Microsoft

Big Data APAC IT Trade Briefing Coverage Report

As of 27 March 2013

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News Clipping

Date	19 March 2013
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Headline	Singapore uni buys into Microsoft's big data vision
Page	-
Website	http://www.zdnet.com/sg/singapore-uni-buys-into-microsofts-big-data-vision-7000012805/

Singapore uni buys into Microsoft's big data vision

Summary: *National University of Singapore deploys SQL Server 2012 to unlock self-service business intelligence for its employees, which in turn empowers them to deliver better services for its online student learning platform.*

By Kevin Kwang | March 19, 2013 -- 10:25 GMT (18:25 SGT)

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SINGAPORE--The National University of Singapore (NUS) today announced the successful implementation of SQL Server 2012 to give employees in its Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT) the ability to run hypotheses and validate IT proposals on a self-service basis.

This, in turn, empowered the team to better deliver content and services to the student population via its learning management system--the Integrated Virtual Learning Environment (IVLE), according to Jeffery Tay, associate director of CIT at NUS.

In a briefing session Tuesday, Tay revealed the CIT had started thinking about big data implementation in 2010 and when it finally deployed its IT system in 2011, the IVLE usage dashboard was "static, basic and liable to data corruption". It also needed the IT team to be heavily involved in re-configuring the dashboard as and when there were new information added to it, he said, adding the system took some two years to set up and be fully functional.

By contrast, the implementation of Microsoft's SQL Server 2012 took between three to six months, he revealed. Besides cutting down on time, the Power View dashboard for IVLE usage was significantly improved in that it was easily understood, configurable and managed almost entirely by end-users, he said.

This then allows the team to run their hypotheses and back these up with concrete proposals to improve the IVLE platform, Tay added. For instance, the previous analytics dashboard did not show mobile usage among NUS' student population. With the new dashboard, CIT found out that content consumption and usage were increasingly done via mobile devices running on Apple's iOS and Google's Android operating systems, he said.

Backed up by hard data, the CIT was able to justify the need to create native mobile apps for the two platform, as well as a video delivery program for course content to Android mobile devices , the executive said.

Additionally, as part of its 2015 IT roadmap, CIT aims to use Microsoft's big data analytics tool to better monitor student usage of IVLE such as whether they are using it in school or at home, and to better personalize the ways students learn, Tay said.

Thailand's DSI using big data to shorten its investigation processes, and better identify suspects when a crime has been committed.

Asia adoption ramping up

The Singapore university is one of the latest in the region to sign up for Microsoft's big data offerings. Arun Ulag, Microsoft's general manager for server & tools division in Asia-Pacific, said in the same briefing session Tuesday that Thailand's Department of Special Investigation (DSI) had implemented a big data system based on SQL Server 2012 and Apache Hadoop software to more effectively retrieve and correlate different sets of information stored up in its siloed databases.

The law enforcement agency did not use to have a standard method for police officers to access information from structured and unstructured data for specific investigations, and this slowed down processes so much so that it used to take about two years to solve one case, Ulag revealed.

In the initial test phase, though, DSI imported records from 250 closed cases to simulate a large volume of investigative data. It then subjected the system to different tests and searches to evaluate its performance, and narrowed down a list of suspects that matched the actual offenders arrested in the actual crimes.

Yannaphon Youngyuen, deputy director of the DSI at Thailand's Ministry of Justice, said in a prepared statement: "With the traditional approach, it took two years to search for tips and gather and analyze data. With Microsoft's big data solution, it took only 15 days. This reassured us that implementing the system would increase the accuracy of our results while saving [our] officers' time."

Kenneth Cukier, data editor of The Economist, added in the briefing that he believes Asia has what it takes to be a "pioneer of today's data age", and these two case studies help back up his assertions.

He said given the economic growth of the region, as well as the relative lack of legacy IT systems in many of Asia's emerging markets, this would give businesses here the space to experiment with big data applications. It also has people with good mathematic skills, which would help bolster the development of big data usage here, Cukier said.

News Clipping

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Publication	Techgoondu
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Microsoft touts Big Data wins in Asia-Pacific

By: *Alfred Siew*

19 MAR 2013

Microsoft today brought out recent wins in its Big Data efforts in Asia-Pacific, promising its technology will be easy to use for anyone who knows how to set up a Powerpoint slide.

