



Success Story: Penn National Insurance

Penn National Insurance Reduces Elapsed Time for Database Loads by 50% with SyncSort

"We can't have the load running for days on end. We need SyncSort for preprocessing because the loads have to finish at night or on a weekend."

Analyst

Penn National Insurance Development Team

Organizational Profile

- Sells property-casualty insurance and surety bonds
- Founded in 1919

Business Need

- Speed up a migration database load and the monthly database loads for a decision support system

Environment

- RS/6000 with Sybase

Benefits

- Cut elapsed time of database loads by 50%, from eight days to four
- Reduced the need for C programs, saving programming time
- Integrated easily with decision support applications

The Challenge:

Large-volume loads, into any database system, can take a long time if the data is not already pre-processed. That means external pre-processing is a key component of any procedure that loads large amounts of data. And loads are likely to be largest when mainframe data is moved to a UNIX system. This was the case at Penn National Insurance, where mainframe data was being moved into a Sybase table on an RS/6000.

Teaming with Andersen Consulting on an information warehouse project, Penn National Insurance turned to SyncSort to speed both one-time migration database loads and the monthly loads that would be integral to the completed decision support system.

The Solution:

The development team realized that SyncSort could be used to accelerate the migration loads. SyncSort would be able to prepare the data for loading and could handle the signed integer fields in the insurance records.

SyncSort was used to presort and summarize sequential data from the mainframe. This accelerated the load by ordering the data on the primary index key and eliminating duplicate-keyed records. "If we hadn't sorted the data in the same order as the index, the loads would have taken more than a week," commented one analyst on the team. With SyncSort's help, the migration loads were completed in four days.

The Benefits:

SyncSort provided another benefit. SyncSort reduced the need for C programs, saving programming time and making it possible to process data in ways that would have been difficult otherwise.

SyncSort was used to convert data formats, reformat records and summarize records. This was important, because the mainframe data was processed intensively on the UNIX system before loading into the database. For example, the files expanded at several points in the processing stream as a result of merge steps, and SyncSort's summarization function was used to reduce the data for subsequent operations.

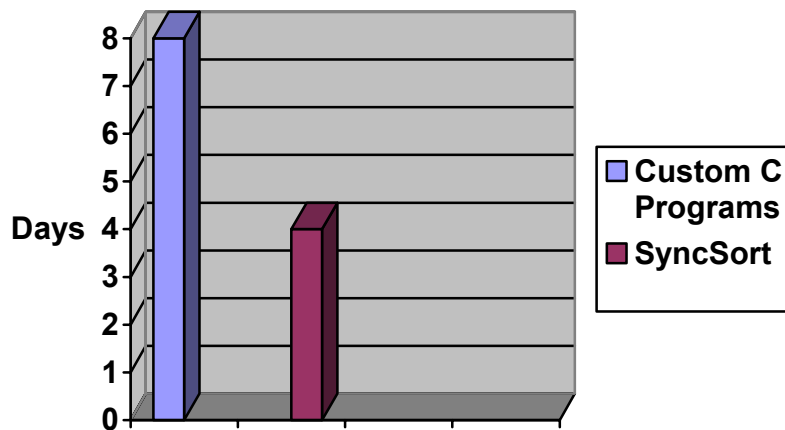
Procedures that use SyncSort help speed routine monthly database loads. The procedures are similar to those used for the migration load. "SyncSort can sort and sum flat file data faster than an RDBMS can look for the original record and apply the new one to it," the analyst said. "The presorting reduces the time required for the RDBMS to run through a large database table looking for a record."

Success Story: Penn National Insurance



The time saved as a result of pre-processing are critical because the monthly loads must run within a batch window. "We can't have the load running for days on end. We need SyncSort for preprocessing because the loads have to finish at night or on a weekend."

The RS/6000 with Sybase serves PCs running third-party decision support software, which displays the data in graphic form, including trendlines and what-if modeling. Thanks to SyncSort, the monthly loads will not interfere with users on the completed information warehouse system.



SyncSort cuts elapsed time of database loads by 50%, from eight days to four

About SyncSort

SyncSort is a high-performance application accelerator that improves the performance of multiple applications and reduces elapsed time for a broad range of applications. It speeds ETL transactions by up to 90% and facilitates data mining and click-stream processing. SyncSort merges, aggregates, cleanses, and converts data. Other features include filtering, pattern matching, and partitioning. SyncSort will save you time in operations like data warehousing, data mining, data marts, CRM, ERP, DSS, BI, Oracle Financials, and legacy migration. Using Visual SyncSort, SyncSort applications can be created through a Windows-like GUI. For more information or to arrange for a free trial, call Syncsort at (201)930-8200 or visit www.syncsort.com.