastically reduce data latency and improve the speed from 20 minutes to 45 seconds."



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