Solix ExAPPS Brings New Relief to Application Retirement Anxiety

By DCIG Analyst James Koopmann

The benefits of shutting down aging or unused applications are easy to see but as anyone knows who has ever been asked to turn such an application off – you hate to be the one responsible for pushing the button only to have someone request the application data later on. The Solix ExAPPS takes these concerns about application retirement off the table.

SOLIX
Empowering Data Management

Company

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Industry

Data Storage

Challenges

- Maintaining and managing the infrastructures needed to support legacy applications
- Resourcing the technical expertise to manage the application retirement process either in-house or with professional consultation
- Quantifying which underlying application data needs to be retained
- Accessing the retired data if needed or requested
- Making Application Retirement a repeatable process

Solution

Solix ExAPPS

Benefits

- Automates application retirement while preserving application data integrity
- Data can not be modified and remains safe to meet compliance requirements.
- Automated repeatable process eliminates the manual, ad hoc nature of past application retirement attempts
- Compressed legacy data reduces operating efficiencies

People may come and go but applications live forever. Well, not exactly, but that mindset leads to the application retirement problems that many organizations face today. Often applications remain intact and running on corporate networks long after their useful life is over but gracefully shutting them down is no simple matter. However the recently released Solix ExAPPS appliance provides organizations a new option for retiring these applications while alleviating the uncertainty normally associated with such decisions.

Retirement Planning: Who, What, Where, When and Why

Application functionality, architecture, or business rules often change over time that can render an application obsolete that leaves an organization's application portfolio less than optimized. In a research paper, *Plan Legacy Application Retirements Carefully*[1], Jim Duggan, a Research VP with Gartner, makes the following observation, "On average, 10% of the applications in an un-optimized portfolio are candidates for retirement. An additional one-third can require migration or rationalization."

In an era of economic downturn, where companies want to squeeze costs and do more with less, all sizes of companies, from SMBs to large corporations, are recognizing the value of application retirement. This is done as much to reduce costs and simplify the IT infrastructure as it is done to eliminate the need to migrate or virtualize seldom or minimally used applications.

Considering that many enterprise organizations have numerous applications spread across many server platforms with numerous database servers on the backend, the value of decommissioning these application servers quickly becomes evident. However application retirements go beyond just the hardware and software costs. Maintaining and managing the infrastructures needed to support legacy applications takes expertise, often specialists.

Aggravating the situation, as an organization continues to run old applications on legacy hardware or out-dated software versions, the available amount of expertise within an organization or marketplace continually diminishes. This increases the risk of losing all expertise associated with an application; running applications that are unsupported or require high-maintenance; and, having data in-house with no one being able to access or interpret data in a knowledgeable fashion.

Retiring Applications: Understanding and Mitigating Risk

While the cost benefits of retiring applications may be clear, the risks associated with application retirement can be vague. Consider:

- *Organizations lack expertise in the application retirement process.* This results in an inability to zero in on which applications should be retired
- *Organizations cannot quantify which underlying application data needs to be retained.* This creates apprehension and risk when considered against the backdrop of compliance requirements and different federal and state regulations.

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> ***—James Koopman, DCIG Analyst***

- *Budgets are already tight.* Obtaining funding for additional resources can be difficult, especially when those resources are high-paid consultants and the applications scheduled for retirement often are already included as line items in the organization's budget.

But probably the biggest question that organizations face when deciding to retire an application is, "What will happen to the data?" The data may be needed for compliance and legal reasons but who else uses or accesses the data? Sometimes there are no records as to when the last time the data was accessed, who accessed it and for what purpose. Further, no one wants to say they were

the one who deleted the data only to find out later that it is needed by executive management.

