

**INFORMATION**

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# ASE ON

**SYBASE TECHNOLOGY RUNNING ON THE LINUX  
PLATFORM PROVES TO BE THE SOLUTION FOR  
AN E-MAIL MARKETING SYSTEM**

> BY PAUL HIRSCH

**TARGET**

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**AUDIENCE**

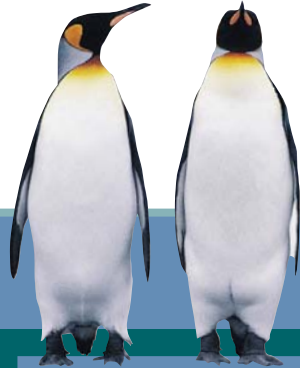


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What *mLogica* discovered in an analysis of the SubscriberMail system <

Why that analysis led to ASE on Linux as the solution <

About the immediate and tangible benefits of the solution <



# LINUX

## “IT WAS, AT THE VERY LEAST, CHALLENGING.”

That is how the president of *mLogica* ([www.mlogica.com](http://www.mlogica.com)), Amit Okhandiar, describes what he found at a company called SubscriberMail when his firm was called in to analyze SubscriberMail’s e-mail marketing system. SubscriberMail describes itself as a provider of e-mail marketing tools and services. Its software enables organizations to develop and deliver e-mail marketing campaigns through a sophisticated Web-based system.

*mLogica*’s clients include AC Nielsen, the American Marketing Association, and the Chicago Bulls. Unfortunately for SubscriberMail, its incumbent system, based on Microsoft SQL Server, was reaching capacity several times a day and customers were experiencing slow performance.

SubscriberMail President Dan Swartz says the problems began at the foundation of the system supported by SQL Server. “Performance of database transactions and queries was poor, and it was affecting business,” he says. “Central processing unit utilizations were high, and we were running short on memory, with poor input/output performance. Our business was growing rapidly, and we were concerned about the incumbent application’s scalability and how that would affect us in the future.”

According to Okhandiar, *mLogica*’s job was to evaluate SubscriberMail’s current system and make recommendations based on performance, scalability, security, cost, flexibility, and manageability.

### Analysis Phase

During *mLogica*’s analysis phase, Swartz saw the writing on the wall. “We engaged *mLogica* to perform an analysis of our current systems and database architecture, using its *mSecure* product, a systems monitoring and management solution, and to give us recommendations for a next-generation architecture,” Swartz explains.

“During the analysis phase, our systems and database performance continued to deteriorate. We asked *mLogica* to shift gears at that point to do some fine-tuning of MS SQL Server Database and our NT platform in order to receive immediate relief.

“With the performance-and-tuning effort on the database, we did resolve our immediate problems. However, we also realized that our current architecture was not suited for our long-term goals.”

The next step for *mLogica*’s architects was to evaluate Swartz’s conclusion and determine if the approach he sug-

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## Migration Weekend

It was tense at times. Not everything went as planned. Hurricane Frances almost intervened, and it took two weekends instead of one, but ultimately *mLogica* was able to work with SubscriberMail and help the company migrate from Microsoft SQL Server to ASE on Linux. The original plan targeted an August 28 completion date, but caution dictated a one-week delay.

"We had to be conservative," says SubscriberMail President Dan Swartz. "I think we probably could have sealed the deal by the end of the first weekend after the successful parallel run, but we weren't 100 percent positive, and it would have been irresponsible for us to run the risk of shutting down for a day."

"We were within a couple of hours of nailing down everything on the first Sunday," says Amit Okhandiar, CEO of *mLogica*. "The last weekend was a breeze, and SubscriberMail was finally able to enjoy the benefits of Linux on ASE full-time." The Sybase and Microsoft solutions had been running in tandem since late July. "That experience, along with planning, were key," Okhandiar explains.