Well, anyone who is backed up by a team of competent IT experts, who would be doing the tough job of putting the data into the mix with Microsoft database tools like SQL Server, said executives here in Singapore.

There's also the problem with getting the right data in the mix, and sorting out structured data – such as addresses – from unstructured data – such as photos – with various different tools.

Not an issue, said Microsoft's enterprise software folks today. They added that it is possible even for small retailers, using simple tools such as Excel, to extract important insights such as customer buying patterns to better plan their inventory.

Arul Ulagaratchagan, Microsoft Asia-Pacific's general manager for server and tools, said Microsoft was confident of the consumerisation of Big Data, the number crunching and analysis process that many big companies have latched on to better predict the future.

He pointed to Microsoft's Azure cloud-based marketplace where customers can look up publicly available data, say, from government agencies or paid-for data collected by commercial companies, and mash that with their internal data, to form a coherence analysis.

That is just part of the equation. The company hopes that its tools, familiar with business users everywhere, will help win it more Big Data deals.

Microsoft's Office suite already comes with business intelligence tools, such as PowerPivot, which lets users mash up and analyse data across millions of rows. Then, there is Power View, which taps on SQL Server's Reporting Services to provide a quick visualisation of data.

The National University of Singapore, for one, uses SQL Server and crunches data on how students access its e-learning service. The findings confirmed what the university always believed – that students were accessing more school materials from their smartphones. It now has Android and iOS apps for users to access its e-learning service.

Other wins which Microsoft brought up today included a law-enforcement agency in Thailand, a hotel in China and the Bank of New Zealand.

In Thailand, the Department of Special Investigation rolled out a Microsoft project that helped mine data better with Microsoft SQL Server 2012 and Apache Hadoop software.

The structured data was handled by SQL Server, while Hadoop dealt with unstructured data, say, crime scene photos. The result? A cut in investigation time from two years to just 15 days, claimed Microsoft.

News Clipping

Date	20 March 2013
Publication	FutureGov
Headline	Singapore University Embraces Big Data Analytics
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Website	http://www.futuregov.asia/articles/2013/mar/20/singapore-university-embraces-big-data-analytics/

EDUCATION IT, INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY EMBRACES BIG DATA ANALYTICS

By Thanya Kunakornpaiboonsiri | 20 March 2013 | Views: 1676

National University of Singapore (NUS) yesterday announced the successful deployment of SQL Server 2012 to create business insights from big data, and enhance a more personalised e-learning experience.

Developed and maintained by NUS' Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT), the project was completed in December 2012 in partnership with Microsoft. The solution allows the NUS to capture real-time analytics to improve the user experience of its online learning management system, and Integrated Virtual Learning Environment (IVLE).

The IVLE hosts 90 per cent of all academic modules offered in the university, and is accessed by most of its 37,000 students cohort on a daily basis. The portal provides students with one-click access to learning tools such as discussion forums, chat rooms, and file hosting.

The CIT has invested heavily in man-hours since 2010 to dig deeper into terabytes of data to understand the user behaviours of a diverse set of students using IVLE.

Questions such as how students access IVLE, peak traffic periods, popularity of features and functions are all important insights in understanding consumption behaviours, according to Jeffery Tay, Associate Director of the CIT, NUS.

The labor intensive task in generating insights involved analyzing web traffic data, log-in information, and student profiles to gleam useable insights, he added.

"To stay relevant and fresh to our diverse set of students, we needed to constantly evolve and improve the user experience of our online learning portal. In analyzing large sets of data about user behaviours, we were faced with the challenge of consolidating different sets of structured and unstructured data; and uncertainties in the accuracy of insights gathered," he said.

PHOTOS

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Microsoft SQL Server 2012 is a cloud-ready information platform that enables organizations to unlock breakthrough insights across different operations, as well as quickly build solutions to extend data across on-premises and public cloud infrastructure.

The NUS has chosen this solution, particularly for its Power View feature where it can provide an interactive browser-based data virtualization and presentation experience for all levels of users, according to Tay.

"The solution produces significantly more accurate datasets and provides better insights. More importantly, we were able to speed up the data analysis process by as much as 50 percent. The insights gleaned from such trends and patterns went a long way in helping IVLE designers stay on the forefront of development, creating a learning experience that is personalized and tailored to each individual student," he said.

