

IBM Looks to 'Cheetah' to Speed Up Blade Servers

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IBM officials hope a new feature aimed at increasing performance and availability of applications using Informix Dynamic Server "Cheetah" in a multi-node, blade server environment will separate the upcoming release from the pack.

"Users can deploy a greater number of nodes—beyond only a primary and single secondary," said Bernie Spang, director of IBM data servers. "Nodes can be brought online with a simple command without disrupting running applications. Also, nodes can be taken offline without disruption."

All this, Spang continued, gives greater flexibility to manage capacity "up or down" to meet changing workload demands. Dubbed MACH 11 by IBM, the feature is the progeny of a high availability disaster recovery capability IDS has had across systems for some time, building it into the technology running on a single blade system, he said.

"Doing this [in] a blade environment gives partners and clients who use IDS-based applications greater flexibility and lower cost while achieving the performance and availability they are looking for," Spang said.

"You can distribute the workloads, respond to the pquery situation and be able to have that instantaneous failover without service interruption if a node were to go down."

In some ways, the new feature is a counterpunch to the high-availability

Oracle RAC (Real Application Clusters) seeks to provide its users. Oracle RAC is a multi-node extension to Oracle's database server. However, unlike RAC, MACH 11 does not require a high speed interconnect switch such as Infiniband, Spang said.

Joe Bai, CIO of online game provider WorldWinner, of Newton, Mass., said the company currently runs a mixture of IDS 9 and 10 in his company's environments.

"Cheetah will improve our service availability and performance by offering us new growth paths, increasing our data replication options, eliminating blocked checkpoints, eliminating the potential for operator error on new index builds, and simplifying administrative tasks," Bai said. "Mach 11 gives us the ability to seamlessly grow our database server capacity in a highly cost-effective manner and in whatever increments we desire."

Scheduled for release later this year, IDS Cheetah is the latest version of technology IBM acquired when it bought Informix back in 2001. IBM officials have said the newest version is designed to help customers meet changing data management goals by enabling them to extract more value from their business information.

Spang said that Cheetah offers a superior combination of lower cost, better performance, near hands free administration and greater reliability.

"Clients with a goal of continuous availability—such as the many 9-1-1 emergency systems that rely on IDS—cannot afford to be impacted by unplanned downtime," he said.

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