

Lladro USA improves customer experience with enterprise-wide Oracle data sharing

Commentary by Carlos Munoz,
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INDUSTRY

DISTRIBUTION, WHOLESALE

BUSINESS APPLICATION

DATA WAREHOUSING
ERP INTEGRATION



Lladro started out as a small artisan workshop in the mid-1950s in Valencia, Spain. Today, all Lladro creations are made in Porcelain City, a complex of artisan workshops where 2,000 artists work exclusively on the creation of figurines. Throughout its history, Lladro has maintained an entirely hand-made process of manufacturing figurines for décor and gifts.

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Lladro USA, a sister company of the international porcelain figurine manufacturer, is headquartered in Moonachie, New Jersey. Lladro USA currently distributes porcelain figurines and other items throughout the United States and will soon control Canadian distribution as well. Lladro USA customers range from small retailers to large department stores including Macy's, Lord & Taylor and Fortunoffs. For more details about Lladro, visit www.lladro.com.

The Problem

Lladro USA faced its biggest technology challenge in early 2000 when it came to coping with the complexity of integrating critical data from a wide variety of transaction systems across the enterprise. With an ever-expanding need for strategic business analysis and reporting, Lladro USA needed to find a way to share its customer, item and invoicing data as well as sales orders across a computing environment of five Microsoft Windows NT servers running Oracle and three iSeries (AS/400) servers.

“A direct load from one system to another was just not feasible,” says Carlos Munoz, Microsystems Co-ordinator for Lladro USA. “What we needed was a more sophisticated, robust architecture that would allow us to reliably transfer our SAP enterprise resource planning data on iSeries to an Oracle data warehouse on Windows NT.”

The Solution

To successfully share its data across the enterprise, Lladro USA selected DataMirror Transformation Server with Enterprise Administrator and Oracle Warehouse Builder.

“From the beginning, we needed an easy-to-tailor technology infrastructure

that would allow us to replicate our data whenever or however we wanted," says Munoz. "Our parent company in Spain had been using Transformation Server for some time and that was a big advantage in our evaluation process. DataMirror also fulfilled all our requirements for real-time and periodic net-change replication."

The Company uses Transformation Server for two activities. The DataMirror solution continuously mirrors Lladro USA's SAP data to its Oracle warehouse in real-time. The Company also has a web application that accepts orders via the Internet through its dealers. This data is stored in an Oracle database and replicates to SAP on a daily basis using Transformation Server. To further simplify the replication process, Lladro USA also uses Enterprise Administrator for Transformation Server, a web-enabled, Java-based graphical user interface to manage and monitor the replication network from a single location.

The Benefits

Over 30 employees at Lladro USA enjoy the ease-of-use of Transformation Server.

"The performance of Transformation Server is great and mirroring is almost instantaneous," says Munoz. "Before implementing the DataMirror solution, we didn't even know how to pass information from the iSeries platform to the NT platform. Transformation Server is so transparent that it has empowered us to manage our SAP and Oracle data successfully without even knowing the solution is there."

Using Transformation Server to process web orders has been a tremendous time saver, thereby improving Lladro USA's customer experience greatly.

"Orders coming through the web are processed much more quickly than conventional orders," says Munoz. "Our employees can now obtain reports that are far more accurate and up-to-the-minute than they would have been without the help of Transformation Server. Building reports is so much easier and faster in Oracle than it is in SAP. Having an up-to-date Oracle data warehouse saves resources that would be spent on expensive consulting for SAP reporting."

Efficient DataMirror product support has rounded out a positive experience for Lladro USA.

"The DataMirror team was excellent in listening to us and adhering to our current needs," says Munoz. "Sales contacted me after we downloaded a fully functional version of Transformation Server from the DataMirror web site and I was given contact information for support services even before purchasing the solution. As well, when we upgraded from Oracle 8.0 to Oracle 8i, DataMirror developers worked to rapidly create a patch to make Enterprise Administrator fully compatible with our new database before it went into production. The fact that the DataMirror team has a work ethic built on a customer-centric philosophy makes it easy to rely on them should any questions or concerns arise."

Conclusions

With an efficient real-time data warehousing system firmly in place, Lladro USA can now depend on reliable data access throughout the enterprise as Transformation Server replicates over 8,000 transactions per day.

"As a distributor, it is essential to keep track of orders and customer information no matter when or where it comes from," says Munoz. "DataMirror has given us the opportunity to easily control the capture, transformation and flow (CTF) of critical business information. This in turn allows us to provide quality customer service and helps generate a competitive edge for us in the industry."



DataMirror software is available
on-line at datamirror.com or call
1-800-362-5955

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