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Community Connector

A Biweekly Newsletter for SQL Server Professionals



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In This Issue

[Editorial](#)

[SQLSaturday - Nov 10, 2007](#)

[DBA SIG Tool Shed Project](#)

[SQLTeach in November!](#)

[European PASS Conference 2008](#)

[PASS Exhibitor Interview - Part 8](#)

Quick Links

[Early Bird Registration for Summit 2008](#)

[PASS Website](#)

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Dear Sandy,

Technology vs. Process

Grant Fritchey



I've no doubt that most of you have seen the articles on implementing virtual servers. Some of you may already be running virtual servers for isolated testing or QA. Some of you have even started using virtual servers for your development boxes. A few people, including one I've talked with personally, are even using virtual servers in a production environment.

My company has been working with virtual servers for a while as a method for creating isolated test environments so that we can test new patches, network configurations, security settings, etc. But recently, as some of our development teams have begun to have severe integration issues, and some of our QA deployments have started to run into problems, the leaders of the development team saw virtual servers as a way to avoid these issues. The argument goes, if we just give each development team their own environment, they can go as fast as they can without the hassles of having to deal with the other teams. They also feel that the QA deployments can be avoided because they can just snapshot an environment when it's reasonably stable and the QA team can go to work on that. In fact, with virtual environments, they can work on hotfixes independently of mainstream development and branch entire environments when they branch the code to support a new production release. They plan on taking more snapshots after the QA team is done so that the business testers will have their own copy of the entire environment. All of this eliminates the need to worry about integration. It also eliminates the need for those messy deployments to QA.

Anyone else spot the core problem with all this? While I



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support the possibilities offered by virtual servers, I'm even excited about it, I don't think we're addressing the core issues. The problems we're addressing is that the applications aren't working well together, so we're isolating the development teams further and longer? We're running into issues with deployments so we're going to eliminate deployments until the final steps of the process? Not to mention the fact that each team is likely to have about six different environments all at once. Can this scale?

I like a new toy as much as the next person (I'm already working on an airtight case for upgrading to 2008 the day it's released if not a month or three before hand), but simply throwing technology at a problem may not solve it. Further, throwing technology at a problem could make that problem worse. In our case, before we find ways to isolate the applications and development teams further, despite the development wins for the individual teams when they're not chasing down phantom bugs, I'd like us to identify why our communication and documentation processes are breaking down, preventing a clean integration between applications that are absolutely dependent on each other. I'd prefer to see a cleaner, safer, more reliable deployment methodology rather than attempts to eliminate deployments from our process.

The shine on a new toy can prevent you from seeing the problems that toy carries with it.



Register now for SQLSaturday in Orlando!

November 10, 2007

[SQLSaturday](#) is a free one-day learning event for SQL Server professionals, loosely patterned on the well known Code Camp model and organized by the Orlando SQL Server Users Group.

Register [here](#) for this free event!

The DBA SIG Tool Shed Project Needs Your Input!

The DBA Special Interest Group is working on a Tool Shed project. Rather than the usual collection of (often dubious) scripts, our vision is that we will have a collaborative effort that will deliver open source products to the PASS DBA Community.

We need your input on what you kinds of tools you would like to see in the tool shed.

Please visit our [website](#) and complete our short survey.

Thanks!



SQLTeach!

Training you can't get any other way!

This event will be held **Nov. 26-30** in conjunction with DevTeach in Vancouver, Canada. It will offer the elements of an intimate community event while bringing together **SQL Server gurus** from around the world for three days of networking and hands-on training.

The tracks will cover the latest technologies and techniques for SQL Server 2005, .NET 3.0, Vista, ASP.NET, Software Architecture and Agile.

On November 26th Paul Nielson, William R. Vaughn and Kevin McNeish are presenting fantastic Pre-Conference workshops and November 30th Itzik Ben-Gan, Rod Paddock, Scott Bellware are presenting Post-conference workshops.

Please visit www.sqlteach.com for more information, registration and exhibiting opportunities.

European PASS Conference 2008

April 14th - 16th, 2008

The European PASS Conference is being held in Neuss, Germany in 2008.

It is a 2 day conference with 24+ technical sessions. Two distinct tracks of pre-conference seminars are also offered.

Get a chance to deep dive into the new Microsoft SQL Server 2008 features - right after it's officially launched!

Click [here](#) for more information.

PASS Exhibitor Interviews - Part 8

PASS Exhibitor Interview Questions for:
ANTs Software

Tell us about the most exciting product(s) in your line-up.

The ANTs Compatibility Server (ACS)

Accelerating Migration from Oracle to the SQL Server Database

Who are your offerings intended to help?

The ANTs Compatibility Server enables database consolidation that significantly reduces the cost and complexity of managing heterogeneous database environments. The economic impact to IT organizations can be really significant as they will be able to reduce their number of database vendors and fully leverage their Microsoft's Enterprise License Agreements (ELAs) without requiring a major application rewrite.

What does it do?

The ANTs Compatibility Server is a middleware component that accelerates the migration of applications running on one database vendor such as Oracle onto another vendor such as Microsoft SQL Server.

What is the most significant advantage or workplace change that your product offers to its users?

The ANTs Compatibility Server over simplifies painful migrations from Oracle to Microsoft SQL Server.

Many users are used to having most of their needs met by native tools. How does your product go over

and above the native tool offering?

Several migration tools are available on the market today, such as SQL Server Migration Assistant (SSMA), they automate the conversion of the Oracle database schema and data, which is a good portion of the effort required to migrate an application from one database to another. However, completing the database migration typically requires difficult, costly and time-consuming manual effort and significant application rewriting intervention to move Oracle SQL statements, stored procedures and triggers as well as to adapt to the original connectivity APIs to the SQL Server database.

The ANTs Compatibility Server (ACS) is a disruptive technology that is designed to automate the most expensive and labor-intensive aspects of the migration process. ACS provides a "database virtualization" middleware layer which allows server side code (queries, stored procedures and triggers) from the Oracle databases to run natively and transparently against SQL Server with minimal application rewriting and recompiling. The legacy application operates as if it were still communicating with the Oracle database, yet the SQL Server database operates as if it were communicating with a SQL Server application.

What's your vision for these offerings? What's it going to do in the future that it doesn't do now?

The ANTs Compatibility Server is creating a new type of IT virtualization; the virtualization of the database layer. There are a number of analysts that believe database virtualization will be increasing in acceptance as many organizations move into database consolidation to lower data management cost.

Tell us about licensing your product. Do you have any special programs in place for PASS members?

A significant discount to PASS member could be part of our offering.

Where can we find out more about it?

<http://www.antssoftware.com/>

PASS Organization & Mission

PASS was founded by Microsoft and CA to provide users of SQL Server a peer network and to help build a body of expertise to help educate millions of SQL Server users around the world.

Currently, PASS is a global community for more than 25,000 SQL Server professionals. It is the first independent, user-run, not-for-profit association dedicated to providing SQL Server users around the world with the tools and knowledge to achieve unparalleled business results.

Our Mission:

- Provide a forum for SQL Server education
- Build and grow the SQL Server Community
- Facilitate member networking & provide an infrastructure to enable the exchange of information within SQL Server disciplines- DBA/Developers, BI Professionals, etc.
- Work with Microsoft to influence the direction of the SQL Server product and services
- Publish high quality technical materials including the Connector & the SQL Server Standard Magazine
- Build the largest archive of user created SQL Server and Business Intelligence reference material

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