*mLogica*'s lead architect for the project, Jeff Garbus, was working from his home in central Florida and sweating out Hurricane Frances during the final weekend. Fortunately, according to Okhandiar, the migration stayed a step or two ahead of the hurricane, which fizzled to a tropical storm by the time it reached Garbus' home. "We were a little lucky there," Okhandiar admits.

Garbus is a world-renowned expert in database applications and has written more than a dozen books on ASE and MS SQL Server. Tasks he led included

- Migration planning and user acceptance planning
- Installation and configuration of Linux, device setup, and RAID configuration for the hardware
- Installation and configuration of the ASE database
  - Data and application migration
  - Testing and quality assurance
  - Performance tuning for the operating systems and the ASE database
  - User acceptance testing
  - Go/no-go decision

If a no-go decision is made: Roll over back to SQL Server, and try again next weekend.

If there are no issues and a "go" decision is made: Go live with ASE and Linux in production on Monday morning.

Unfortunately, the no-go decision had to be made once, but Okhandiar says that it had nothing to do with database issues, just with the extra care that Swartz insisted upon and Garbus endorsed. "Our client's issues are always paramount. We have no problem stretching out the process if it makes everyone more comfortable. The most important issue is that the migration takes place and SubscriberMail's customers are able to see the improved performance that ASE on Linux provides."—PH

Not even a hurricane could stop the SubscriberMail migration from Microsoft SQL to ASE on Linux.



Hurricane damage in Florida illustrated here is a familiar fact of life this year.

gested was feasible for SubscriberMail. Some of the *mLogica* management team and lead architects are former Sybase employees as well as experts in Microsoft SQL Server, Oracle, and Sybase technologies. A few have written books on Microsoft and Sybase technologies.

The architects believed that the criteria defined by Swartz were best served with a solution based on Sybase Adaptive Server Enterprise (ASE) and Linux. "ASE offers the most flexibility and knobs to tune for high performance. If you know Sybase very well, you can beat any other database solution on the market," Okhandiar says.

Swartz agrees. "*mLogica*'s recommendation was Sybase ASE database on the Linux platform for our future growth plan. We decided to strongly consider that idea, based on Amit's passion for the solution and his assurances that it would be successful."

### ASE on Linux the Best Choice

Tom Traubitz, Sybase senior group product marketing manager, explains why ASE on Linux will outperform Microsoft SQL Server in mission-critical projects. "First of all, it's cheaper," Traubitz says. "The typical project can be done for 34 percent less with ASE's Linux-based solution as opposed to SQL Server."

Second, according to Traubitz, is performance. "ASE is designed to meet the most-demanding needs of the world's biggest customers," he notes, citing Wall Street financial giants and U.S. intelligence agencies among its satisfied customers. The versatile ASE works in conjunction with all four UNIX flavors, whereas SQL Server functions only on Windows or Windows NT.

"It's like comparing a race car with a Cadillac," Traubitz says. "ASE is designed to deliver robust performance dedicated to getting you around the track as fast as possible. SQL Server, on the other hand, is burdened with a lot of features that are not always needed by every customer. Ultimately, that slows it down and affects performance. In essence, the

shift to Linux is really a move from more-costly proprietary hardware to commodity systems that nearly always offer superior performance."

Christine Bottagaro, Sybase senior product manager for ASE on Linux, translates these performance attributes for customers. "Companies such as SubscriberMail often find they outgrow technologies such as SQL Server and need to find something else quickly.

It helps a lot that ASE and SQL Server have a common code heritage, which makes the jump easier from an internal training and maintenance point of view. Customers come to love that ASE on Linux provides a robust yet affordable solution.

She continues, "Customers choose Sybase for the same reasons they choose Linux: lightning-fast performance, lower cost of ownership, and the many benefits of open technology. Today, Sybase provides the most comprehensive combination of products and services supporting Linux."

Independent research from The Standish Group verifies the performance claims. "We've seen instances where Sybase ASE runs at a 37 percent lower cost than Microsoft SQL Server," says Standish Group chairman Jim Johnson.