For example, the CIT noticed an increasing number of students accessing IVLE through mobile devices. As a result, it spearheaded a programme to create mobile apps and encouraged the students to create their own unique apps (icreate.nus.edu.sg) that tap into IVLE's versatile platform.

As CIT continues to keep an eye on data analytics and provide constant feature updates to IVLE, for the university at large, making sense of student learning habits and patterns is only the beginning.

The university intends to add a wider range of data to its fast-growing pool. For example, with sufficient data, the crowd at the university's busy canteens can be mapped and analyzed for insights into crowd-control strategies, he said.

News Clipping

Date	20 March 2013
Publication	Networks Asia
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Asian businesses poised to lead in Big Data transformation

By Networks Asia Staff | Mar 20, 2013

Tags: Big Data   IT news   Microsoft

More than 75 percent of midsize to large businesses are implementing big data-related solutions within the next 12 months — with customer care, marketing and sales departments increasingly driving demand, according to new Microsoft research released in Asia Pacific.

The "Global Enterprise Big Data Trends: 2013" study surveyed more than 280 IT decision-makers in leading business with a global footprint.

The survey identified finds that demand for big data is increasingly taking place outside of the IT department. Customer care alone took up 41 percent of the demand, followed by sales (26 percent), finance (23 percent) and marketing (23 percent).

Nearly 90 percent of customers surveyed dedicate a part of their budget to addressing big data. 17 percent are in the early stages of researching big data solutions, and 13 percent have fully deployed big data solutions.

Nearly half of customers (49 percent) reported that growth in the volume of data is the greatest challenge driving big data solution adoption. 41 percent saw difficulties in having to integrate disparate business intelligence tools, while 40 percent took to task the tools used in gleaning business insights.

Big Data Transforming Asia Pacific

The Asia Pacific region today is witnessing one of the highest growths in big data globally due to the dramatic transformation of its nations. IT research firm IDC projects a five-year 46.8 percent CAGR (compound annual growth rate) in Asia Pacific's big data technology and services market from US$258.5 million in 2011 to US$1.76 billion in 2016

Arun Ulagaratchagan, General Manager, Server & Tools Division, Microsoft Asia Pacific, said: "Increasingly, more and more organizations are starting to understand the value of big data not just as a solution for IT problems, but as a competitive advantage. No matter the industry, big data can be used to manage customer demands and expectations, predict behavior, respond to rapidly changing market conditions, and improve overall operational efficiency."

According to Kenneth Cukier, one of the foremost thinkers on the subject of big data and the co-author of a new book entitled "Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work and Think", big data opens up a world beyond our deep-rooted conventional thinking and superstitions.

"We live in a world where we can never have enough information, but big data is as close as we can come to complete information," Cukier said. "This allows us to make better decisions that are based on solid information instead of relying solely on 'intuition' or 'hunches' and in turn lead our organization to success, whether it is a country or a corporation."

In additional to inspiring innovation and transformation, big data is anticipated to spur job creation in Asia Pacific. Research firm Gartner reported that by 2015, close to one million IT jobs will be created in the Asia Pacific to support the growth of big data.

And for every IT role, a further three jobs will be created for people outside of IT, bringing the number of new jobs to a total of four million.

News Clipping

Date	21 March 2013
Publication	Lianhe Zaobao
Headline	Microsoft: ¾ of enterprises worldwide will be using "Big Data" within 1 year
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微软：

全球四分三中大型企业 一年内将使用"大数据"

赵恺健 报道
kjcheow@sph.com.sg

一项调查显示，全球超过四分之三的中型与大型企业在接下来的12个月内将在公司内推行"大数据"（big data）相关的解决方案，而最关注的是在于客户服务、营销与销售这几个方面。

根据微软（Microsoft）最新公布的一项调查，推动企业界对大数据的需求已不再是来自公司的资讯科技部门，有多达41%受访者表示需求来自他们的客户服务部门，而紧接着的是销售（26%）、金融（23%）以及营销（23%）等部门与业务。

这项名为"2013年国际企业大数据趋势"的调查，访问了超过280家全球领先企业的资讯科技决策者。

调查显示，接近90%受访者表示已计划将公司部分资源预算的一部分使用在应对大数据的需求上。其中有17%受访者表示正处于研究大数据解决方案的早期研究，而另有13%表示已充分使用了大数据的解决方案。

