More Power in the Cockpit

Success Story | Compart

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arvato direct services Gütersloh GmbH, a subsidiary of arvato (Bertelsmann), an international provider of business process outsourcing services, stepped up its output management (OM) both technologically and organizationally. The centerpiece of the innovation is DocBridge Pilot, which enables high-powered parallel processing of complex jobs.

As a printing and mailing service provider, what do you do when you are suddenly facing a mountain of documents to process and send but no additional time to do so? This is a situation not unfamiliar to arvato direct services Gütersloh GmbH. Barely two years ago, the arvato AG subsidiary specializing in mail and document solutions confronted what looked like an impossible task: one of their largest customers wanted to complete four times its regular volume in the same amount of time. arvato had a dilemma. How could they expand their existing output management system (OMS) to accommodate the need? Oliver Simon, IT Operations Director at arvato, remembers. "It was clear that we were going to have to put the entire infrastructure under the microscope. It was no use upgrading the server with additional processors and memory if the OM systems running on it were unable to support the added performance." So the analysis was expanded to cover not only the software and hardware in the immediate OM environment, but all the components in the IT landscape (database, operating system, network and storage technology, etc.). The upstream and downstream processes needed to be fully understood. Was direct processing of individual files or bundling more effective? What was the general load distribution in creating the mailings? What were the

key parameters for performance improvement?

For Oliver Simon and his colleagues, this holistic approach was an essential criterion – did they need another platform or could the current one be scaled better? Most importantly, arvato needed to know if DocBridge Pilot had the appropriate resources to guarantee reasonable scalability of the solution. Using direct allocation between the CPU core and DocBridge Mill conversion software already in place at arvato, they were able to prove that system performance could be boosted by adding more CPU cores. It was important to equally expand main memory to furnish sufficient resources for the additional Mill output. Over the breadth of the different orders, they were able to achieve scalable parallelism with the added CPU cores and main memory.

This increase in overall system performance does not necessarily benefit a single order. Wait times are reduced, but the performance for an individual order remains as good or bad as it was before. Of course, faster processors can be used. But this method of acceleration is generally quickly exhausted. For this reason, the defined objective was to configure the job such that parallelism could be achieved regardless of other orders. Some approaches were dead ends. The analyses made clear, for example, that processing bundled files was no faster if the bundling itself had to be performed.

Analyze all IT components

To achieve parallelism of the individual orders, arvato needed to upgrade from DocBridge Pilot

◼ **Executive Summary**

arvato AG is a leading European business process outsourcing (BPO) provider. More than 63,000 employees design and implement customized solutions for business customers all over the world and their various business processes along the integrated service chain. These services include data management, customer care, CRM services, supply chain management, digital distribution, financial services, qualified and individualized IT services as well as all services related to the creation and distribution of printed products and digital storage media.

2.9 to the current 2.14 release, which offered the necessary features. It was important for the service provider to expand the existing infrastructure without having to change to basic programming. What could be better than sticking with the tried-and-true system?

Simon recommends that companies facing similar performance challenges in the OM environment take enough time for the analysis, and they look at the whole IT structure. "Increasing performance through a hardware upgrade is only a short-term solution, not a lasting one." According to the IT manager, it is much better to analyze the entire process and to optimize wherever possible.
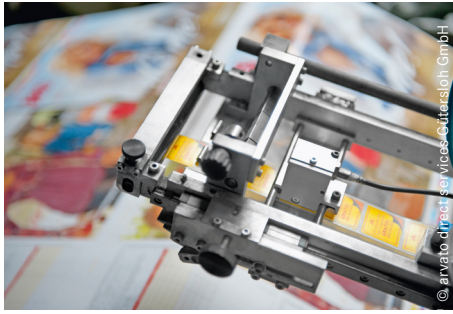
He believes that with the new release of DocBridge Pilot, companies are indeed prepared for the future. "The scalability options for the software are virtually limitless. Even if said customer increases the volume even more, we don't need to worry."

Quality assurance in document checking is the alpha and omega

At arvato, most mailings are still printed. Yet Oliver Simon can envision sending more electronically in the future. "The ratio between the physical and digital is shifting toward the latter. On the other hand, e-mail is probably unsuitable for advertising. For products that rely on haptics and optics, like premium catalogs, paper is still the better medium." For the future, the manager foresees a comfortable balance of the two.

For Compart, a longtime partner with arvato, the change was also a challenge. The new version was not available until just before the project start in the spring of 2012, so arvato was a "heavyweight" pilot customer for the 2.14 release. "It demonstrated that Compart not only builds future-proof products, but also has the

solid migration know-how in such important and sensitive areas as document processing."

arvato will continue to work with the OM specialist in the future. An introductory project is currently underway with DocBridge Delta, Compart's platform-independent check software for automatic document comparison. Quality assurance in document checking is essential for the company, especially to ensure that unwanted changes in the layout or text do not result from updates to the document creation software.