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Mainframe will Continue to Play Major Data Management Role

Mainframe computers will continue to play major roles supporting mission-critical applications and managing mission-critical data, according to a new research study, **The Continuing Strategic Role of Mainframe Data: Issues and Challenges**, conducted by Unisphere Research and sponsored by Attachmate, which enables IT organizations to extend mission-critical services and assure they are managed, secure, and compliant. The study found most enterprises that currently support mainframe computing platforms do not intend to migrate from those platforms within the foreseeable future. Moreover, the mainframe computers support a significant percentage of the enterprises' critical applications. The most significant challenge mainframe users face is being able to better integrate mainframe data with the data held in distributed systems.

Nearly 180 respondents participated in the survey, representing a wide range of industries. The most broadly represented job title was director/manager of IT/IS systems, which represented 27.3 percent of the respondents, followed by database and systems administrators (23.1 percent) and programmer analyst (18.9 percent). Almost 10 percent of the respondents came from organizations with more than \$5 billion in size. Nearly one quarter of the respondents came from financial services and nearly one-fifth came from govern-

ment, military and other public sector organizations. And while 80 percent of the respondents' enterprises were active in North America, nearly a quarter (24.8 percent) conducted business globally.

Perhaps the most compelling findings were that over 70 percent of the respondents run 50 percent or more of their mission-critical applications on their mainframe computers and only around 10 percent plan to migrate off their mainframe computing platform within the next two to five years. The primary reason for migrating from a mainframe platform, according to the respondents, is cost, so as the mainframe computing vendors and mainframe tools vendors continue to improve the total cost-of-ownership equation, that migration driver should recede. Indeed, the majority of respondents who have decommissioned their mainframes did so more than five years ago, when the total cost-of-ownership calculation looked very different.

Meanwhile, companies continue to run a wide range of mission-critical applications on their mainframe platforms, including financial, account management and product information applications. But if the role of the mainframe is no longer in doubt in the enterprise information infrastructure, the environment is changing. Mainframes no longer can operate as data silos. As the mainframe platform continues to generate more data from legacy, as well as new,

workloads, that data must be integrated into the overall information infrastructure. The data silos associated with mainframe computing are breaking down. Close to 85 percent of the respondents indicated that they exported data from the mainframe to distributed database systems and 80 percent indicated an interest in solutions that would automatically update relational database with mainframe data.

Come blog with us! This study is one of an ongoing series of studies conducted by Unisphere Research. I will be posting additional results periodically on my blog, **Elliot King: Inside the Numbers**, at www.dbta.com/blogs, which provides ongoing commentary on IT research. You will also find a blog by Joe McKendrick commenting on data center issues and a blog on which you can give feedback on our other columnists.

Are you interested in surveying the data management community about issues of importance for your company? Unisphere Research conducts custom research studies in conjunction with the leading database and enterprise application user groups. Contact Tom Wilson at Tom@dbta.com.

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