微软亚太服务器与工具业务总经理阿伦乌拉克（Arun Ulagaratchagan）说："越来越多机构已开始理解到大数据的重要性，并不只是限于作为资讯科技的一种工具，而是作为企业竞争的优势。"

他说："不管哪一个领域，大数据都可以用来管理客户需求与期望、预测行为、对迅速变化的市场状况做出回应，并改善整体的运作效率。"

不过，调查也显示，有接近一半的受访者表示，在推动采用大数据解决方案时，所面对的最大挑战就是应对数据量的大幅增长；也有41%受访者表示难以将商业分析工具融合在业务中。

因此，企业需要懂得充分使用大数据带来的优势，通过使用各种工具来帮助他们管理数据，并改变他们思考、分析与操作的方式。

乌拉克表示，善用大数据，不一定要限于大企业，政府部门、中小企业，甚至企业中的普通员工，都可以通过大数据的工具改变做决策与创新的方式。

其中一个使用微软的SQL服务器（SQL Server）的客户是新加坡国立大学。国大的教学技术中心（Centre for Instructional Technology，简称CIT）使用了这大数据解决方案，以希望改善他们的网络虚拟学习环境（IVLE）平台，并更好地理解学生与老师的使用模式。

国大教学技术中心副主管郑广安表示，他们在使用该工具后，观察学生使用学习平台的模式，发现越来越多学生通过手机使用该平台，因此推出手机应用程序，以更好地符合学生的需求。

他表示，使用SQL服务器后，可提供他们更加准确的数据与更好的见解，分析数据所需的时间也大大减少。他们希望在未来可以进一步理解这些数据，为学生设计一些更加量身定制的学习过程和体验。

News Clipping

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Publication	NetworksAsia
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Website	http://www.networksasia.net/content/sql-server-2012-powers-singapore-schools-big-data-journey?page=0%2C1&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A%20nwarss%20(Networks%20Asia%20RSS%20feed)

SQL Server 2012 powers Singapore school's big data journey

By **Networks Asia Staff** | Mar 21, 2013

Tags: Big Data   IT news   Microsoft SQL Server 2012
          National University of Singapore

The National University of Singapore (NUS), a leading global university in Asia, has saved 50% in man-hours to analyze massive amount of user data with the Microsoft SQL Server 2012.

The university chose SQL Server 2012 for its combination of power features, cloud readiness and ease-of-use in creating business insights from large amount of data.

"Organizations such as NUS are making the leap forward in embracing big data," said John Fernandes, Chief Marketing & Operations Officer, Microsoft Singapore. "Microsoft's rich set of information tools can help organizations report, analyze and predict insights from all types of data, giving them a competitive edge in a new world where consumer expectations are ever growing, while pressures to constantly reduce operational expenditures is real."

Completed in December 2012, this big data deployment has already enabled NUS to capture real-time analytics to improve the user experience of its online learning management system, Integrated Virtual Learning Environment (IVLE).

Developed and maintained by NUS' Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT), IVLE hosts 90 percent of all academic modules offered in NUS and is accessed by most of its 37,000 student cohort on a daily basis.

The portal provides students with one-click access to learning tools such as discussion forums, chat rooms, and file hosting.

To ensure top-notch user experience of its online learning portal, CIT has invested heavily in man-hours since 2010 to dig deeper into terabytes of data to understand the user habits of a diverse set of students using IVLE. Questions such as how students access IVLE, peak traffic periods, popularity of features and functions are all important insights in understanding consumption behaviors.

The labor intensive task in generating insights involved analyzing web traffic data, log-in information, and student profiles to gleam useable insights.

Jeffery Tay, Associate Director of CIT, NUS, said: "To stay relevant and fresh to our diverse set of students, we needed to constantly evolve and improve the user experience of our online learning portal. In analyzing large sets of data about user behaviors, we were faced with the challenge of consolidating different sets of structured and unstructured data; and uncertainties in the accuracy of insights gathered."

For example, CIT noticed an increasing number of students accessing IVLE through mobile devices. As a result, it spearheaded a program to create mobile apps and encouraged NUS students to create their own unique apps (icreate.nus.edu.sg) that tap into IVLE's versatile platform.

