



dsb Media IT: RS/6000 with DB2 – clearly superior in benchmark.

dsb Media IT, based in Neckarsulm, was formed in 1966 as “Daten-Service Beck” for the purpose of organizing magazine sales more efficiently for media companies and their service providers by means of computerized customer lists. Today, the company is a highly specialized IT partner, with around 150 staff and branches in Munich and Hamburg, which organizes the computer-aided sales processes of publishing firms such as Axel Springer, Gruner + Jahr and IDG entirely within the dsb computer center. The idea of optimizing its customers’ businesses through efficient information management has now been supplemented by over 30 years of IT and industry experience and the use of the latest technologies for implementing intelligent IT solutions and services. dsb Media IT focuses on four main areas of business, starting with subscription management for integrated management of the subscription business, and magazine sales to ensure the complete handling of the press marketing function. With eight million subscribers and annual sales in the IT field of DEM 3 billion, dsb Media IT occupies an excellent market position. To ensure the perfect flow of goods in direct marketing, the company offers a mail-order solution. A transport management system completes the product range.

Most of dsb Media IT’s customers operate according to the principle of outsourcing, or access the products as required via the Internet or a direct line under an Application Service Providing (ASP) arrangement. This means that customers, instead of owning software licenses, pay variable amounts depending on how often they use the applications. These applications are held, hosted and managed in the central dsb computer center and are available to a number of customers. dsb Media IT has developed specific add-ons for subscription management on the basis of the industry solution IS-M/SD, and was consequently certified as a SAP partner (SME) in January 2000. In its capacity as ASP for the media industry, it is vitally important for dsb Media IT that the applications are

Industry	IT-Services
Applikation	SAP R/3 FI, CO, IS-M/SD
Software	AIX DB2 HACMP
Hardware	RS/6000



“SAP and IBM offer our information management the ideal basis for guaranteeing our customers integrated solutions for effective information flow.”

Michael Metken,
Managing Director of dsb Media IT



permanently available to customers. Moreover, the IT infrastructure must guarantee that the magazines are shipped on the very day of their publication. Every day around 300,000 transactions are processed in the dsb computer center, and the administration of the 8 million subscriptions signifies a high batch load capability. This places particular demands on system performance, exceeded only by the monthly invoicing run of around one million letters with bills and reminders. These letters are produced entirely independently by the system and prepared for dispatch via three print lines. Michael Metken, Managing Director of dsb Media IT, explains "Extremely accurate batch runs and a permanently available online service are absolutely essential in this industry, in order to achieve optimum and long-term customer satisfaction."

SAP replaces proprietary solutions

Until now, dsb Media IT has supplied its 15 or so publishing customers with sophisticated proprietary solutions for managing their subscriptions. These applications however, do not match the requirements in terms of integration and web compatibility in this age of e-business, whereas SAP IS-M/SD, on the other hand, meets both these needs superbly. The solution was developed by SAP for the international newspaper market, and modified by dsb Media IT with specific German elements and functions for use in the magazine publishing industry. Its proprietary add-ons will also be created for customers in the future. The pilot project for SAP IS-M/SD starts in summer 2001. In this initial stage data from the publishing company IDG will be completely migrated, followed gradually by the other publishing firms early in 2002 with the rollout. By the end of the project in 2003 the system will be available to around 2000 users.

Benchmark as a guide to decision-making

After the decision to purchase SAP software came the search for the optimum hardware. The high data volumes of the applications and the associated high batch load capability steered the decision firmly in favor of a UNIX system. As well as an IBM solution with RS/6000 and DB2, the choice also included UNIX servers from two other manufacturers as well as a

further leading database software product. In a customer benchmark based on actual data, all possible solutions in all variations were intensively and thoroughly tested against one another. The results revealed the clear superiority of the pure IBM solution. The combination of RS/6000 and DB2 responded significantly faster than the other alternatives tested, with the response times of the DB2 database being many times lower. This performance capability and the definite economic efficiency of both the platform and the database tipped the balance. Three IBM RS/6000 Model M80s, as database and application servers, will in future form the corporate platform for the five productive SAP systems. One IBM @server pSeries 640 will manage the pre-production area, with four others available for testing and development. In the final configuration dsb Media IT will have over 12 IBM RS/6000 servers with a total of 76 processors and 90 Gbytes of main memory. High availability is ensured by HACMP.

System security and reliability form the basis of customer satisfaction. dsb Media IT therefore also seeks optimum solutions in the backup and storage area. It is estimated that by 2005 the old and new IT infrastructures will be operating in parallel in the computer center. The mass storage will be shared by the VSE and UNIX systems, and large data volumes from VSE will be processed further under UNIX and administered jointly. The system management plays an extraordinary role here, which is why solutions such as Tivoli are checked to the last detail.

Fit for the future with CRM

A CRM solution is essential for dsb Media IT to enable it to provide comprehensive customer service. The SAP Call Center Agent, which enables the company to process both subscriber data from the SAP system and data from the non-mail-order area in other manufacturers' systems as required, is being discussed for this purpose. Movement and inventory data is already captured by a data warehouse. DB2 will also continue to operate as the central database. To increase its competitiveness still further and to fully exploit the benefits of business intelligence solutions, dsb Media IT is also heavily involved with analytical CRM and topics such as serverless backup. In this way dsb Media IT will be ideally equipped to serve its customers in the future as well.



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