



A European Pricing System for EMI

A solution using Microsoft SQL Server, Hyperion Essbase & Wired for OLAP

Background

For over 100 years, EMI has been one of the world's leading music companies; its record labels and music publishing businesses working with and representing some of the top recording artists and songwriters of all time. Today, the EMI Group operates directly in 45 countries, with licensees and distribution agreements in a further 26. EMI releases more than 1,000 albums every year and has a roster of over 1,500 artists from all around the globe.

Issues

Increased retailer consolidation and expansion across borders; increases in retailer system sophistication; and the introduction of the Euro had all made understanding and managing differences in terms and prices across Europe a priority for the Group. EMI needed to be able to identify any disparities and understand their impacts; gain timely and accurate information to establish pricing policies; and to facilitate informed trading terms negotiations.

The solution required was to work with a preferred technology set to gain synergies with existing systems, and to operate within the controls of EMI's infrastructure with strict security considerations.

Solution

EMI was already using Microsoft SQL Server 6.5 in conjunction with Hyperion's Essbase OLAP server and Wired web reporting for analysing global sales. Due to the many synergies between the two applications, using SQL Server 7.0 and Essbase provided the obvious solution, allowing EMI to exploit improvements in the new versions of the products, including the effective SQL Server Data Transformation Tool (DTS) and Hyperion's powerful data loading Integration Server.

EMI was keen to exploit the cost and deployment benefits of the Internet, and wanted to use this environment to capture both regional sales returns and manually entered pricing information that could be used to supplement analysis. The system would have three components:

- A core relational system using SQL Server 7 with a customised Visual Basic control application to facilitate the movement of information through the various stages of data receipt, validation and aggregation.
- A multi-dimensional analysis cube giving reporting flexibility via Wired for OLAP over the web.
- A web based data capture and data transfer facility.

Thorogood input

Thorogood was uniquely placed to be able to provide EMI with a 'one-stop-shop' of skills in all of the required areas:

- Having worked closely with Microsoft prior to the commercial launch of SQL Server 7, Thorogood had gained critical exposure to this new release of the product.
- As a Hyperion Partner, Thorogood have many years of experience in developing OLAP solutions using Essbase.
- Our experience in linking relational and multi-dimensional data allowed us to develop a flexible interface between SQL Server and Essbase using Hyperion's new Integration Server product.
- In the area of web technology, client side scripting was used to reduce server load with powerful ASP scripts and custom COM components to control business rules and file distribution.

Benefits to the client

EMI now has a centralised European Pricing System that facilitates:

- Understanding of the trading terms and pricing structures across Europe
- Integration of transaction data with explanatory information for enhanced analysis

And has achieved an effective implementation to meet the planned roll out within Europe using:

- State of the art technology
- Low cost-roll out using intranet technology

In today's technological age there is no shortage of information, but how do you access the facts you want, when you want them and in the best possible format? To help you, Thorogood makes sense of data. We combine our skills in IT and numerate analysis with business understanding to provide you with solutions to help you get ahead in today's marketplace. Independent since 1987, our focus is to find exactly the right system to match your needs.

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