As CIT continues to keep an eye on data analytics and provide constant feature updates to IVLE, for the university at large, making sense of student learning habits and patterns is only the beginning. NUS intends to add a wider range of data to its fast-growing pool. For example, with sufficient data, the crowd at the university's busy canteens can be mapped and analyzed for insights into crowd-control strategies.

Other Asia Pacific organizations are also using Microsoft's SQL Server 2012.

For instance, in Thailand, the Ministry of Justice, Department of Special Investigation implemented a Microsoft Big Data solution based on Microsoft SQL Server 2012 and Apache Hadoop software to improve investigation processes and reduce manual procedures. Today DSI Investigating officers work more efficiently with self-service business intelligence (BI) tools. And with better BI and data management capabilities, the agency has improved accuracy and shortened the time to investigate criminal cases from two years to 15 days.

Over in China, Super 8 Hotels deployed Microsoft SQL Server 2012 to gain a powerful and highly available data-processing foundation, easy-to-use business intelligence tools, and scalability into cloud environments.

Non-IT sector making large move to Big Data

Study shows 90% of customers dedicating part of budget to it

By AMANDA TAN

A REPORT done by Microsoft, *Global Enterprise Big Data Trends: 2013*, reveals that more than 75 per cent of mid-sized to large businesses are implementing Big Data-related solutions within the next 12 months with demand driven by non-IT sectors.

The study, which surveyed more than 280 IT decision-makers in leading businesses globally, found that there is increasing demand for Big Data in sectors outside IT such as marketing, sales and customer care, which alone took up 41 per cent of the demand.

Also, 90 per cent of customers surveyed have dedicated a part of their budget to addressing Big Data with 13 per cent having fully deployed Big Data solutions.

This is especially so in the Asia-Pacific region, which is witnessing one of the highest growths in Big Data globally. IT research firm IDC projects a five-year 46.8 per cent CAGR (compound annual growth rate) in Asia-Pacific's Big Data technology and services market from US$258.5 million in 2011 to US$1.76 billion in 2016.

This has a direct impact on jobs as research firm Gartner also reported that by 2015, close to one million IT jobs will be created in Asia Pacific to support the growth of Big Data and for every IT role, a further three jobs will be created for people outside of IT, bringing the number of new jobs to a total of four million.

"Increasingly, more and more organisations are starting to understand the value of Big Data not just as a solution for IT problems, but as a competitive advantage," said Arun Ulagaratchagan, general manager, server and tools division, Microsoft Asia Pacific.

However, there are also challenges, with nearly half of customers surveyed reporting that growth in the volume of data is the greatest challenge driving Big Data solution adoption

Despite this, one user, the National University of Singapore (NUS), has successfully deployed the SQL Server 2012.

It hosts 90 per cent of all academic modules offered in NUS for its 37,000-strong student cohort that uses its online learning portal Integrated Virtual Learning environment (IVLE) and was able to use it to create real-time analysis of how the students used the system.

By automating Big Data analysis in this manner, NUS was able to save up to 50 per cent of man hours spent previously on manual processing of Web statistics and other forms of data. It also enabled NUS to create a better user experience of IVLE.

The system, which was completed in December 2012, was used for its combination of power features, cloud readiness and ease-of-use in creating business insights from large amount of data.

The portal currently provides students with one-click access to learning tools such as discussion forums, chatrooms and file hosting, and it has a Power View feature which provide an interactive browser-based data virtualisation.

For example, NUS Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT) noticed an increasing number of students accessing IVLE through mobile devices. As a result, it spearheaded a program to create mobile apps and encouraged NUS students to create their own unique apps (*icreate.nus.edu.sg*) that taps into IVLE's versatile platform.

There are plans ahead for this technology as with sufficient data, the crowd at

> **'To stay relevant and fresh to our diverse set of students, we needed to constantly evolve and improve the user experience of our online learning portal'**
>
> *— Jeffery Tay, associate director of CIT, NUS*

the university's busy canteens, for example, can be mapped and analysed for insights into crowd-control strategies.

"To stay relevant and fresh to our diverse set of students, we needed to constantly evolve and improve the user experience of our online learning portal. In analysing large sets of data about user behaviours, we were faced with the challenge of consolidating different sets of structured and unstructured data and uncertainties in the accuracy of insights gathered," Jeffery Tay, associate director of CIT, NUS.

