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GridApp Takes Model-Driven Approach to Database Automation

By Brian Prince

Clarity 4.0 will help DBAs cut time spent writing and maintaining provisioning scripts, GridApp says.

GridApp Systems is touting new model-centric automation features in the latest version of its Clarity product line that officials claim will save time and energy for database administrators.

The New York-based company has thrown some new out-of-the-box automation into the mix that GridApp officials said eliminates the need for database administrators to write and maintain provisioning scripts. In Clarity 4.0, now available, DBAs can use organizational standards to build a model within Clarity that encompasses database configuration and patches, custom business logic and metadata, and storage configuration across platforms and multiple database types, officials said.

Since Clarity already knows how to provision and patch most scripts, it minimizes the time needed to support different or new versions of Oracle and SQL Server, GridApp said.

Jasmine Noel, an analyst with Ptak, Noel & Associates, said the release's model-driven automation will make DBAs breathe easier when it comes time for deployment.

"For them, a model is not just the database version and configuration—all the details of how to deploy it, which patches must be deployed, how to correctly deploy those patches, etc., are captured in the model," she told eWEEK. "So all the knowledge about what makes up a particular database environment and how to correctly deploy, change and patch that environment is encapsulated in one place. This makes it a lot easier for DBAs to get the consistent deployments they are looking for. When you couple the model idea with the server validation packages, what you get is DBAs having to do much less custom scripting to automate provisioning and patching."

The built-in validation of database server configurations is also interesting, she said, because it goes hand-in-hand with why enterprises are getting tired of having to manually develop custom scripts to deploy, patch and upgrade databases.

"One of the reasons there is so much custom scripting [is] because there are so many details—like a Windows registry setting, or a vendor changing its patching scheme—that can derail a deployment or patch," Noel said. "Although most of the details are available on various vendor support sites ... what that means is that every enterprise must exert the effort to sort through everything and create a script that will work."

"So what is happening is that some DBAs are saying, 'Don't give me a tool to make scripting easier. Instead give me a tool that packages the deployment/patching/upgrading best practices information for me,'" she said. "So Version 4 greatly expands the series of checks for all the different server-database combinations out there."

Clarity 4.0 also features advanced database discovery, the centralized delivery of agent updates and the ability to restart provisioning jobs from arbitrary points. The product now features support for Solaris, 64-bit SQL Server, and Veritas and Windows clustering, as well as native awareness of Veritas, Oracle RAC and SQL Server cluster environments.