



Overview

The need

MagNet provides the magazine publishing industry with daily insight into sales, helping its clients plan print runs and distribution. With data growing rapidly, how can MagNet analyze it all quickly enough?

The solution

Implementing the IBM® PureData® System for Analytics gives MagNet faster and more reliable analytics capabilities than ever before, enabling it to analyze more data in shorter timeframes.

The benefit

With eight times faster analytics, MagNet can easily accommodate data growth, and reliably deliver the insights into sales and returns that its clients need to drive effective decision-making.

MagNet

Finding the key to sky-high magazine sales with hot-off-the-press insight

MagNet was founded in 2000 by the US magazine industry as a source of sales and marketing information and analytics. Based in West Palm Beach, Florida, MagNet has grown its membership to include the wholesalers that represent nearly 99 percent of single-copy magazine sales in the US.

Meeting tight deadlines

MagNet uses its database – containing historical data on 12,000 titles sold in 175,000 retail locations in the United States and Canada – to provide clients with insight into how their publications are selling.

As MagNet's database grew, the amount of time it took to run analytics escalated. How could the company find a more efficient way to harness its data, optimize its operations, and deliver a high level of service that would help to win, retain and grow its business with its customers?

Tim Felber, Data Systems Architect at MagNet, explains the challenge: “Each day, we receive snapshots of sales data based on the past week’s stock changes at stores. We combine these figures to derive a daily measure we call ‘net last numbers’ for our clients. The batch process to produce the net last numbers runs overnight – we used to start it at 8pm, and it was often barely finished by the next morning.

Industry-leading analytics capabilities need not be out of reach for smaller enterprises. “IBM helped us purchase the right system at the right price – the IBM PureData System for Analytics is ideal for our current needs, and gives us the option to scale up easily in the future,” says Tim Felber, Data Systems Architect at MagNet.



Solution components

- IBM® PureData® System for Analytics
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“If something went wrong, our clients would have to wait another day to get the information they needed. And because that information can be critical to decision-making about print runs and distribution, this was potentially a big problem.”

MagNet also realized that an ability to analyze more data in less time could create new opportunities to expand its services.

“We currently run our analyses using three years of historical sales and returns data,” says Tim Felber. “But what if we could load five or six years? It would give us a much better ability to analyze the effects of seasonality and changing economic conditions on each title’s performance.”

Starting a new chapter

Initially, MagNet sought to resolve its big data challenges by extending its hardware capabilities, purchasing a new top-of-the-line server with fast solid-state drives. However, the company soon realized that this was not the answer.

“Adding a bigger server was an improvement, but not enough of an improvement,” says Felber. “We needed a different approach. When we saw the IBM PureData System for Analytics, we realized it was exactly the kind of solution we needed.”

By deploying the IBM PureData System for Analytics, MagNet is able to analyze larger data sets, faster than ever before – which creates a richer, more accurate picture of magazine sales.

Felber elaborates: “Previously, rather than refreshing data for all stores, we would select the ones that we knew had changed and only run those workloads. With the PureData System, we can refresh three years of data for all the stores in about an hour.”

Integration by design

Why should it be necessary to spend time tuning systems until they work properly? Designed to help organizations unlock data’s true potential, the IBM PureData System for Analytics is delivered as a single ready-to-go system that is optimized for analytics workloads. With advanced data integration capabilities built in, by experts, companies can focus on putting the solution to work to uncover new insights that transform the way they do business.

“IBM PureData System for Analytics allows us to do things with our data that were simply not possible before.”

— Tim Felber, Data Systems Architect, MagNet

“The architecture is much simpler and easier to manage, too. We’ve been able to scrap a number of complicated summary tables that we had to use to optimize performance in our old data model. With the IBM PureData System for Analytics, we load the data and it just works.”

Looking beyond the headlines

The stability and performance of the IBM PureData System for Analytics is helping MagNet deliver on its deadlines, equipping the company’s clients with the information they need to make critical decisions.

“One of the biggest benefits of the IBM PureData System for Analytics is that I am not awake at night worrying about it,” says Felber. “It looks after itself. But the main advantage is the sheer speed with which we can load and analyze data.

“For example, we can now load point of sale data three times a day. To refresh one month of data used to take 15 minutes, now it takes about 36 seconds. We can calculate ‘net last numbers’ in an hour and a half – more than eight times faster than our old overnight process.”

With faster, more complex analytics enabled by the IBM PureData System for Analytics, MagNet will be able to share new insights with its clients in the future.

Felber concludes: “Deploying the IBM PureData System for Analytics allows us to take data and do things that simply were not possible before. Ultimately we would like to build on this with predictive models that will help our clients take their decision-making to the next level.”

For more information

To learn more about IBM PureData System for Analytics, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/puredata



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