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## Oracle's Rivals Dismiss Hardware Foray

*'Where the beef?' is the operative phrase.*

By Richard Adhikari

Oracle's competition is rejoicing over the company's announcement of the HP Oracle Database Machine, unveiled with much fanfare at Oracle OpenWorld 2008 in San Francisco earlier this week.

In announcing the product, Oracle (NASDAQ: ORCL) CEO Larry Ellison told a packed hall that the rapid proliferation of data has forced his company to go beyond software for a way to move data off disks into the database server fast enough to cope.

He positioned it against offerings from Netezza (NYSE: NZ), which he said uses B-Tree, "which is old, I learned when I was in college," and from Teradata (NYSE: TDC). Both Netezza and Teradata, however, contend their products are superior to the HP (NYSE: HPQ) Oracle Database Machine.

"Our largest machine has 860 processors, so when we talk about massively parallel, it's considerably more massive than Oracle's," Tim Young, vice president of marketing at Netezza, told *InternetNews.com*. Netezza offers an appliance consisting of an SQL database stored on the disk rather than on the server, and up to 860 snippet processing units, each consisting of a field programmable gate array (FPGA) and an IBM (NYSE: IBM) PowerPC chip running Linux.

"Whilst Larry says nasty things about us, the level of interest in Netezza since his keynote has skyrocketed," Young added. "On Wednesday morning most people on the planet had never heard of Netezza and on Thursday morning thousands of people had heard of us."

Young dismissed Ellison's focus on the intelligent storage offered by the HP Oracle Database Machine. "A lot of the rich features that he talked about with regard to intelligent storage, indexing and caching, we just don't need," he said. "We just handle tables and columns and that's fundamentally simpler to operate than a database like Oracle's which has thousands of objects," he added.

Randy Lea, vice president of marketing at Teradata Products and Services told *InternetNews.com* the HP Oracle Database Machine will not impact his company "in any

significant way.” Oracle has only “come up with an intelligent disk subsystem to handle the inherent weakness Oracle has had over the years -- doing full table scans,” he added.

Ellison’s statement that disk technology runs into problems in the 1 Terabyte range is true only for Oracle, Lea said. “We solved that problem 15, 16 years ago,” he said. Teradata, spun out of NCR last year as an independent company, ranks fifth in the database market, while Oracle ranks first.

As for the InfiniBand connections used in the HP Oracle Database Machine, “we aren’t even close to the limit of the bandwidth of our technology, and we have some of the largest data warehouses in the world running our systems,” Lea said. Teradata’s customers include Wal-Mart, (NYSE: WMT) AT&T (NYSE: T) and Bank of America (NYSE: BAC).

According to Lea, Teradata’s solutions can go up to 4,096 servers connected in a grid, like the HP Oracle Database Machine. And, like Oracle’s solution, “every time we add a node, we add bandwidth, memory and disk capacity,” he said.