

E*TRADE Australia



*"VERITAS Indepth for SQL Server is a tool that enables us to identify problems and to make sure the E*TRADE Australia product stays lean. That means happy customers, more trading, and a smooth running business."*

*Harry Brigden, Technology Manager, E*TRADE Australia*

Company Profile

- E*TRADE Australia is an online stockbroker which facilitates trading in equities, managed funds, and options over the Internet
- Founded in 1997
- Number 2 in the market

Business Needs

- Rectify a performance issue by identifying and releasing bottlenecks in the company database
- Orders need to get to market quickly

Environment

- The licensing agreement which originally stipulated that E*TRADE run its website and server from the US. In March 2002, E*TRADE Australia established its own website which is locally hosted and maintained using Compaq, SQL Server and Microsoft Solutions.

Products Used

- VERITAS Indepth for SQL Server

Business Benefits

- Clearly identified the performance issues
- Highlighted further problems
- Increase in trading volumes
- Decrease in calls to the Customer Service Center
- Boosted staff morale
- Enabled executive team to concentrate on developing new products and services for all their customers

The Situation

When the basement of the E*TRADE Australia building in Sydney was flooded in January 2003, water was not the only element blocking the system of the online trader. The company's backup procedures ensured that the accident caused minimal damage – and only three hours' business downtime – but the gremlins in the company's database were not washed away.

"The efficiency of our database engine is critical to our business, and we were having ongoing problems that we were unable to solve," says E*TRADE Australia Technology Manager, Harry Brigden. "We were dealing with repeated bottlenecks that were causing a cascading effect: a request was queued on the database and everything else was backing up behind it."

The challenge for E*TRADE Australia, an online stockbroker which facilitates trading in equities, managed funds, and options over the Internet, was to rectify a performance issue by identifying and releasing bottlenecks in the driver of the business – the company's database.

The technology environment used by E*TRADE Australia included the SQL management suite but this was unable to identify what was causing the bottlenecks and where they were occurring. "We had suspicions, but we couldn't tell," says Brigden.

During the trading period, there was not enough time to redress the problem, and when the market closed, there was not enough historical data with which to work. These bottlenecks were causing delays for customers to get trades to the market.

"It was a performance issue," says Brigden, "we had limited tools, and we didn't have data to go back to. We kept killing processes and restarting but the next day, we'd have the same problem again. We were never getting to the core issues."

Time – a crucial aspect of the business in which E*TRADE Australia operates – was the enemy. "In a true environment, we need to get orders to the market as soon as we can," says Brigden.

The Solution

The solution to E*TRADE's dilemmas, as suggested by Gordon Baird of Precise Performance Management who was consulting to the company, was VERITAS Indepth for SQL Server.

VERITAS Indepth for SQL Server improves the performance of business applications by capturing historical data and providing a holistic view of performance across the enterprise using correlated data. E*TRADE Australia agreed to a week's trial.

“During the trial all the same problems kept happening– the system blocked up, we had to kill processes and then restart,” says Brigden. “But at least this time we had the information to go back to.”

The Success

The software not only clearly identified and enabled us to rectify the ongoing issues, but it also highlighted further problems such as the creation of temporary tables from the system tables. “The simple fix straight away alleviated a lot of the problems we were having but it also allowed us to delve deeper and fine tune even further,” says Brigden.

The additional benefits for E*TRADE Australia included an increase in trading volumes, a decrease calls to the Customer Service Center, a boost to staff morale and more time for the executive team to concentrate on developing new products and services, especially dynamic products for active traders.

“The efficiency of our database is crucial to our business success and to our ability to constantly develop new products and services for all our customers,” says Brigden. “Therefore, we see VERITAS Indepth for SQL Server as a long term proposition for our business.”

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