



Cedacri reduces test storage requirements significantly with Data Express

Full compliance and manual maintenance work reduction benefits Cedacri

At a Glance: Cedacri S.p.A.

Italian company Cedacri specializes in delivering outsourcing services for the banking sector. Cedacri has a staff of more than 770 people serving more than 100 customers, including banks, financial institutions, industrial companies and utility companies. Their outsourcing companies deliver a range of services including complete outsourcing, facility management, system integration, and business process outsourcing. The company's turnover in 2013 exceeded 197 million euros.

Solution

- Data Express

Challenge

The banks that choose Cedacri are accessing innovative and complete outsourcing services that reduce costs. Their full outsourcing solution enables banks to realize savings of up to 30%, thanks primarily to the economies of scale, through sharing technologies, systems, structures, resources and skills among the Group's various client banks.

Cedacri's testing and training environment is created for each client bank and managed through unique and manual processes, making collaboration and the sharing of best practice difficult for developers. The process to prepare each environment required high volumes of data extraction and reloading - costly in terms of both time and resources. This mostly manual process was prone to human error, presented a business risk and made meeting their clients' privacy legislation requirements difficult. And while data privacy, especially customer details, is sacrosanct in most industries, the Financial Services sector is perhaps burdened by more obligations than most.

Customer requirements

Emanuele Scolozzi, Senior Test Data Manager, explains what Cedacri was looking for: "We wanted to improve the data quality in our test environment to enable better testing processes, while saving time and MIPS consumption. Centralizing the management process for different platforms and data types would help us create dedicated development teams.

Highlights

- Storage requirement reduced by 87%
- Full data protection compliance
- Drastically reduced testing time
- Eliminated manual data extraction and reloading work

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Emanuele Scolozzi,
Senior Test Data Manager

We also looked to reduce our storage requirement for training and testing which would generate substantial cost savings and we were hoping to eliminate all manual activity in the data extraction and reloading process.”

Cedacri uses its outsourcing services to create testing and training environments using current data as a template and individual changes, such as customer codes, are applied for the testing environment. To comply with Italian and European directives, data used in the training and testing environments must be comparable to the live information, but not recognizably so. Data must retain its data integrity even when used across different platforms, with sensitive details such as name, company name, address, VAT, tax code and email address anonymized through a masking process.

Data Express fits the bill

A number of features were tested during a successful Proof of Concept (POC). The builder component of Data Express enables an inventory of organizational data to be taken, collated and centrally stored in a single metadata repository, or knowledge base. This was important to Cedacri in helping adhere to strict, customer-driven requirements.

- The data management solution runs on either z/OS or in a distributed environment, depending on the client’s IT estate, and can provide automated processes to populate the knowledge base with physical and logical client environment information.
- Cedacri wanted an intuitive User Interface and the ability to analyze and provide statistics on the data contained in the knowledge base.
- Masking transforms sensitive information to anonymous data. However, to be efficient and economical the process must be repeatable to enable live data to be regularly refreshed in the masked environment.
- The masking solution must be based, through classification, on exit routines for which the source code must be provided. This enables Cedacri to customize the routines based on specific client and/or project requirements.
- The masking process manages the relationship between the original value and the masked value. Cedacri needs enough flexibility to change the relationship whenever required by a client for security purposes. Consistency of data between applications is very important too, with the same data entity, the customer name, for example, masked in the same way across different data store types ie DB2, VSAM and SQL Server.

Flexible data access

Scolozzi illustrates the need for flexible data access with an example: “The client can choose whether to directly access live data or a backup. For instance, when parsing metadata and extracting the data, the solution must be able to directly access the DB2 table or a backup. This change needs to be in the easy control of an operator, by updating a parameter, rather than creating a new process.”

Using the same, centralized approach to understand data relationships, Data Express can also substantially reduce the size of test data through subsetting. Cedacri can generate multiple data reduction models, or rules, which can be implemented when needed. Data Express also provides data extraction simulation to predict key performance indicators (KPIs) such as CPU time, elapsed time, number of records read and number of records written. Scolozzi comments: “As a direct result of our Data Express use, data storage has been reduced by 87% of the production volume for each of the test environments we generate for our clients.”

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Set up for success

An important deciding factor for Data Express was the flexible pricing model proposed by Micro Focus. This means there are no constraints on MIPS consumed by the client, number of users, client workstations installed or the number of files scanned.

Implementing Data Express has meant a significant reduction in testing execution time. It has eliminated the need to maintain historic JCL extraction and reloading processes as these are no longer required. By using Data Express, Cedacri can reload data from one or more banks without affecting the original information. So, a training environment for a new bank member is set up very quickly using metadata and masking rules already available for another client.

Every weekend, Data Express automatically generates fresh, masked data to ensure data security in the test environments.

Scolozzi concludes: "Using Data Express as a key component of our training and testing environments has saved resources, made us fully compliant, increased our development productivity and reduced our storage requirements by 87%. The support we have received from Micro Focus has been excellent and we look forward to continued success."

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