

Performance Optimisation and Cost Reduction with Data Archiving



Monthly data growth rates of 10 to 15 per cent are nothing unusual for a SAP database. As a result, performance suffers. The proximate solution would be more disk space, "because hard disks are inexpensive" – so goes a widespread false estimation. PBS archive add-ons can reduce stored data in SAP databases by more than a half, grant a better performance and lower hardware costs.

PBS archive add-ons at SPAR Switzerland

403.700 purchasing orders and 636.000 invoices, among other things, had raised the data volume at SPAR Switzerland, growing with an average rate of 25 gigabyte monthly, to 2 terabyte. A trend that could hardly be stopped by using the SAP standard archiving within the main SAP retail application. This is why data volume and performance had to be checked and optimised after upgrade in the course of a switch from SAP R/3 (release 4.6c) to mySAP Enterprise. The IT manager at SPAR Switzerland in St. Gallen, Wolfgang Mähr states: *"We continuously had a very high data growth and performance problems which we wanted to eliminate by means of data relocation and using additional PBS modules."*

The Archiving Concept

The starting point of optimisation and data avoidance is a database analysis that helps to define measures for identification, of archiving possibilities and data avoidance. Which data must be archived and accessible for auditing purposes is regulated by law and fiscal authorities. Most of these data are no longer required in daily

business operations, but certain residence times must be observed for them.

Objects of the analysis are the table sizes in the SAP database, document distribution and archivability. Even customer tables (Z-objects) which are not considered by SAP standard archiving are analysed and archived. Even these tables may reach a considerable size and continue to grow constantly. The archiving concept allows the specification of relevant archiving objects. Taking technical aspects and business processes into consideration, the archiving concept of ComSol AG is implemented in a sector and customer specific way.



SPAR Group Switzerland

SPAR Group Switzerland is a family enterprise based in St. Gallen/Gossau and is a franchisee of SPAR International. The group has over 140 SPAR and EUROSPAR markets and 6 Cash & Carry warehouses. With 857 staff the group realised a turnover of 750 million Swiss francs.

The following questions are to be thereby answered:

- How much disk space is occupied by which modules?
- How big is the monthly document volume?
- How big is an average document?
- How big is the SAP database growth rate in one month – in one year?
- Which data are irrelevant for process management and can therefore be deleted?
- In which tables can updating be prevented?
- Which data can be urgently archived?
- Which tables can be archived with which archiving object?

The ComSol AG analysis report contains the results of the actual analysis, a prognosis of further data growth and recommendations about data avoidance. Thus, it becomes perceptible which data can be deleted or archived and which archiving processes are appropriate.

The SAP modules Financial Accounting (FI), Materials Management (MM), Sales and Distribution (SD), already archived in SAP Standard were included in the analysis performed in SPAR Switzerland. In the SAP module Controlling (CO) new archiving objects (single items, earnings statement and special ledger indices) were considered. After two days of basis consulting and according to the analysis results, the implementation of the PBS archive add-ons was approved. Therefore the data volume at SPAR Switzerland could be reduced by one third. Wolfgang Mähr underlined the improved performance as a substantial result and emphasized *“the outstanding consulting and training by ComSol AG during the entire project”*.

The Benefits of Archiving

PBS archive add-ons complement the SAP archiving and allow a considerable volume reduction of the SAP database, since data are compressed and stored in archive files outside the database. The following beneficial aspects are particularly important:

- The residence time of documents in the SAP system is reduced to a minimum.
- All data related to a certain document are involved in the archiving and the SAP system load is therefore reduced.
- Prompt and regular archiving allows an optimisation of the SAP applications and an accelerated access to data and transactions.
- Users have direct access to archived data through all SAP modules. They can view these data in the usual SAP system interface.
- PBS archive add-ons can be efficiently implemented.

PBS Archive Add-ons at Shell Europe Oil Products

The starting point for the implementation of PBS archive add-ons at Shell Europe Oil Products (SEOP) in The Hague was the new tax requirements which prescribe digital auditing since January 1st, 2002. Fiscal authorities do have extended rights to access corporate data processing systems for auditing purposes. Data inspection can thus be carried out through direct program access or by searching stored data. Actually, data in Shell Europe Oil Products had already been archived in SAP Standard; nevertheless, the SAP standard archiving did not meet the new tax requirements.

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Moreover, the database grew with a monthly rate of 100 gigabyte to reach finally 1,8 terabyte.

ComSol AG was called in by Shell Europe Oil Products for already ongoing projects in order to implement a common SAP application for several European countries with different legal and fiscal requirements. Under intense time pressure and by involving several Project Managers in the ramified company structure on a Europe-wide basis, solutions for data reduction could be analysed and implemented. In addition to problem analysis, development of solutions, customizing PBS archive add-ons and optimal setting of the archive environment, ComSol AG has solved start-up problems as well. *„When new applications are to be integrated in an already existing and functioning IT landscape, implementation problems cannot be avoided”,* concluded Volker Bassler, Shell Project Manager according to his experience in various projects. *“ComSol AG has prepared us optimally for this and has solved the implementation problems promptly and in a flexible way.”*

An integral part of the project carried out by ComSol AG at Shell Europe Oil Products was the training of staff members coming from different European countries and supposed to form an interface between tax departments, testers and IT landscape. *„ComSol AG’s consulting and support was excellent, especially in customizing the PBS archive add-ons”* states Volker Bassler. This was a matter of course for Bernd Hellgardt, CEO of ComSol AG. *“After all, we are an intermediary between our customers and PBS Software GmbH and we see to that the PBS archive add-ons are adapted to the renewed and changing requirements of our customers.”*

Conclusion from Both Projects:

The archiving projects at SPAR Switzerland and Shell Europe Oil Products show that PBS archive add-ons are a useful addendum for the SAP standard archiving and that ComSol AG is the right partner for their customizing and implementation. This confirms the positive conclusion drawn by Volker Bassler, Shell Project Manager: *“In fact data archiving will continue to be performed on a SAP Standard basis. However, the PBS archive add-ons implemented by ComSol AG allow an online and user friendly redisplay of archived data in the SAP application with a good performance.”*



Shell Europe Oil Products

Shell Europe Oil Products (SEOP) was integrated in the Dutch/Shell Group on January 1st, 2005 after a company reorganisation.

The Royal Dutch/Shell Group is one of the world’s biggest groups with 115.000 staff all over the globe. It covers the business areas of oil and gas supply, petroleum processing and sales, gas/power, chemical industry and renewable energy. It supplies about 3% of the world’s oil production. In 2004, the group’s turnover amounted to nearly 300 billion US dollars.

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