

TST OVERLAND EXPRESS

COMMENTARY BY: DOUG SCOTT,
VICE PRESIDENT, I.T., TST OVERLAND EXPRESS

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INDUSTRY

- Shipping & Logistics

BUSINESS APPLICATION

- Business Intelligence
- Data Warehousing

TECHNOLOGY

- IBM iSeries (AS/400)
- Microsoft Windows NT
- Oracle



DataMirror
Transformation
Server™

TST Overland Express (www.tstoverland.com) is a leading high-quality and time-sensitive North American transportation service. Located in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, TST Overland employs over 1,200 employees and is the first major North America-wide carrier to achieve ISO 9002 registration. The Company is a Canadian Member of the ExpressLINK North American strategic alliance, forming a network with other carriers including Estes Express Lines, GI Trucking and Lakeville Motor Express. Through ExpressLINK, TST Overland has access to a service team of more than 10,044 professionals, over 5,219 tractors and 14,115 trailers and a network of more than 232 transportation centers serving 50 U.S. states and 10 Canadian provinces.

THE PROBLEM

TST Overland's computing environment consists of an IBM iSeries (AS/400) production server located in Toronto, running a Freight Management System (FMS) that stores 3-4 years of waybill data. The Company also has two Intel NT Oracle servers located in Montreal and Toronto that act as application servers running a pickup and delivery management system. The Transportation TrackPro (TTP) application handles all pickup and delivery assignments, assigns routes to shippers and communicates with drivers over a wireless network.

TST Overland required a scalable data integration solution that could flow data bi-directionally and in real-time between their two Oracle servers as well as integrate changed data from Oracle into the AS/400. The need for real-time data access across TST Overland's enterprise was clear – the ideal solution would need to capture all completed shipment data as well as new delivery entries and flow it into Oracle. The data would ultimately be moved into the AS/400, providing all remote offices with up-to-date information on the status of deliveries.

“TST Overland delivers shipments to and from the United States and Canada. This cross-border activity drives the need for our shipment data to move quickly and effortlessly between our U.S. and Canadian offices,” said Doug Scott, Vice President, I.T., TST Overland Express. “It is imperative that all of our locations know the whereabouts of shipments at all times in order to accurately schedule delivery. They must know when a shipment has been dispatched, when it's expected to arrive in the destination city and where it needs to be delivered.”

Scott continues, “In our competitive business, timely delivery is not an option; it's a requirement. With a large part of our revenue coming from cross-border business, our ongoing relationship with both Canadian and U.S. customs is very

important. Shipments can sometimes be held back at customs, forfeiting our next-day delivery guarantee. Therefore, we needed a solution in place that would provide us with the latest status on all shipments as they enter and clear customs."

THE SOLUTION

After undergoing an extensive search, TST Overland selected DataMirror Transformation Server™ for their data integration needs because of its cost-effectiveness, Oracle and AS/400 integration capabilities and high performance.

DataMirror Transformation Server allows users to capture, transform and flow data in real-time between DB2 UDB, Microsoft SQL Server, Oracle, Sybase and XML across UNIX, Linux, Microsoft Windows NT/2000/XP, OS/400, OS/390 and z/OS. Because Transformation Server is easy to implement and requires no programming changes to applications and databases, customers can realize a rapid return on their software investment. Transformation Server's out-of-the-box support for leading databases makes it ideal for a range of distributed data applications including EAI, e-Business, business intelligence and customer relationship management.

DataMirror Transformation Server's real-time capabilities allow TST Overland's widespread offices to have up-to-the-minute access to shipment information in order to better serve customers. As new shipment orders are received from their web site, the Enterprise Data Interchange (EDI) and handheld devices, it is flowed into Oracle and from there, integrated into the AS/400 to allow all remote offices to receive the most current pickup and delivery data. Moreover, when changes are made to the delivery data in the AS/400, only changed data is moved into Oracle.

This process enables TST Overland to adequately organize route and delivery planning, ensuring customers receive their shipments promptly, and also provides customers with the most current status on their shipments via the Company's web site.

THE BENEFITS

Since the implementation of DataMirror Transformation Server, TST Overland has streamlined business processes and enhanced operational efficiencies.

"We have taken many proactive measures to make our operations run more smoothly. We have a highly-efficient system in place that allows Canada Customs to flag custom clearances through an EDI that relays the data into our AS/400," said Scott. "This data is then integrated by Transformation Server into the Oracle systems where we are able to track all shipments as they go in and out of customs."

Scott continues, "Having this process in place enables us to improve service levels as customers are provided with access to the latest status on their shipments – even when their package is held back at customs. Using Transformation Server, we can keep a historical record of how long a shipment is with customs just in case a disagreement over service levels ever arises."

With Transformation Server in place, all new delivery data that is received via the Company's web site or the EDI, is captured and integrated from the Oracle servers into the AS/400, enabling each regional office to determine accurate pickup and delivery planning. As well, once the data is integrated, the AS/400-based corporate web site becomes populated with up-to-date delivery information.

Moreover, Transformation Server allows the Company to eliminate the need for full system refreshes as the solution uploads only changed data into Oracle.

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THE ROAD AHEAD

TST Overland's ISO 9002 standing clearly demonstrates their ongoing commitment to providing the very best carrier service to customers in North America. The Company has gained a strong competitive advantage as they are now able to access the most current data when they need it and from wherever they need it. The Company has also received a substantial return on their Oracle and iSeries investments – as both systems offer enhanced performance and added functionality.

Although the Company has no immediate plans to implement other DataMirror solutions, they are very pleased with the results that DataMirror Transformation Server has provided. They look forward to continuously providing customers with timely delivery services as well as ensuring information gets to all of their divisions when they need it, so employees can make better decisions, be more productive and ultimately 'drive' better business results.

HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH DATAMIRROR

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