



EHarmony Finds Data Warehouse Match with Netezza

By Chris Kanaracus, IDG News Service

The large online dating company eHarmony has forged a deal with Netezza for its data-warehousing appliances, the companies announced Wednesday.

Netezza competes with Teradata, Greenplum and Oracle in a space that has become red hot in recent years.

EHarmony has more than 20 million registered users and pushes up to 12TB of information at a time into the Netezza system, said Joseph Essas, vice president of technology.

The company uses the Hadoop large-scale computing framework to run scoring algorithms against its pool of users to match potential mates, he said. Behavioral metrics, such as what users do with the matches they receive, or their satisfaction with a match, get fed into Netezza for analysis.

The Netezza system, which eHarmony began using in October, is “more or less working as advertised. ... It runs complicated queries, it’s fantastic in terms of table scanning and those sorts of things.”

In addition, Netezza provided “really all of the plug-ins we needed” for Oracle, MicroStrategy and other platforms, he said.

Implementation was straightforward. “The way we did a proof of concept with them was, they shipped us a box, we put it into our data center and plugged into our network,” he said. “Within 24 hours we were up and running. I’m not exaggerating, it was that easy.”

EHarmony also looked at systems from startup Aster Data Systems and Greenplum. Aster’s technology was intriguing but the company was too immature to take a chance on, he said. “They would be learning on us and that would be hard for me to stomach,” he said.

Hewlett-Packard and Oracle’s jointly developed Exadata technology for high-end data warehousing, unveiled at last year’s OpenWorld show, didn’t make the cut either: “My feeling is that product is also in a very early stage right now.”

“When you run an IT organization you have to ask, ‘How many eggs do I want to put in one basket?’” Essas added. EHarmony is already using Oracle’s database and Real Application Clusters software.

Netezza also “worked very aggressively” with eHarmony on pricing, Essas said. He declined to say how much his company is paying, but stressed that the investment is worthwhile, even amid a weak economic environment.

“It’s one of those things you don’t want to under-invest in during the down time, because in the up time, you want to be at the top of the game. But the price tags are high,” he said.

A spokesman for Netezza provided only limited pricing information, saying that the company’s lower-end systems start at less than US\$200,000 and scale up from there. Support is an additional cost, but details weren’t provided.

