



Grid-Tools Limited Watson Wyatt User Story



Grid-Tools User Story: Watson Wyatt

Actuary deploys database sub-setting solution to reduce application development costs

Global consulting firm Watson Wyatt has deployed Grid-Tools' subset database generator, enabling it to reduce application development expenditure by saving testing time.

Watson Wyatt was previously forced to extract new batches of test data from its production database each time an application was tested, and then to wipe it following each test. But the complexity of the relationships in its Oracle database meant that ensuring the integrity of each batch of test data took many hours of development time - expensive in terms of both time and money. Additionally, Watson Wyatt predicts that its future applications will be of higher quality and delivered more quickly as a result of its new testing capability.

GT Subset – an element of Grid-Tools' Datamaker solution – now provides Watson Wyatt with a low cost method for rapidly extracting test databases from its production database. Using the latest technology from database vendors combined with an easy-to-use front end, GT Subset allows definition of any relationships required to subset the data, as well as using existing database constraints.

Christine Green, Support Consultant, Watson Wyatt, said, "Due to the sensitive nature of our solutions, testing procedures are necessarily rigorous, and this adds significantly to the overall application cost. GT Subset contributes directly to the quality and speed of delivery of the final product, achieving the valuable 'double' of reducing costs and improving our quality of service. The automatic documentation of database structures and relationships also reduced the effort involved in our documentation project. "

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Huw Price, Managing Director of Grid-Tools, said, "Although GT Subset is a highly specialised tool, it's easy to use and performs a crucial function to anyone developing a modern data processing application. Today's databases are often full of complex interdependencies and applications are also increasingly sophisticated, meaning that test databases need complete integrity and to be properly representative of the live data if the application is ever to work properly in the real world."

Specialising in employee benefits, human capital strategies, technology solutions, and insurance and financial services, many of Watson Wyatt's solutions involve the collection and processing of individuals' personal data. But data protection laws mean that such personal information may only be used in connection with the reasons for which the information was collected in the first place – meaning that live, identifiable personal data cannot legally be used for testing new I.T. applications.

As a result, Watson Wyatt still needs to ensure that all test data is properly anonymised – “scrubbed” - before testing, but this is now a minor overhead compared with the previous task of creating an integrity-assured test database.

Nigel Williams, Senior Systems Consultant, Watson Wyatt, added, “ The test data generation and depersonalisation features of GT Datamaker could also remove a headache because we can more easily demonstrate compliance with data protection rules. GT Datamaker’s test case repository would also allow us to re-use datasets, improving productivity even further. “

GT Datamaker is one of a suite of products provided by Grid-Tools. Shahid Chowdhury, Head of Pension Administration Systems, Watson Wyatt, said “One of the reasons we bought Datamaker from Grid-Tools was their product roadmap. Now we have the database relationships in the Grid-Tools repository, adding further functions such as archiving are incremental steps.”

About Watson Wyatt Worldwide

Watson Wyatt Worldwide (NYSE:WW) is a global human capital and financial management consulting firm. The firm specializes in employee benefits, human capital strategies, technology solutions, and insurance and financial services and has 6,000 associates in 30 countries. The firm is located on the Web at www.watsonwyatt.com.

About Grid-Tools

Grid-Tools software enables database users to achieve legal compliance, to increase the productivity of their IT staff and to improve the price/performance of their infrastructure. Grid-Tools solutions apply to business intelligence, test data management and information lifecycle management. The core product automates the discovery and documentation of database structures: add-on modules populate datamarts; generate, anonymise or subset test databases; or archive production databases. For further information visit:

www.grid-tools.com

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