



Microsoft SQL Server Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: Edgenet

Web Site: www.edgenet.com

Customer Size: 200 employees

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Professional services—Data services

Partner: NEC Corporation of America

Partner Website:

www.necam.com/servers/enterprise

Customer Profile

Based in Atlanta, Georgia, Edgenet collects, optimizes, and distributes data that is used by online retailers, search engines, and consumers. The company's systems handle data on more than 750,000 products.

Solution Spotlight

- Edgenet can conduct dozens of simultaneous 1-GB exports and maintain high performance.
- SQL Server 2012 AlwaysOn multi-subnet failover capability eliminated a VLAN that had high network overhead.
- Self-service BI tools decrease the IT backlog and save database administrators 150 workdays a year.
- Solution stores 10 TB of data on 750,000 products with 65 million product-attribute values.

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Data Provider Supports Growth and Gains Competitive Advantage with Microsoft

"Now, with SQL Server 2012, we can run any data export our customers want whenever they want it, so we're better able to meet their needs and support new customers."

Michael Steineke, Vice President of Information Technology, Edgenet

To improve customer service and support growth, Edgenet needed to export critical product data more efficiently to online retailers and search engines that provide the data to shoppers. It also wanted to increase employee and customer insight into this data. Edgenet deployed a Microsoft solution for enterprise-level performance, availability, and business intelligence. Edgenet can now serve more customers faster; its network is simpler; and it is improving its competitive advantage.

Business Needs

Edgenet plays a key role in worldwide e-commerce by gathering critical product data from 2,500 suppliers and distributing it to online retailers and search engines such as Bing and Google. One of the company's main lines of business involves supplying nearly 50 customers with daily data exports that can be as large as 1 gigabyte (GB). These exports include the latest product descriptions from suppliers. Retail and search-engine websites display the information, and consumers use it to make buying decisions.

"Because dozens of exports needed to access the same data, we had to restrict them to evening hours to avoid

overloading our system," says Michael Steineke, Vice President of Information Technology for Edgenet. However, this time limitation restricted the number of customers that the company could serve at any one time and eventually could have hindered its growth. In addition, Edgenet was using a virtual local area network (VLAN) to achieve redundancy between the company's Milwaukee and Atlanta data centers. "Using a VLAN this way is extremely challenging, so we wanted to simplify our configuration," says Steineke.

Besides providing product data to its customers, Edgenet maintains a web portal where its customers can compare the quality of data from different vendors.





"The more complete the product information, the easier it is for our customers to sell the products," says Steineke. But customers could access only reports prepared by Edgenet database administrators, a process that spanned three to five IT workdays.

To better serve its customers and support company growth, Edgenet needed to ease data processing, availability, and reporting.

Solution

Edgenet worked with its infrastructure partner, NEC, to deploy [Microsoft SQL Server 2012](#) data management software. The company never considered other options. "We've used SQL Server since 1993, and we're very familiar and confident with its capabilities and tools," Steineke says. "Our long experience has given us no doubts whatsoever that SQL Server can provide enterprise-level, mission-critical performance and availability."

Edgenet is using a SQL Server 2012 AlwaysOn failover cluster consisting of two servers in its primary data center and one in its secondary data center. With this configuration, it can easily attain both geographic redundancy and 99.99 percent availability, with the capability to achieve 99.999 percent availability should the requirement arise in the future. Because AlwaysOn clusters support multi-subnet failover, Edgenet no longer needs to use a VLAN between the two locations. In the primary data center, the company has also configured a read-only active secondary database on a fourth server using the AlwaysOn availability group feature. Edgenet performs data exports and reporting with the secondary database to reduce demands on the primary database.

Edgenet is also taking advantage of [Power View](#), a self-service business-intelligence reporting tool in SQL Server 2012 Reporting Services. Edgenet analysts and customers explore, visualize, and present data with the interactive web-based tool, which doesn't

require specialized technical knowledge. Customer reports can now be prepared by business analysts, freeing IT staff to engage in more valuable projects. Power View will be used by 20 Edgenet employees and about 200 external users.

Overall, SQL Server 2012 stores 10 terabytes of data on 750,000 products and 65 million product-attribute values. It has 15,000 users, including 5,000 concurrent users, who make 150,000 changes a day. The new solution, which went live in October 2011, includes the Windows Server 2008 R2 Enterprise operating system and a Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 web portal. It runs on NEC Express 5800/A1080a-D servers. "NEC helped us work through a steep learning curve and create a great solution," says Steineke.

Benefits

With SQL Server 2012, Edgenet can more easily serve and increase its customer base. It can simplify high availability and disaster recovery, help analysts understand data more quickly, and add value to its services.

Maintains High Performance While Exporting Multiple, Large Data Files

Edgenet can now perform dozens of simultaneous 1-GB data exports during the day while maintaining high system performance. "In the past, as we added more customers that we were sending data to, it became more and more of a challenge to meet their time frames," says Steineke. "Now, with SQL Server 2012, we can run any data export our customers want whenever they want it, so we're better able to meet their needs and

support new customers."

Eliminates Need for VLAN with Multi-Subnet Failover

Edgenet expects the new solution to help it ease administration and reduce network overhead. Steineke says, "With SQL Server 2012 AlwaysOn, availability and disaster recovery is much simpler to implement and support."

Saves Database Administrators 150 Workdays Annually

"Because customers now use self-service Power View tools to query product data, database administrators no longer receive requests to customize as many as 50 reports per customer, reducing the IT backlog and saving 150 workdays per year," says Steineke. "Administrators can then use that time to increase the breadth of reports available to Edgenet employees." Also, Edgenet information workers using Power View can now provide data analysis at a moment's notice, even in the middle of decision-making meetings, and they don't need to be technically savvy, says Andrew Tuerk, Director of Database Systems and Architecture at Edgenet. "Power View raises employees' business IQ by making them more aware of the driving factors for business and less reliant on IT," he says.

Tools like Power View also help the company further increase the value it can offer its customers. "Being able to offer our customers more interactive and usable reporting with Power View gives us another competitive advantage," says Steineke.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Windows Server 2008 R2 Datacenter
 - Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2012
- Technologies
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2012 Reporting Services
 - Power View

Hardware

- NEC Express5800/A1080a-D server