### Making a Choice

When analyzing how to best help SubscriberMail, Okhandiar looked at products from Sybase, Intel, and Apple, based on hardware, architecture, performance, and scalability for the long term. "The best thing about Sybase, and what I see as its differentiator, is that its database products are tunable, flexible, and versatile," he says. With help from Sybase VAR (value-added reseller) manager Mike Azevedo and sales consultant Darryl Salas, Okhandiar encouraged SubscriberMail to go with Sybase.

"While we were analyzing the incumbent system, fixing the crashes, exploring solutions, and evaluating alternatives, our relationship with SubscriberMail had grown from that of



VAR Partner. *mLogica*'s Armando Lopez fields questions at the company's exhibit at Sybase TechWave 2004 user conference in Orlando, Florida, in August.

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consultant to trusted adviser and we were building toward becoming a strategic partner with them,” Okhandiar says. “All that was enhanced by the help we received from Mike and Darryl. They provided all the support we could have hoped for.”

Swartz concurs. “Mike and Darryl were instrumental in providing us technical justifications and evaluation software and recommended to us the appropriate paths for achieving our goals. Based on Amit’s passion, Mike and Darryl’s support, the evidence *mLogica* and Sybase presented, and the solution’s performance during parallel testing, we migrated to ASE on Linux during the weekend of September 4 through 6.”

Clearly, Azevedo and Salas understood the emphasis Sybase places on its VAR program. According to Senior Director of Product Marketing Deborah Harrington, partners such as *mLogica*, when strongly supported by Sybase, can offer personalized one-stop shopping for their customers’ technology needs and are an invaluable resource to Sybase. “Our partners continue to be a critical component of Sybase’s strategy,” she says. “We’re gaining traction and have already tripled revenue through the channels from last year.”

### Immediate Benefits

Once the ASE on Linux system from Sybase was installed, the benefits were almost immediate. “We went to parallel migration in July and experienced a tenfold improvement in performance with the new system compared to SQL Server,” Okhandiar notes. “Best of all, the changes were transparent to the users and to SubscriberMail when it came to day-to-day business operations.”

Swartz sees this migration as the key to SubscriberMail’s growth. “The obvious observation since the migration has been higher performance of the database and I/O. In the long term, this architecture is lot more scalable and flexible and will better support our growth plans. Higher performance, of course, will lead to greater user satisfaction.”



Sybase executives were among the first to have their company widely deploy Linux and remain committed to maintaining its leadership in performance for enterprise-class relational database management systems on Linux, based on testing of ASE. “Sybase was the first to deliver an enterprise-class relational database management system on Linux, in 1999, and since then we have remained focused on

helping enterprises fulfill the promise of the operating system with both lower hardware and management costs,” explains Dr. Raj Nathan, senior vice president and general manager of Sybase’s Infrastructure Platform Group.

“Unlike other high-profile vendors, Sybase on Linux delivers performance without compromise, providing UNIX-like scalability and performance on lower-cost platforms. Through our dedicated Linux Professional Service Practice, we

expect to meet the growing demand for enterprise-ready Linux solutions that deliver all gain and no pain.”

Sybase Chairman, CEO, and President John Chen told analysts in January that “about a quarter of new customers for ASE” are choosing to run it on Linux. “So far,” he added, “we have counted about 30,000 downloads of our Linux-version database, so we think we are doing something really good here.”

By the end of this year, all relevant Sybase products, including Sybase IQ, Enterprise Portal, and Integration Suite, will support Linux.

“Based on this experience, SubscriberMail will look to Sybase first for high-availability solutions,” Swartz says.

“We have a proof of concept under way with another client, using Sybase IQ with Linux and comparing it with a Microsoft solution. Early results shows worst queries performing 300 percent faster on IQ and Linux as compared to Microsoft SQL Server on Windows NT,” says *mLogica*’s Okhandiar. “I can’t wait.” ■

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