Quest Q&A

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WANT TO UPGRADE BUT WORRIED ABOUT CONVERTING YOUR DATA?

**An interview with Barry Carden,
VP & CIO, Mayer Electric, presented by ARCTOOLS**

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This interview can shed some light on your worries; Barry Carden, VP & CIO, Mayer Electric (www.mayerelectric.com) talks about his upgrade experience and how Arctools (www.arctools.com) purging and archiving software reduced Mayer Electric's database by 20 percent in just 28 hours.

WHAT IS MAYER ELECTRIC'S HISTORY WITH JD EDWARDS?

From our first card-based computer system introduced in 1967, strategic use of technology has always been part of the culture at Mayer. Technology is one of our key competitive weapons and allows us to continuously deliver the outstanding customer service for which we are known.

At Mayer we like to take a proactive approach to technology, so in the late 1990s, when the IT department began to confront Y2K issues, we saw it as an opportunity not only to fix potential problems caused by the date fields in the legacy systems, but also as the right time to invest in an ERP that would improve the business going forward.

And so our JD Edwards journey began in 1999, when we replaced our legacy system with JD Edwards OneWorld 7.33, subsequently upgrading to XE in November 2001, and to EnterpriseOne 8.12 in June 2008.
Our 1,000 JD Edwards users employ the finance and distribution modules to lower transaction costs and to ensure that we can deliver any one of our 40,000 inventory items over night to customers at our 60 plus branches in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR DECISION TO UPGRADE FROM XE TO 8.12.

JD Edwards XE served us well over the years and helped us to scale the company gracefully; in 2004 we took over another company, which added 13 branches to our existing 40 plus locations.

However, as time went on, we realized that the increased functionality of 8.12 (expanded EDI, CRM, sales force automation and customer self-service) would greatly enhance our business.

WHY DID YOU PURGE AND ARCHIVE DATA BEFORE THE UPGRADE?

Our initial estimates indicated that the process of converting XE data to 8.12 would take over two and a half weeks. Needless to say, this was never going to be an option for us.

We started looking at ways to cut the data conversion time to a minimum and reducing the amount of data to be converted seemed like a really efficient way of speeding up the process.

In the end, we managed to convert all our data in just thirty-six hours, and I can honestly say that the Arctools solution played a key role in helping us achieve our goal.

DID YOU CONSIDER DEVELOPING A PURGING AND ARCHIVING TOOL IN-HOUSE?

Well, as you know, purging and archiving data in JD Edwards is not straightforward. It requires a delicate balancing act between, on the one hand, purging and archiving as much data as possible, while on the other hand, protecting referential integrity.

After undertaking a cost/benefit analysis and reviewing the ROI offered by Arctools, we very quickly realized that it just didn't make financial sense to build rather than buy.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ARCTOOLS?

First, it was fast. With Arctools, we knew that the purging and archiving process would be quick and efficient.

Second, something we really liked about Arctools was the fact that it did not slow down our IT systems. This meant that we were able to run purge and archiving jobs without impacting the performance of our production database and without disrupting our end users.

Finally, it seemed like these guys were "a safe pair of hands". Over the past number of years we had heard of Arctools through Quest and from going to COLLABORATE. We also knew that the software had been developed in collaboration with JD Edwards and that it had been successfully implemented by over two hundred and twenty JD Edwards clients worldwide.

HOW LONG DID THE PURGING AND ARCHIVING PROJECT TAKE?

From researching a solution to go-live, the whole project took three months. Total time to actually purge and archive the data was just twenty-eight hours.

One thing that really helped us gain a lot of time was the fact that during our "proof of concept" we had already validated a lot of our purging and archiving rules. The "proof of concept" also meant that, by the time we actually bought the product, our users and data owners were already fairly comfortable with us purging and archiving their data.

HOW DID ARCTOOLS PERFORM?

In fact, the software surpassed our expectations. The production platform outperformed the test environment and it took us just twenty-eight hours to reduce our database by 20 percent.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE COMPANIES PLANNING A PURGING AND ARCHIVING PROJECT?

The first point is, this is a business project and not just a technical one. Business stakeholders and users from all areas of the business need to be involved right from the start. Users are very protective of "their" data and need lots of reassurance when it comes to purging and archiving.

In our case, this meant that while our DBA, Allen Rowan, led the project, our COO and CFO were also part of the project team. Their leadership in communicating to their respective teams was invaluable.

The second point, and it seems almost too obvious to mention, is the importance of extensively testing before purging any data. Arctools "proof mode" functionality really helped us with this as we always knew precisely what data was going be purged and archived before actually running the job.

The third point is that it can be worthwhile getting some expert help. While Arctools is very easy to use and requires very little hand-holding to implement, we decided to invest in some consultancy services from Whitehouse Consultants (www.whitehouse-consult.com). To our mind this was money well spent. These guys developed the software, along with Dave Shea from DCSoftware, and they really added a lot of value - there is just about nothing related to purging and archiving that they haven't already seen!

Finally, the last point is, don't wait until your back is up against the wall to start purging and archiving your data. Be proactive!

WHAT ABOUT PURGING AND ARCHIVING IN THE FUTURE?

With Arctools we can automate purging and archiving. This functionality allows us to proactively manage application data growth and means that our data levels will stay at optimal levels in the future.

ANY FINAL THOUGHTS FOR OUR READERS?

Purging and archiving often gets pushed down the to-do list. This is a mistake! Remember, keeping your data at optimal levels saves the company money. By reducing your data load, you save money on hardware, your system will perform better and your IT team will spend less time backing-up and maintaining the database and more time on higher value added tasks.

With a tool like Arctools, purging and archiving really is a quick win. Now, isn't it time you moved that purge and archive project up your to-do list?

ABOUT MAYER ELECTRIC

Mayer Electric is one of the nation's largest and most rapidly expanding distributors of electrical supplies. A family run business founded in 1930 and headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, Mayer employs over 1,000 people and has annual sales of over $650 million.

Mayer is currently running ERP 8.12, Oracle 10g database. The hardware platform is IBM P570 series with user connections using Citrix.

ABOUT BARRY CARDEN

Barry Carden has been with Mayer Electric since 1985. Promoted to CIO in 2003, Barry manages an IT staff of 16 and has been a member of Quest since 2001.

Barry is a graduate of UAB. He received his B.Sc. in MIS in 1990.

www.mayerelectric.com

ABOUT ARCTOOLS

Arctools is the leading purge and archive solution for JD Edwards EnterpriseOne and World.

Developed by recognized JD Edwards experts, DCSoftware and Whitehouse Consultants, in collaboration with the JD Edwards company, Arctools is a proven solution.

Arctools delivers a set of standard rules to enable quick and efficient purging and archiving. These rules ensure that data integrity is protected and can also easily incorporate client specific configurations and customizations.

Arctools is easy to understand and use which guarantees a short implementation time.

Over two hundred and twenty customers on six continents have already chosen Arctools.

www.arctools.com

ABOUT WHITEHOUSE CONSULTANTS AND DC SOFTWARE

Established in 1991, Whitehouse Consultants is a leading JD Edwards Consultancy with offices in France and the UK.

Whitehouse Consultants are experts in the field of purging and archiving and have a strong reputation as a "local" European partner with extensive international experience.

DC Software, Inc. was founded in 1996 by Dave Shea. Dave has been working in IT for more than 25 years. He spent six years with one of the largest systems consulting firms in the world working in defense and commercial manufacturing and has more than 20 years experience in ERP environments.

www.whitehouse-consult.com