CASE STUDY

Penton: Using Data to Power their Business Has Resulted in a 140% ROI Thanks to Pentaho and Melissa

Leveraging Pentaho's data integration expertise and Melissa for data validation lets Penton deliver new products and services that use data to help customers better target their marketing efforts.

ABOUT PENTON

Penton is an information services company that drives performance for nearly 20 million professionals each and every day. They rely on us to deliver insights and opportunities that inform critical business decisions, help them to engage with their community, advance the way they work, and leverage their potential.

Penton
• inform • engage • advance

OVERVIEW

For well over a hundred years, Penton has been a leading publisher of trade magazines covering many markets, including transportation, infrastructure, manufacturing and agriculture. However, times have changed and now the company focuses most of its efforts on its online properties and digital products. In the age of digital transformation, Penton began a new corporate initiative called Corporate Reporting designed to consolidate and blend data from all of Penton's various digital assets to create new, more impactful products for their customers.

CHALLENGE

Like many companies with long histories, Penton was trying to manage several databases it had picked up from various acquisitions over the years, each one running a different operating environment and storing data in different formats. The user data collected by each of Penton's digital properties could provide customers with valuable information about visitors to Penton's various websites, information that could help better target their advertising and marketing efforts. Tim Jumps, director of data engineering with the product development group at Penton, was tasked with consolidating all of Penton's data into a single database that would be used to feed data into future Penton products and services.

Jumps' team had already developed one such tool, Fleet-Seek, a data mining tool that helps Penton's transportation customers better target their sales and marketing budgets. FleetSeek uses the latest trucking fleet information gathered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, a database of an estimated 1.5 million records that grows by 20 percent every month.

"FleetSeek had proven such a success that the product development group was asked to launch new versions of the tool to serve other vertical markets," said Jumps. "If my team was going to launch these new products, they had to make sure the underlying database was as accurate as possible."

GOALS

Penton was looking for a solution that could manage their data integration workload and review imported data for accuracy. In the past, Penton had an office building full of analysts whose sole responsibility was to contact companies included in the Department of Transportation reports to confirm data and standardize data formatting. Penton also relied on a team of data engineers to manually write search scripts for database queries. If the team was going to scale to support new products without adding head count, they needed to automate their data processing platform.

SOLUTION

To meet their business goals and their complex data needs, Penton adopted Pentaho Data Integration with an integrated contact verification component from Melissa. The platform's ability to automatically cleanse, standardize, validate and format data has freed up much of Penton's data analyst team to focus on other projects.

IMPACT & BENEFITS

Jumps estimates that since switching to the Pentaho platform, he has been able to create an ROI of approximately 140% by eliminating about 40 hours of work a week. "Previously, I had to have an engineer with a specialization in each of the database technologies used on our network; one for MySQL, one for Oracle, and one for Microsoft SQL Server Integration Services (SSIS)," said Jumps. "Now, by leveraging both Pentaho and Melissa, my engineers only need to understand one environment, which allows them to focus on other tasks besides monitoring data loads. Tasks like creating new products that can have a profound benefit to our bottom line."

Additionally, Penton is now able to provide additional insight about the companies listed in the FleetSeek database by including insurance data such as policy and car accident information. Previously, it was too time intensive to integrate these databases, but the Pentaho solution allowed Penton to easily merge them.

Penton intends to launch products like FleetSeek in the future to target other vertical industries the company serves. Furthermore, Penton is looking to take advantage of PDI's predictive capabilities in the future.

ABOUT PENTAHO

- Pentaho, a Hitachi Group Company, is a leading integration and business analytics company with an enterprise-class, open source-based platform for diverse big data deployments.

- Pentaho has over 15,000 product deployments and 1,500 commercial customers.

- Learn more at pentaho.com

ABOUT MELISSA

- Since our founding in 1985, Melissa's foremost goal has been helping customers achieve the highest quality data at the most affordable price.

- More than 10,000 companies worldwide rely on Melissa to gain and maintain a single, accurate, and trusted view of critical information assets.

- Learn more at melissa.com

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