



WHEN INNOVATION IS PARAMOUNT TO SUCCESS IRI TURNS TO SUN AND SAS

Industry

Market Information
and Insight

Customer Spotlight

IRI (Information Resources, Inc.)

Industry Challenges

- Speed to market
- Ability to offer unique visibility into consumer behavior

SAS Solution

Improves performance through:

- Insight into vast amounts of data
- Advanced analytics
- Business intelligence applications
- Comprehensive enterprise intelligence platform

Sun Solution

- Sun Fire™ V40z server
- AMD Opteron™ processors
- Solaris™ 10 Operating System
- World-record performance
- Compute-intensive scalability

Solution Results

- High-speed processing of billions of integrated records
- Met or exceeded development milestones
- Seamless utilization of SAS solution on the Sun platform — no lost downtime for training
- Scales to meet expanding research requirements

"We needed a platform that was capable of helping us quickly turn a really innovative idea for market research into a viable product for commercial retail grocers. SAS 9 running on the Sun x64 AMD processor-based platform was the answer."

— Marshall Gibbs, President, Loyalty Analytics Division, IRI (Information Resources, Inc.)

Market research empowers business profitability

IRI helps 95 percent of the Fortune Global 500 companies in consumer products, retail, and healthcare leverage market intelligence to gain a deeper understanding of consumer behavior and parlay that insight into targeted merchandising strategies that drive trip frequency and basket growth.

The retail grocer industry in particular is facing rapid change with intensified competition from big box retailers and specialty stores. To find the next big idea that results in a competitive advantage, grocers need to not only understand the consumer's roles across markets and categories, but also behavior within these roles and the impact of market conditions.

Understanding the transformation of consumer behavior in the retail grocer industry requires a unique combination of real-time market content, advanced analytics, and the ability to process large sets of integrated records very quickly. "When our research team has a new idea based on an extremely complex model that takes billions of records, they have to integrate the information, and through some very advanced modeling techniques, turn this information into a product that commercial grocers can use to see what they are missing, act faster with greater confidence, and win at the shelf," said Gibbs.

Reliable performance

SAS, the leader in business intelligence and analytical software and services, was the software platform of choice for this particular project at IRI. The company has a long history of supporting IRI for their enterprise marketing information needs. "We knew the SAS solution was the right software for this research project, but we weren't certain SAS on HP Unix or Windows would provide the speed and performance we needed."



The Sun Fire V40z server, powered by four dual-core AMD Opteron processors, and running the Solaris 10 Operating System gives the IRI research team the CPU performance they require. “With the Sun platform, we’ve met or exceeded our initial milestones and the SAS solution has run seamlessly, which means we haven’t lost downtime for training or additional IT resources.”

Speed to market depends on processing performance

The ability to lead in the market research industry depends on speed to market. To stay ahead of the competition, the research and development group at IRI must quickly convert customer preferences into information. IRI customers depend on comprehensive, integrated market intelligence to turn data into a deep understanding of the multiple personalities of consumers in order gain a competitive edge.

The power of SAS 9 running on the Sun x64 AMD processor-based platform makes it easier for IRI to use data mining and data integration products. “I wanted to step-out-of the company’s standard infrastructure for this research project because the volumes of data are massive, much larger than traditional studies, and we need incredibly fast, reliable performance to meet the project deadlines. After evaluating the existing platforms, we determined they weren’t up to the performance and scalability requirements the project demanded.”

Sun, SAS, and AMD teamed to offer IRI early access to the SAS solution running on the Sun Fire V40z server, and collaborative engineering between SAS and Sun keeps the performance of SAS software optimized for the Sun platform. The Sun x64 server line, running Solaris 10, delivers enhanced performance, manageability, and scalability for the complex, massive modeling requirements at IRI that support billions of records very quickly.

“You don’t know where exploratory research is going to take you. It’s essential for researchers to explore the data and quickly prune a path that will yield the greatest success. To do this, you need speed and scalability and the Sun platform is providing the headroom we need to increase that exploration process, enabling us to offer our customers more insightful information about the consumer. Based on the results we’ve seen during this core phase, we’re comfortable with performance results we’ve realized from running SAS on the Sun platform, and we’re confident in achieving the final milestones of the project.”

Learn More

To learn more about Sun Microsystems and SAS Institute, please visit sun.com/sas and sas.com.

For more information IRI visit <http://us.infores.com>.



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