

Case Study:

Underutilizing zIIP Engines Was Costing This Global Bank Serious MIPS & Money

Challenge

After several years of rapid growth fed by mergers and acquisitions, sort-type processing was taking up a lot of general-purpose CPU time in the multiple IBM mainframes at this international banking group. It was inevitable that all that CPU time spent on mundane sort and copy operations would become a target for cost reduction. But how? That was the question.

The bank's formidable IT organization managed four major data centers - in Brazil, Mexico, Spain, and the UK. Each site had two to four mainframes, and all were running at high utilization rates, often hitting 100%.

For years the IT shop was content with using IBM's DFSORT, the standard component for sort processing that comes with z/OS, even though faster, more efficient alternatives were available. Precisely's Syncsort MFX was the most obvious alternative, as it is generally considered the sorting gold standard for DFSORT replacement and, indeed, it is used in more than half of the IBM mainframe installations worldwide.

Until recently, however, there were always bigger fish to fry when this IT shop went looking to save costs and address mainframe challenges.

Solution

That circumstance changed in 2016 when Ciber (an Experis IT brand), a global IT consultancy, brought Precisely's Syncsort ZPSaver software into the picture. Syncsort ZPSaver augments the capabilities of Syncsort MFX in several respects, but mainly it increases the amount of sort-type processing that can be offloaded from the CPU to the zIIP. Some costs are attached to zIIP processors, of course, but they are one-time costs and they are relatively minor compared to the substantial and ongoing usage-based licensing charges that go with the IBM's general-purpose CPUs.

With the Syncsort MFX and Syncsort ZPSaver solution, up to 90% of that work can be offloaded to zIIP engines, meaning it would not incur dreaded MLC (monthly license charge) fees from IBM. This suddenly became one of the bigger fish to fry. Ciber, as a knowledgeable systems manager and reseller of Precisely software and services, played a central role in implementing the Syncsort MFX and Syncsort ZPSaver solution at all four of the bank's major data centers. Ciber continues to consult with Precisely and this bank on how the bank could benefit from other mainframe optimization opportunities in its z System environments (some of which could also reduce Db2-related MLC charges and other costs, etc.)

Results

With the replacement of DFSORT with Precisely's Syncsort MFX and Syncsort ZPSaver, at this leading international bank group:

- CPU time spent on sort/copy/merge processing is down by approximately 39% to 40% on average across the four mainframe data centers
- Mainframe MSU charges have been reduced
- The existing CPUs suddenly have increased capacity for higher-value workloads
- More responsive customer-facing services are supported
- Already looking at additional "mainframe optimization" options to save more money with Precisely

Learn more about Precisely Syncsort MFX and Syncsort ZPSaver by visiting: www.precisely.com