



ANTs Addresses Information Silos with ANTs Compatibility Server

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Management Summary

ANTs, a Silicon Valley company, is well known for its *Data Server* that accelerates database operations to meet needs of traders and brokers for real-time information. Now it has added another product to its arsenal. The *ANTs Compatibility Server* addresses the pains of companies with database silos that create application silos in their domain. These days, the familiarity of search and the needs for more strategic business intelligence drive enterprises to use diversely-sourced data to support forecasting and decision support. Database silos are then a problem. Many want to standardize on just a few – but such a goal is not easy to attain.

The problem is that the value of databases does not come just in the data they contain, but also in the stored procedures and other operations that, over years, have synchronized what data bases *do* with what the lines of business *require*. Migrating the data in a database is merely hard. Recreating all the procedures of the old database on the new is much more difficult. Few businesses can afford to incur a hiatus of database functionality, so they need an intermediate step.

In developing a high-performance in-memory database front-end for the real-time requirements, ANTs leverages full standards compliance with the ability to reach down into the binary code to understand not just the outcomes and relationships of database operations but also the triggers and stored procedures that provide the logical infrastructure for those operations. One might say it really *groks*¹ the databases it fronts, whether *Oracle*, *Microsoft SQL Server*, *Sybase*, *Informix*, or *DB2*. Now, ANTs is using these capabilities to provide a virtualization layer between databases and the applications that feed on their data, called the ANTs Compatibility Server. It has all the mapping and correlation and the deep understanding to support a single front end (in whatever flavor the user prefers) that can work with whatever back end data sources are needed. The idea came from their existing customer base in the financial services industry, where a habit of growth by acquisition has created distressing back-end database situations.

The ANTs Compatibility Server, available first for Oracle, is of interest to any company that has grown by acquisition, or that partners in a way that necessitates the intimacies of process interaction, as contrasted with the primness of mere data exchange. The difference between a kludge that makes data exchanges acceptable and the compatibility that provides full native functionality is like the difference between looking at a picture of the Eiffel Tower and being there. There is no comparison. The latter is better. Read on for more details.

IN THIS ISSUE

➤ ANTs Database Strategy	2
➤ ANTs Compatibility Server	2
➤ About ANTs Software	2
➤ Conclusion	2

¹ *Grok* is a term coined by Robert Heinlein decades ago for the deep understanding that only his polymath Martian hero could reach.

ANTs Database Strategy

Database proliferation is understandable, but it is no joke. **The more databases an enterprise supports, the more variants of test and development, quality assurance, patching, and end-user training must be maintained.** However, consolidation of databases has often caused spectacular and costly dysfunction, even when the databases supported identical processes.

Applications that address these back-end databases continue to proliferate. In addition to the standard operations and analytics applications, new, edge-based self-service applications have brought a new class of applications that call on back-end databases.

Oneness is difficult. Many enterprises are fearful of vendor lock-in. Then again, particularly in this world of evolving business models, a single database architecture may not meet all enterprise needs, just as a single pair of shoes usually does not meet all of your wardrobe needs (at least, it shouldn't). The kinds of platforms that are needed may vary – and, over time, may change. All these factors make virtualization a popular long-term strategy. ANTs' virtualization approach supports the inevitability, over time, of database heterogeneity and gives organizations a way to manage database changes non-disruptively.

The routes to consolidation are many but in all, translations and mappings must occur. They can be done by information cleansing as the data is imported to a data warehouse, or as an iterative background process, or, focusing on critical product information, as a Master Data Management initiative. **A less intrusive and more widely useful approach is to virtualize the application/database interface, and to transform the information as it is used.** Over time, virtualization allows an enterprise to import stored procedures as a data service and prune their plethora of databases down to a reasonable few.

The ANTs Compatibility Server (ACS)

ANTs Compatibility Server, available next quarter for Oracle, lets companies standardize on one set of database processes for all their data sources. Of course, Oracle would like all those processes to be Oracle's, but through virtualization, this is not immediately necessary – or even necessary at all. If there is a particular procedure from Sybase or DB2 you want to keep, you can. ANTs APIs to both application and database layers allow Oracle data to appear native to Sybase and DB2 applications, allows Oracle database data to behave as the front-side applications expect.

In the realm of databases, all of the standards in the world won't guarantee that processes and stored procedures – the crown jewels of organizational use of databases – will work the same way on database B as they did on database A. **ANTs does not normal-**

ize the stored procedures, but uses the metadata import-to-memory processes to broaden the range of data sources over which the procedures will work. Where such mapping does not suffice, ANTs has other strategies to bring to bear to resolve the problems.

This is version 1.0 of the product. It is targeted at Sybase users migrating to Oracle. There are two Sybase tools that are important to Sybase customers: *SQSH* (an open source, command line SQL execution tool for any ad-hoc SQL execution) and *BCP* (for database import/export). ACS will support *SQSH*. Since *BCP* is an import and export tool and the data is to be owned by Oracle, users will be able to use Oracle's database import and export facilities (and will not need to use *BCP*).

Microsoft SQL Server support will come as a different flavor of ACS, probably sometime later in 2008. Other platforms will be added as requested. Because ANTs compiles to binary code, their compiler can run on a number of chipsets².

ANTs sees a huge opportunity for ACS in software as a service (SAAS). Few companies are willing to start from scratch when they outsource their databases. ACS will allow SAAS providers to provide, and their customers to enjoy, the best of both worlds.

About ANTs Software

ANTs has received six patents for their core technologies. Their customer base includes the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy, and a major retail firm. ANTs is now focused on the financial industry. Its channel includes IBM (with whom it is an Advanced Industry Optimized Partner) and Raytheon. ANTs is in discussions with other major distribution channels for ACS.

Conclusion

ANTs Compatibility Server offers a way to rationalize database environments without doing anything drastic (and perhaps dire). It allows an enterprise a way to do all that it would like to do with all the databases it currently deploys, while moving to consolidate its environment over time. The savings in software licenses and hardware, while considerable and admirable, will be dwarfed by the operational benefits. **If you have a *too-many, too-important-to-mess-with* database problem, ANTs Compatibility Server may be the cure you need.**



² Intel, AMD (Opteron) and SPARC. IBM's POWER chip is on the roadmap.

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