News Clipping

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Demand for big data is strong in the region

Jack Loo | March 26, 2013

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A Microsoft-survey on big data demand in the Asia Pacific region is claiming that more than 75 per cent of mid-sized to large businesses are implementing big data-related projects within the next 12 months.

The study, *Global Enterprise Big Data Trends: 2013*, surveyed more than 280 IT decision makers in the region. Another finding is that the demand for big data is increasingly taking place outside of the IT department. Customer care alone took up 41 percent of the demand, followed by sales (26 percent), finance (23 percent) and marketing (23 percent).

Nearly 90 percent of customers surveyed dedicate a part of their budget to addressing big data. Seventeen percent are in the early stages of researching big data solutions, and 13 percent have fully deployed big data solutions.

Nearly half of customers (49 percent) reported that growth in the volume of data is the greatest challenge driving big data solution adoption. Forty-one percent saw difficulties in having to integrate disparate business intelligence tools, while 40 percent took to task the tools used in gleaning business insights.

Microsoft believes its research is supported by projections from IDC that the big data technology and services market in Asia Pacific will grow from US$258.5 million in 2011 to US$1.76 billion in 2016.

"Increasingly, more and more organisations are starting to understand the value of big data not just as a solution for IT problems, but as a competitive advantage," said Arun Ulagaratchagan, general manager, Server & Tools Division, Microsoft Asia Pacific.

"No matter the industry, big data can be used to manage customer demands and expectations, predict behaviour, respond to rapidly changing market conditions, and improve overall operational efficiency," added Ulagaratchagan.

One reason why the big data trend is catching on in the region is that it can open up a world beyond deep-rooted conventional thinking and superstitions, offered Kenneth Cukier, co-author of Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work and Think.

"We live in a world where we can never have enough information, but big data is as close as we can come to complete information," Cukier said. "This allows us to make better decisions that are based on solid information instead of relying solely on 'intuition' or 'hunches' and in turn lead our organisation to success, whether it is a country or a corporation."

Case studies

Microsoft is also bullish about its leadership claims to the region's big data vendor market. It published several successful case studies of its customers utilising Microsoft's big data technologies.

The National University of Singapore deployed SQL Server 2012 to create real-time analysis of how its 37,000 students use its online learning portal. The insights gleamed from this big data project enabled NUS to create better user experience of the site. In automating big data analysis using SQL Server 2012, NUS was able to save up to 50 percent of man-hours spent previously on manual processing of Web statistics and other forms of data.

Thailand's Ministry of Justice, Department of Special Investigation (DSI) implemented a solution based on Microsoft SQL Server 2012 and Apache Hadoop software to improve investigation processes and reduce manual procedures. The agency has since improved accuracy and shortened the time to investigate criminal cases from two years to 15 days.

China's Super 8 Hotels chain is growing rapidly in China but needed better tools for integrating, processing and analysing its growing data stores so that managers could make more-informed business decisions. The company deployed Microsoft SQL Server 2012 to gain a powerful and highly available data-processing foundation, easy-to-use business intelligence tools, and scalability into cloud environments.

"Big data has the potential to change the way governments, businesses and even consumers conduct business, innovate and interact in their day-to-day lives. The transformational power of big data is not only about managing the data deluge well, but also about handling the power of big data analysis to the widest set of people possible," said Ulagaratchagan.

News Clipping

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Page	-
Website	http://www.computerworld.com.sg/resource/applications/singapores-nus-installs-sql-server-for-e-learning-portal/

Singapore's NUS installs SQL Server for e-learning portal

Jack Loo | March 26, 2013

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The Integrated Virtual Learning Environment (IVLE) is an online learning management system offered by the National University of Singapore (NUS) to its students.

Developed by NUS' Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT), IVLE hosts 90 percent of all academic modules offered in NUS and is accessed by most of its 37,000 student cohort on a daily basis. The portal provides students with one-click access to learning tools such as discussion forums, chat rooms, and file hosting.

To ensure top-notch user experience of its online learning portal, CIT has invested heavily in man-hours since 2010 to dig deeper into terabytes of data to understand the user habits of a diverse set of students using IVLE.

