Rocket®

KKH Statutory Health Insurance Fund
Enhances Staff Productivity and Minimizes Risks with Fast, Simple Db2 Cloning

Industry
Statutory Health Insurance

Challenge
Automate data copying from production system to consolidation system for quarterly load and volume testing

Results
- Eliminated 40 man-hours of manual cloning per quarter
- Extended availability of consolidation system for test purposes by three days, minimizing the risk of failure
- Enhanced staff productivity resulted in better customer response times and a more competitive set of applications

Products
- Rocket® Mainstar Volume Clone and Rename (VCR) for Db2
- Rocket® Mainstar FTR

Application
- IBM Db2® for z/OS®

Company

With annual revenues of 5.5 billion euros, KKH Statutory Health Insurance Fund is one of the largest health insurance funds in Germany, providing insurance to 1.8 million people. Based in Hanover, the fund employs approximately 4,000 people who provide health advice to customers from 110 service centers across the country. The data stored by KKH is highly sensitive, containing detailed patient information that includes diagnoses, treatment plans, and financial details. In addition, KKH performs reconciliations with data from other statutory insurance providers as well as financial institutions on a regular basis.

Challenge

An IBM® z13s™ system is at the core of all activity in the fund's data center. The mainframe runs key applications, using IBM Db2® for z/OS® to manage operational data. KKH runs load and volume tests on a regular basis, using a pre-production system. Each quarter, the administrators copy a large volume of the data from the production Db2 subsystem to this target system.

Until recently, the copy process was conducted leveraging snapshots and solutions that had been developed in-house. However, this task increasingly required the team to drill more deeply into the Db2 system's structures, especially after each Db2 version change. Successfully cloning Db2 objects required a two-step process: first, the team copied the data in "snapshots," then made the data available again in the Db2 target system.

The complete cloning process and the associated downtimes during which tests couldn't be carried out proved to be too long and resource-intensive for KKH. The company started looking for ways to automate the process, save time, and reduce the need for specialist knowledge by implementing standardized software.

Solution

After evaluating several products, KKH selected the Rocket® Mainstar Volume Clone and Rename (VCR) for Db2 solution. The Rocket specialists' expertise and strong personal commitment before, during, and after the evaluation period made an impression on the KKH team. Administrators were especially pleased with the quick and professional project implementation.

Results

The entire cloning process is now faster and simpler, significantly reducing the risk of availability issues for the target system. Defined jobs can be started at the push of a button, and run independently at a higher speed. While the time dedicated to the "snapshot" process could not be reduced, the team was able to significantly scale back the time required to restore the target system—from days to mere hours.

"Our work involved in cloning the Db2 database has been reduced by more than half," said Petra Dießel, Database Organizer for KKH Hanover. "Short response times and fast handling are essential ingredients in satisfying our policyholders and business partners, and are key quality criteria for assessing KKH's performance," she explained. "Constant enhancement of system performance and fast implementation of improvements also make us more effective. The quicker we are in delivering better and faster applications, the more productive and competitive the whole of KKH is as a result."

With Rocket VCR for Db2, the KKH IT team was able to reduce the time needed for the complete cloning process from 64 to 24 man-hours; a savings of 40 man-hours per quarter. More important, KKH can now test its software three days earlier than before, which gives the team more time to perform tests, minimizing the risk of failure. Rocket VCR also reduces the burden on database administrators, eliminating the need to drill down into each Db2 detail in advance. Four clone scenarios were started in the first year of use, and all ran smoothly and to the team's full satisfaction.

Aditionally, the source and target jobs created by Rocket VCR have been successfully integrated into the job scheduling processes with minor moditfications.

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