Satisfying the Requirements of Application Retirement

Therefore before any solution is introduced that facilitates application retirement, it must satisfy the following criteria:

- *The application context of legacy data must be preserved.* Not only must objects, columns, and attributes be preserved but an understanding of how an application's logic interprets codes and the relationships between data so the application data still makes sense should it need to be retrieved and referenced in the future.
- *Data is stored in an accessible format.* Regardless of data format for an application, data must be stored in a compatible format. If a legacy application uses a backend database that contains binary large objects (BLOBs) then the storage repository for retired applications should be able to accommodate and efficiently store these types of objects as well.
- *Store all legacy data stored in a single location.* This makes it simpler and more efficient to find and retrieve later on should the requirement emerge.
- *All legacy applications should be considered to have unique data reporting requirements.* These requirements should be fully supported by any BI tools that are put in place after the application retirement.
- *An open or standard access method should be used.* While it is difficult to predict data access methods in the future, storing data in formats that are considered open today increase the likelihood that the data can be retrieved at some point in the future.

Retire Apps with Confidence: Solix ExAPPS

It is these issues that the new Solix ExAPPS addresses. Recognizing this new corporate need for a solution that automates application retirement while preserving application data integrity, Solix ExAPPS is a pre-built, pre-configured, and pre-tested appliance that can be plugged directly into the corporate network for the single purpose of application retirement.

Organizations only need to use a Web browser to point the Solix ExAPPS at an identified target application's data using a Web browser. Once it sees the application, ExAPPS begins the process of migrating all of the application's data, including its objects, reports, and the context of how the application data is used and referenced, to the Solix ExAPPS secured repository in an immutable form. This process guarantees data can not be modified and remains safe to meet compliance requirements.

Since this is a fully automated process, it is repeatable and eliminates the manual, ad hoc nature of past application retirement attempts that relied heavily upon consultants, system integrators and third parties utilities and migra tion tools.

Once an application is retired and the data moved over to the Solix ExAPPS appliance, business users or IT can query the ExAPPS appliance and report on the legacy data using standard enterprise reporting tools. While the data is stored in a proprietary database (the Solix Secure Archive), it is accessed using a standard SQL engine so standard database query methods will work.

Depending on how the Solix ExAPPS is utilized, organizations may even see further savings. Solix ExAPPS compresses legacy data by up to 90% and a single Solix ExAPPS Appliance can replace multiple physical servers, applications and storage in the data center thereby significantly reducing operating budgets and increasing operational efficiencies.

The benefits of shutting down aging or unused applications are easy to see but as anyone knows who has ever been asked to turn such an application off—you hate to be the one responsible for pushing the "off" button only to have someone request the application data later on. The Solix ExAPPS takes these concerns about application retirement off the table. Using the Solix ExAPPS appliance, organization can quickly and easily deploy a solution that enables them to achieve their goal of cost-effective application retirement.

About DCIG

DCIG analyzes software, hardware and services companies within the storage and ESI industries. DCIG distributes industry, company and product analysis by way of viral marketing and community building using the burgeoning BLOG infrastructures created worldwide.

About Solix Technologies, Inc.

Solix Technologies, Inc., a leading provider of Enterprise Data Management solutions, helps businesses to improve application performance, reduce storage costs, meet compliance and data privacy requirements by achieving Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) goals and Data Governance strategies. Solix Enterprise Data Management Suite (Solix EDMS) software enables organizations to implement Database Archiving, Test Data Management (Data Subsetting), Data Masking and Application Retirement across all enterprise data. Solix ExAPPS Appliance is an integrated set of Server, Storage and Software Components for Application Retirement all bundled into a single device. In partnership with leading application and storage vendors, Solix provides integrated information lifecycle management (ILM) and Data Governance solutions for today's heterogeneous environments. Solix has an extensive global client base, including Fortune 500 companies, and is widely considered the standard for enterprise data management. Solix Technologies is headquartered in Santa Clara, California and has an established worldwide channel program of value added resellers (VARs) and systems integrators.

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[1] Gartner Report: *Plan Legacy Application Retirement Carefully* by Jim Duggan, April 24, 2009.

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