Open QM

Stalker-Radar

STALKER ®

Company Profile

Stalker Radar, a brand of Applied Concepts Inc., based in Plano, Texas, is a leading manufacturer of radar units for police and sports applications. The company's CopTrax in-car video system, laser and LIDAR (light radar) equipment, and radar sensors are used around the world to provide safety and transparency for law-enforcement units.

Company

Stalker Radar is a worldwide leader in radar and video equipment for law enforcement and sports applications.

Objective

Reduce cost of ERP MultiValue database backbone to accelerate business processes and improve analytics capabilities.

Results

- Slashed database costs with an OpenQM database migration
- Achieved in-depth, on-demand analytics capabilities
- Improved database responsiveness for over 7,000 applications
- Gained value-added application development features, including exception handling and object oriented programming
- Accelerated business growth and enhanced flexibility to meet changing business requirements

Background

Stalker Radar's ERP environment controls all aspects of business operations and is used by almost all of its staff—about 120 users at its primary site, plus another 12 offsite. Around 7,000 distinct programs collect and analyze data to be used in manufacturing, shipping and receiving, inventory, accounting, and many other areas of the business. With one centralized repository for the entire company, Stalker Radar's success hinges on the stability of its database application.

"If we had a problem with our database, it could have really significant consequences throughout all aspects of our organization," says James Woods, Senior Programmer and Analyst for Stalker Radar.

The Solution

Back in 2008, Stalker Radar was dissatisfied with the low performance and high cost of licenses of its D3 database. When they began searching for more powerful and efficient alternatives, they came across an offer for a free personal version of the OpenQM database and they were impressed with what they saw.

Right away, the speed of the OpenQM API interface caught Woods' attention. OpenQM was several times faster than D3. Testing with OpenQM showed that they could lower the costs of licenses while providing a more powerful programming environment for Stalker Radar's character-based applications and its Delphi-based Windows programs.

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"I kept running into my boss's office to show him the timings of OpenQM versus D3," says Woods. "OpenQM was several orders of magnitude faster."

That was all the convincing that Woods and his team needed. After an intensive two-week migration, Stalker Radar had switched to OpenQM. To maintain business continuity during the migration process, they ran OpenQM on a separate development machine. Programs and dictionaries were converted on this system using a copy of the live application. When they were ready to switch to OpenQM, they copied the latest data from the production machine to the new machine. They were also able to deploy new Delphi programs that same day.

Results

"It was an easy decision to switch to OpenQM because it was faster, less expensive, and better," says Woods.

With a virtualized infrastructure and OpenQM, Stalker Radar has dramatically accelerated its ERP business processes. The increased speed has enabled Stalker radar to transmit data at a much quicker rate, providing a faster and richer environment for new projects. The responsiveness of its new OpenQM-based ERP applications has nearly eliminated Stalker Radar's system lag—with no performance tuning required.

"We designed the interface using Delphi to talk to D3. When we switched to OpenQM, it got really fast," says Woods. "Our users expect to be able to press a button and see the information they need. Now we can give them faster access to much more information—and at a lower cost."

Switching from OpenQM to D3 has cut Stalker Radar's licensing costs nearly in half by removing restrictions on the number of open sessions. Because of the agility of OpenQM, users can connect to the database for individual transactions and immediately disconnect, reducing the number of licenses required at any given time. With the money it saved, Stalker Radar was able to hire two additional programmers to further develop and enhance its ERP tool.

The migration has had the added benefit of providing a programming environment that leverages advanced features of OpenQM that were unavailable in D3.

Exception handling greatly accelerates coding by automating processes related to error patching. The less time Stalker Radar's programmers have to spend debugging code, the more time they can spend developing new features for users.

"Exception handling automatically floats up code supplied by the compiler, so that you can resolve errors without having to drill down into your code," says Woods. "The more modern our code is, the less time—and money—we spend on debugging."

OpenQM is also the only MultiValue database that allows object oriented programming capabilities. Object oriented programming has helped Stalker Radar reduce the complexity of programming by breaking down code into discrete objects, masking the interface between the modules. OpenQM also provides an improved compiler which supports exception handling and catches many more errors than D3.

By using the improved business capabilities of OpenQM, Stalker Radar has been better able to grow its programming capabilities and drive business growth. Rather than spending their time maintaining the database, Stalker Radar's programmers can dedicate more of their time to developing innovative features and applications.

"We have 120 users that are managed by a team of four people," says Woods. "If we had an Oracle database instead of OpenQM, we would have needed a staff of at least ten to fifteen people."

With the improved flexibility, Stalker Radar has also been able to easily grow its international business. Ease of data access and simplified management allows Stalker Radar to adjust business processes to meet international standards while capitalizing on opportunities quickly.

"We are just now beginning to get into international markets, which have different rules and standards," says Woods. "OpenQM gives us the flexibility to change our programs to support the new ways of doing business. Say you change the length of a field in an Oracle database from 32 to 120 characters—you'd have to unload the entire database, change the schema, and reload it again. In MultiValue, you can just go in and put the data in and you're done. That makes a huge difference."

Conclusion

Stalker Radar is still capitalizing on the benefits of its OpenQM database, and is consistently satisfied by OpenQM's personalized service and support. With OpenQM now a part of Zumasys, Stalker Radar looks forward to ensuring world-class service and support for its growing portfolio of applications.

Open**QM** For more information on OpenQM, please visit **www.openqm.com**