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## Midrange Dynamics Takes Aim At Database Changes

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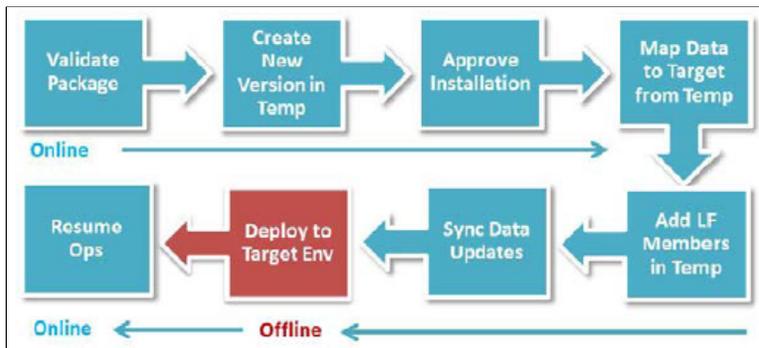
by Dan Burger

Multi-platform application development is often paired with modernization projects that are lighting up the project scoreboards in the IBM midrange. Companies rank modernization as one of their top priorities. Application modernizations are more business logic oriented and more frequently involve database programming as well. Midrange Dynamics, a provider of application development software and consulting services, has all this in mind with the release of a new product and an update to its reputable CMS.

MDRapid, the new database tool for deploying upgrades, and Midrange Dynamics change management (MDCMS) work in concert to curtail business application downtime and risk as database changes are made. High availability technology is the key ingredient in MDRapid that minimizes interruption to operations. It hooks up with MDCMS, which brings a higher degree of control plus auditing features that distinguishes modern change management software from older off-the-shelf and home-grown CMS. Although it's becoming a multi-platform IT world, there are many companies doing single-platform development and operating without change management, too. But progress, like Old Man River, just keeps rollin' along. In the IBM i community SQL database techniques may not be commonplace, but they are moving in that direction. The same is true for multi-platform app dev. Because of this, working without a CMS will become increasingly risky and increasingly rare.

"MDCMS and MDRapid take advantage of the control and auditing inherent with change management. They work together to manage database updates and deploy all associated application objects with extreme efficiency," says Midrange Dynamics Managing Director Michael Morgan in support of his company's latest advancements.

Data-centric development, which makes SQL the development framework of choice, has gradually become recognized as an improvement over the long-lived physical files that have dominated DB2 database development since the dawn of midrange computing. But because business critical applications often have short downtime windows, it's difficult for organizations to tackle essential projects like application and database modernization without disrupting systems that support the vital business operations.



**MDCMS and MDRapid work in concert to manage database updates and implementation of all associated application objects.**

Typically when a file structure is modified, users lose access to one or more applications while the change is implemented. Issues arise when the data copy or conversion can't fit into an available downtime window due to file size. The need to quickly and securely deploy changes to high-volume files on multiple servers compounds this challenge.

That's where high availability technology comes into play. MDRapid was designed with MIMIX Promoter from

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Vision Solutions to migrate data to new file formats while the application remains in use. Any changes made to the current version of the files are journaled and synced with the new version held in the staged library. Thanks to a low performance footprint, users are not impacted during this process.

"Since it deploys database changes quickly, even for multi-million- and multi-billion-record files that have an extensive amount of update activity, it's easy to integrate MDRapid into day-to-day operations," Morgan says. "It's helpful long-term for any type of database change. Another major benefit of using MDRapid is that your business is protected from risk. If anything goes wrong, you can roll back to your old production data."

Organizations apprehensive about impacts on their day-to-day operations may get a shot of courage based on the capabilities of MDRapid.

In addition to worries about operational impacts, IT managers often anguish over vendor lock-in whenever project plans are being discussed. It's something that Midrange Dynamics has taken into account. Both MDCMS and MDRapid integrate with most of the DDS-to-DDL conversion tools that facilitate the roll out of database changes across the enterprise. This little bit of freedom allows companies to evaluate a variety of capable DDS-to-DDL solutions and choose the one that best fits their modernization approach. The combination of vendor choice, minimal downtime, and risk-free deployment removes some of the obstacles that block or delay database modernization projects.

MDRapid is the headliner for enhancements to MDCMS that come with the introduction of MDCMS 7.3. MDRapid, however, is licensed separately. License fees are based on processors and partitions.

Midrange Dynamics counts more than 70 enhancements in MDCMS 7.3. Most of them come under the broad category of ease of use features.

Improvements in conflict management is one of the standout areas. Users should appreciate the better control over resolving conflicts, which speeds the development process. Changes have also been made to make the MDOpen Eclipse tool easier to configure and a merge library feature allows the import of a large group of objects at one time. (This has been available on the green-screen side, but now is available for MDOpen.)

The upgrade to 7.3 from earlier versions of MDCMS is a one-command function and can be accomplished without reconfiguring the environment. Most of the MDCMS customers are current or very near current, the company says. Support for IBM i releases include i5/OS V5R4, plus IBM i 6.1, 7.1 and 7.2.

MDCMS 7.3 has been in beta for six weeks. It is generally available now.

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