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SQL SERVER 7.0 LAUNCHES IN GULF

ENTERPRISE DATABASE DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM LAUNCHES WITH SUPPORT FROM DEVELOPERS, HARDWARE VENDORS

30 November 1998

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Microsoft today launched SQL Server 7.0 in the Gulf market with a series of presentations to an audience of over 800 database administrators, IT specialists and Gulf company executives at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dubai. "We've organized a second session for the launch day because of demand from customers, and we have been overwhelmed by the excitement that SQL Server 7.0 has generated," said Murad Lakhdir, marketing manager, products for Microsoft Gulf.

The database platform, offered to Gulf users for the next 99 days at US\$99 per user, is the defining release in Microsoft's history of producing SQL based databases. SQL Server 7.0 adds powerful new capabilities which support scalable development and database performance from the notebook to multiprocessor server clusters holding enterprise databases of terabyte scale. "SQL Server 7.0 is the most powerful tool for building business applications, and is actively endorsed by the world's leading 3rd party enterprise applications, several of whom have joined us here today. It reduces costs, increases efficiency and brings powerful, fast, development features to the fingertips of the company's Data Processing team," said Lakhdir.

SQL Server 7.0 is a particularly relevant product for Gulf companies, with many falling into the 'midrange' category, and therefore set to benefit from the ease-of-use features which characterize the platform. "Here in the Gulf, we often talk about enterprise companies, but in fact the majority of customers in the region's important commercial sector market are medium sized companies. Those companies often can't leverage extensive resources to pay for large teams of dedicated database administrators, and the ease of use facilities in SQL Server 7.0 bring a new order of empowerment to the smaller teams typically working for companies here. With SQL Server 7.0, these companies can gain optimum benefit from those smaller teams, with reduced costs, while opening up powerful new potential for information access and analysis," said Lakhdir.

A major feature of the product is its ability to support highly advanced business analysis functions and even application software development without requiring extensive input from large specialized and dedicated development teams. Integrated services such as OLAP and Integrated Data Transformation Services mean powerful data analysis features are included 'in-the-box' with SQL Server 7.0, the first time that a relational database management system has shipped with these complete solutions integrated.

"SQL Server 7.0 doesn't aim to do away with in-house development teams by any means. What it does do is take care of the low level functions that have plagued such teams in the past and automate them, leaving developers free to do what they do best: create new ways to turn business information into results for the company. The result is cost savings and better system management, better information and better access to that information," said Lakhdir.

Consistent with the pragmatic approach taken in SQL Server 7.0's development, the product not only supports data warehousing, but recognizes the potential limitations of this approach, adding powerful features for the support of smaller, more flexible 'data marts' which can be synchronized to

exchange data as required.

At the user level, SQL Server 7.0 supports tight integration with Microsoft Office applications, including world leading office automation tools such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. "This gives the end user in the enterprise access to information provided by enterprise level data management, but the integration and tool set users need to get real results back from that information using familiar, simple, desktop tools," Lakhdar concluded.

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