

Advanced DataTools turns data into knowledge with IBM Informix.



IBM Informix Dynamic Server features robust data warehouse functionality that provides Advanced DataTools customers with the information they need to make business decisions.

Advanced DataTools Corporation, an IBM Business Partner, has set out to solve that problem. The data warehousing consultancy, based in Annandale, Virginia, just outside of Washington, D.C., provides the services and tools that help organizations extract value from their data stores. Advanced DataTools consults with customers ranging from top educational loan provider Sallie Mae to U.S. government agencies, creating the infrastructure to provide decision makers with the information they need, when they need it. For example, government workers at a particular

Overview

- **Application**
Data warehouse consulting and implementation service
- **Business Benefits**
Millions of dollars saved in business costs annually for a typical Advanced DataTools customer
- **Software**
IBM Informix® Dynamic Server™, IBM Informix Geospatial DataBlade®

Looking to reap the benefits of the information revolution, companies, organizations and governments have been accumulating vast stores of data for years—capturing everything from customer dress sizes to the cost of a stapler to the geographic location of assets. Yet, the vast majority of it goes untouched, collecting virtual dust, as organizations lack the know-how and the tools to extract value from that data, leaving the promise of the information revolution, in so many cases, still to be realized.

“When you build a data warehouse that solves a real business problem, users don’t want you to shut it down—ever. Informix offers the always-up performance that today’s business users demand.”

—Lester Knutsen, Founder and Principal Database Consultant, Advanced DataTools Corporation

agency can quickly track how much has been spent, where those tax dollars are going and how much is left to fund that agency's projects for the fiscal year.



Whether querying complex reports or updating summary tables, users benefit from the speed and scalability of data warehouses developed with IBM Informix technology.

To create data warehouses for customers, Advanced DataTools relies on IBM Informix Dynamic Server (IDS). Lester Knutsen, founder and principal database consultant at Advanced DataTools, has based his business on IDS, calling it the fastest, most scalable and most fully featured data management platform available today with the lowest administrative overhead. What's more, Knutsen says, IBM's acquisition of Informix adds greater long-term strength and marketing muscle to the platform. "IBM brings new stability to the Informix community," says Knutsen. "And the opportunities for cross-pollination of functionality between IBM DB2® and IDS can leverage the unique strengths of both data management platforms."

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IBM Informix outperforms the rest in unbiased benchmarking

Knutsen's faith in the IBM Informix platform is not based solely upon his 20 years of experience with it, or upon his involvement in the IDS community as a co-founder of both his local and the international Informix user groups.

Over the years, Knutsen has conducted numerous benchmarking tests to evaluate the data warehousing capabilities of several big players in the data management arena—including IDS, Oracle and Sybase. These benchmarking studies were observed by representatives of each vendor company to ensure fairness and accuracy and were performed on behalf of Advanced DataTools' data warehouse consulting customers. Products were benchmarked on load times, monthly update times, ad hoc query speed, batch query speed and how fast summary tables could be created. On all these counts IDS beat the competition. Knutsen also tested scalability in terms of batch queries.

"That's where Informix had the most dramatic advantage," says Knutsen. "Informix was three times faster than the competition when the database was hit with many complex queries by multiple users. Oracle performed particularly poorly on large queries by multiple users."

IDS also offered something the competition couldn't, Knutsen claims—full online backup. While other vendors claimed this capability, in Knutsen's testing the rival databases either took a performance hit or could not complete a full backup while the warehouse remained online. "When you build a data warehouse that solves a real business problem, users don't want you to shut it down—ever," says Knutsen. "Informix offers the always-up performance that today's business users demand."

IDS has also proven faster and easier to upgrade, taking less than a day, says Knutsen, compared with upgrades of rival platforms which he has seen take four days or more. IBM Informix also offers sophisticated technologies that Advanced DataTools is just beginning to exploit on behalf of its customers, such as IBM Informix Geospatial DataBlade. "This leading-edge technology enables geographic information to be tied to financial transactions, customer information or other database records," Knutsen says.



The technologically savvy professionals at Advanced DataTools have provided database consulting services, training and tools based on Informix database software since 1993.

IDS offers customers quick, comprehensive business intelligence

With the rich Informix development environment available to hasten implementation, Advanced DataTools offers customers an eight-week data warehouse pilot. This pilot includes defining goals for the project by gathering requirements from users and systems people. Advanced DataTools gathers this information in roundtable discussions instead of interviews, so participants can build upon each other's ideas and formulate a plan. Together with the organization's systems group, Advanced DataTools prepares a plan for cleansing and loading data. The pilot also includes user training on the data warehouse, a process that is simplified by the ease of use offered by the intuitive Informix platform, says Advanced DataTools Vice President Linda Knutsen.

Advanced DataTools customers have enjoyed significant benefits from their IBM IDS data warehouses. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), for example, saved \$1.6 million in the first year by re-engineering business processes and reducing labor costs as a direct result of information made available through the IDS data warehouse. In addition, BLM previously printed all the reports it created, from those it submitted to the U.S. Congress as required by law to those generated for internal use. By using IDS to generate electronic reports instead, BLM saved \$1.2 million in paper costs over a 2-year period. BLM's process time to generate a report also shrank dramatically—from six weeks to overnight.

IBM and Informix, the best of both worlds

Now that the Informix platform is backed by the steadfastness of IBM, Advanced DataTools can also offer its customers that benefit, says Linda Knutsen. What's more, the strength of the IBM Business Partner program offers advantages to Advanced DataTools in the form of complimentary evaluation software. In the future, Advanced DataTools anticipates using more IBM products in customer applications, such as IBM WebSphere® Commerce and IBM DB2 Universal Database™.

Advanced DataTools enjoyed its status as both an Informix Business Partner and an IBM PartnerWorld® developer. Following its acquisition of Informix, IBM quickly merged the business partner accounts of Advanced DataTools and offered the company and its staff the wealth of programs and services available to IBM Business Partners. Lester Knutsen looks forward to taking advantage of many of these. "IBM now provides us with a diverse and comprehensive range of technologies, training options and support services that complement the excellence of the IBM Informix product line and enhance the value we bring our customers. No other vendor can match the scope of that opportunity."

For more information

Please contact your IBM marketing representative, IBM Business Partner or IBM Direct at: 1 800 IBM-CALL.

For information faxed direct to your location: 1 800 IBM-4FAX.

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Silicon Valley Laboratory
555 Bailey Avenue
San Jose, CA 95141
U.S.A.

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