"To stay relevant and fresh to our diverse set of students, we needed to constantly evolve and improve the user experience of our online learning portal," said Jeffery Tay, associate director of CIT, NUS. Questions such as how students access IVLE, peak traffic periods, popularity of features and functions are all important insights in understanding consumption behaviours.

But getting the answers was not easy. The labour-intensive task in generating insights involved analysing Web traffic data, log-in information, and student profiles to gleam useable insights. "In analysing large sets of data about user behaviours, we were faced with the challenge of consolidating different sets of structured and unstructured data; and uncertainties in the accuracy of insights gathered," said Tay.

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Other SQL Server deployments in the region include Thailand's Ministry of Justice, Department of Special Investigation who improved investigation processes and reduce manual procedures. The agency has since improved accuracy and shortened the time to investigate criminal cases from two years to 15 days.

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News Clipping

Date	26 March 2013
Publication	CIO Asia
Headline	Demand for big data is strong in the region
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Website	http://www.cio-asia.com/resource/applications/demand-for-big-data-is-strong-in-the-region/

Demand for big data is strong in the region

Jack Loo | March 26, 2013

A Microsoft-survey on big data demand in the Asia Pacific region is claiming that more than 75 per cent of mid-sized to large businesses are implementing big data-related projects within the next 12 months.

The study, *Global Enterprise Big Data Trends: 2013*, surveyed more than 280 IT decision makers in the region. Another finding is that the demand for big data is increasingly taking place outside of the IT department. Customer care alone took up 41 percent of the demand, followed by sales (26 percent), finance (23 percent) and marketing (23 percent).

Nearly 90 percent of customers surveyed dedicate a part of their budget to addressing big data. Seventeen percent are in the early stages of researching big data solutions, and 13 percent have fully deployed big data solutions.

Nearly half of customers (49 percent) reported that growth in the volume of data is the greatest challenge driving big data solution adoption. Forty-one percent saw difficulties in having to integrate disparate business intelligence tools, while 40 percent took to task the tools used in gleaning business insights.

Microsoft believes its research is supported by projections from IDC that the big data technology and services market in Asia Pacific will grow from US$258.5 million in 2011 to US$1.76 billion in 2016.

"Increasingly, more and more organisations are starting to understand the value of big data not just as a solution for IT problems, but as a competitive advantage," said Arun Ulagaratchagan, general manager, Server & Tools Division, Microsoft Asia Pacific.

"No matter the industry, big data can be used to manage customer demands and expectations, predict behaviour, respond to rapidly changing market conditions, and improve overall operational efficiency," added Ulagaratchagan.

One reason why the big data trend is catching on in the region is that it can open up a world beyond deep-rooted conventional thinking and superstitions, offered Kenneth Cukier, co-author of Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work and Think.

"We live in a world where we can never have enough information, but big data is as close as we can come to complete information," Cukier said. "This allows us to make better decisions that are based on solid information instead of relying solely on 'intuition' or 'hunches' and in turn lead our organisation to success, whether it is a country or a corporation."

Case studies

Microsoft is also bullish about its leadership claims to the region's big data vendor market. It published several successful case studies of its customers utilising Microsoft's big data technologies.

The National University of Singapore deployed SQL Server 2012 to create real-time analysis of how its 37,000 students use its online learning portal. The insights gleamed from this big data project enabled NUS to create better user experience of the site. In automating big data analysis using SQL Server 2012, NUS was able to save up to 50 percent of man-hours spent previously on manual processing of Web statistics and other forms of data.

Thailand's Ministry of Justice, Department of Special Investigation (DSI) implemented a solution based on Microsoft SQL Server 2012 and Apache Hadoop software to improve investigation processes and reduce manual procedures. The agency has since improved accuracy and shortened the time to investigate criminal cases from two years to 15 days.

China's Super 8 Hotels chain is growing rapidly in China but needed better tools for integrating, processing and analysing its growing data stores so that managers could make more-informed business decisions. The company deployed Microsoft SQL Server 2012 to gain a powerful and highly available data-processing foundation, easy-to-use business intelligence tools, and scalability into cloud environments.

"Big data has the potential to change the way governments, businesses and even consumers conduct business, innovate and interact in their day-to-day lives. The transformational power of big data is not only about managing the data deluge well, but also about handling the power of big data analysis to the widest set of people possible," said Ulagaratchagan.

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