

The Data Center and the Data Warehouse - IO



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November 8th, 2010 / admin / 0 comments

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A growing number of businesses are creating data warehouses—or expanding existing data warehousing deployments—to gain a variety of benefits, including data mining, data visualization, online analytical processing (OLAP) and improved decision support capabilities.

A successful data warehouse's foundation resides on performance, availability, scalability, communications and cost. Deficiencies in any of these areas can undermine a data warehouse's power, usefulness and overall value.

Performance. Exploding information growth threatens to overwhelm data warehouses as well as their operators and end users. The amount of information stored inside a data warehouse spirals upward as content accumulates over time. Meanwhile, as more enterprise processes are instrumented and recorded, enterprises face a growing avalanche of data that must be organized and analyzed for possible future use. To keep pace with growing performance demands, your data warehouse must be located inside a data center that's easily scalable and provides a full array of support resources.

Availability. Many data warehouses are at risk of becoming victims of their own success. As more departments and business partners learn how to use the technology, a flood of new requesters and sources can slow performance to a crawl. Data warehouse operators need to be able to maintain access and stability in the face of growing system loads without sacrificing either speed or security.

Data center infrastructure plays a major role in data warehouse availability. A data center containing redundant power, cooling, networking and other vital resources ensures that data warehouse information and insight will be available to users whenever and wherever they need it.

Scalability. With data warehouse capacities skyrocketing, access to easy, pain-free scalability is essential. The key requirement for scalability is that the data warehouse must be able to support larger volumes of data and more

users by adding additional hardware—without degrading performance. Server and storage virtualization can help you accommodate data warehouse growth without breaking your budget. Having the ability to quickly add floor and rack space as soon as the need arises is another plus. If your current data center can't fully support rapid growth, you need to move into a facility that's more scalability oriented.

Communications. With data warehouse end users—including employees, customers and suppliers—scattered all over the place, connecting your system to a high-quality network is essential. End users expect nothing less than fast and reliable performance, which means using the best and shortest network path. A blended bandwidth service, which optimizes network routing by utilizing paths supplied by several different carriers, is the ultimate way of ensuring optimal data warehouse connectivity.

Cost. As data warehouse technology continues its relentless push into the business mainstream, development and deployment costs are falling rapidly. The increasing commoditization of data warehousing tools, meanwhile, means that the custom-designed data warehouse is quickly fading into history.

Today, a growing number of enterprises are turning to warehouse appliances and industry-specific data models that allow a data warehouse to be created in days or hours rather than weeks or months, usually with less effort and at a lower cost. Supporting these tools requires a data center that accommodates virtualization, cloud computing and other advanced cost cutting and time saving technologies.

Another way of pushing down data warehousing expenses is to base operations inside a multi-tenant facility that enables users to share the costs associated with building, operating and maintaining expensive power, cooling, networking, security and other essential technologies and services.

Bottom line. A data warehouse helps your business fully exploit the value contained inside all of its accumulated information. Don't let an underpowered or outdated data center get in the way of driving your data warehouse to its maximum potential.

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