



The University of Basel speeds up its data warehouse with two HP ConvergedSystem 500 for SAP HANA.

Requirements. The University of Basel faces tough competition for the best talent and funding from both the public sector and private patrons. At the same time and like most other universities, it has a complex organisation and has to juggle a mix of interests and cultures. The need for maximum business efficiency and structured heterogeneity, particularly in the area of mass data processing, posed a huge challenge for the SAP Competence Centre (SAPCC). The crucial question was how could large data volumes for reports and analyses that come from different sources be processed significantly faster in the central SAP Data Warehouse. The answer: SAP HANA on two HP ConvergedSystem 500.

Starting point. The University of Basel's administration relies on SAP software for resource planning, financial management and controlling, human resources, and logistics. Every day, each of the SAP modules sends data to a central data warehouse based on SAP BI. However, moving large volumes of data would often be a serious drain on performance as data was not simply copied as is but had to be pre-aggregated through an ETL (extract, transform, load) process. Christoph Wyss, the SAP Competence Centre's project manager and developer in charge of data warehousing, together with his long-standing SAP partner, Sapify AG, was therefore looking for ways to expedite mass data analyses. "SAP HANA was a very promising, new in-memory database technology by SAP, and with the HP ConvergedSystem for SAP HANA, there was also a hardware component available that's in perfect tune with it," says the expert. "Catalysing the acquisition was the administration's need for updating the SAP Business Planning and Consolidation tool to SAP BPC embedded, for which SAP HANA is a prerequisite." Additional hardware expertise was sourced from university IT specialist Niederer Engineering AG, which has since transformed into Bechtle St. Gallen.

”The project was a great success. Thanks to the excellent collaboration of the University of Basel, Sapify AG and Niederer Engineering AG we were even able to take our SAP HANA data warehouse live a full month ahead of schedule. The two HP ConvergedSystem 500 for SAP HANA Configurations enable us to evaluate and analyse data that's coming in from operations in virtually real time.”

Christoph Wyss

SAP Competence Centre, University of Basel

Solution. Following extensive and successful testing of a pilot installation, the IT specialists migrated the university's SAP data warehouse to two HP ConvergedSystem 500 for SAP HANA Configurations. Sapify AG's Arsène Gschwind explains the benefits of the new technology: "HANA is capable of processing huge amounts of analytical and transactional data in real time. There's a considerable performance boost stemming from the system's in-memory technology, which reads data straight from the RAM, rather than from HDDs or flash storage; and also from its column store data layout, which makes it possible to select and analyse large amounts of numeric values with similar qualities, or columns, for example, with a great deal of flexibility." Christoph Wyss of the University of Basel adds: "Another reason HANA is a very interesting technology for us is because, just like that, it doesn't matter anymore if data originate in a business application-oriented OLTP database system or an OLAP database that has been optimised for mass data analysis. By dropping the need for pre-aggregation, data are being processed with extreme speeds either way." Two HP ConvergedSystem 500 for SAP HANA Scale-up Configurations form the hardware basis of the new solution. Niederer Engineering AG delivered the appliances fully configured and tested and complete with an extensive service and support package from HP.

Business benefits. The HP ConvergedSystem 500 for SAP HANA Configurations enable large amounts of data to be processed at speeds that are nothing short of impressive. Load times of previously close to three hours have shrunk to a mere 20 minutes. Christoph Wyss: "Our previous tools for financial reporting required data to be converted multiple times along disruptive processes. With HANA, users now have quick access to on-demand analyses via a specially coded dashboard." The two HP ConvergedSystem 500 for SAP HANA Configurations enable the university to make better decisions based on enhanced processing and analyses of virtually real-time data. Planning and controlling at the University of Basel is integrated and centralised thanks to SAP BPC embedded based on SAP HANA. Another benefit, according to Christoph Wyss: "HANA is powerful and versatile technology that will support our efforts to consolidate and unify our landscape." The university's SAP data warehouse specialist is full of praise for the collaboration with Sapify AG and Niederer Engineering AG: The project was a great success, and all wrapped up a month ahead of schedule! Both Sapify and Niederer Engineering proved to be very dedicated and competent partners during the migration and complemented each other's work excellently. During the most critical phase of the project, we could always call in help, day and night." Sapify CTO Arsène Gschwind points out the learning curve that came with SAP and HP's new in-memory computing solution: "HP's HANA appliance was uncharted territory for us. Niederer Engineering was instrumental in that regard and helped us establish a direct line to HP's technical specialists, which proved to be a very valuable resource over the course of the project."

CUSTOMER PROFILE.



First established in 1460, the University of Basel is composed of seven faculties allowing students to pursue a broad spectrum of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. The institution currently has around 13,000 students and 3,000 full-time employees, some two-thirds of which are academic personnel. With a focus on life sciences, visual studies, nanoscience, sustainability and energy research, as well as European and global studies, the University of Basel's research frequently ranks among the top 100 international universities. Naturally, it is equipped with modern and powerful information technology. A strategic pillar of the university's administration, its SAP environment, rests largely on hardware from HP. The in-house SAP Competence Centre is a certified Customer Centre of Expertise with a staff of 10 that ensures continuous operation and development of the SAP environment.

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