

Energy company enhances database performance

American Electric Power streamlines application development and testing as well as database administration, saving time and improving performance for end users.



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Ken Foster, Manager of Software Technology, Application Services Group, American Electric Power

CUSTOMER PROFILE



Company	American Electric Power
Industry	Energy
Country	United States
Website	www.aep.com

BUSINESS NEED

The American Electric Power Application Services Group needed a fast, efficient way to view, edit and commit information from multiple systems and locations to their back-end databases.

SOLUTION

The company deployed Toad®, which streamlines application development and testing and reduces time spent on database administration.

BENEFITS

- Improved database and application performance for end users
- Faster application development and testing and simpler database administration
- Competitive advantage for the Application Services Group
- An efficient, unified toolset for development and support
- Streamlined regulatory compliance

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

- [Database](#)

Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, electricity supplier American Electric Power (AEP) is a leading wholesale energy marketer in the United States and Europe. In addition to generating electricity, AEP owns and operates natural gas pipeline systems, natural gas storage and the fourth largest inland barge company in the United States. It is also one of the largest electric utilities in the country, with nearly 5 million retail customers.

AEP operates an energy accounting system that schedules and manages the production of millions of dollars' worth of energy every week. Other IT systems throughout the organization use energy information for billing and other mission-critical functions.

To support unified, efficient energy scheduling and distribution, the Application Services Group at AEP wrote its own programs to extract data from multiple systems and locations and send it to back-end databases for processing. This was a tedious and time-consuming process — and the team needed a faster way to view, edit and commit information from multiple systems and locations back to its databases, while complying with industry regulations for data management.

OVERCOMING DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

The IT software developers at AEP recommended Quest® Toad for Oracle® and Toad for SQL Server® as the software solutions that would meet the Application Services Group's requirements. Toad is a powerful, low-overhead tool that makes development faster and easier, while simplifying database administration tasks.

After evaluating Toad, the Application Services Group was convinced it was the right tool. To gain approval for its plans to deploy Toad, the group built a detailed business case and presented it to AEP's Architecture Review Board, showcasing the capabilities of the Quest solution. Approval was quickly granted, and the group deployed Toad across its environment.

FASTER APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING, AND SIMPLER DATABASE ADMINISTRATION

The Application Services Group has streamlined a range of processes related to application development and testing as well as database administration with Toad.

“Toad provides features that we could not get easily from any other tool, particularly the database administration functions,” says Ken Foster, manager of software technology in the Application Services Group at American Electric Power. “Toad allows our developers to watch what's happening throughout their development work and code execution. They can edit and manipulate large objects, which isn't possible with other tools.”

Specifically, technical team members can view and edit character large objects (CLOBs), a data type that contains a large block of text, directly in Toad.

Foster says, “No other tool that we've used or evaluated provides us with the ability to view the CLOB script directly. And that just makes testing much easier for us, especially if we need to change or massage the data.”

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

SOFTWARE

[Toad for Oracle](#)

[Toad for SQL Server](#)

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COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FOR THE APPLICATION SERVICES GROUP

The Application Services Group competes with external outsourcers to win business from internal customers. Toad is helping the group get the upper hand, ensuring that its development services and support beat outsourcers in terms of quality and cost effectiveness.

“As a manager, it’s very important for my organization to provide effective support without waiting on answers or struggling with problems,” says Foster. “Time is critical for us and everyone in our group is busy—and Toad helps us get our work done quickly and efficiently.”

INCREASED DATABASE AND APPLICATION PERFORMANCE FOR END USERS

With Toad, Application Service Group team members can quickly identify and terminate sessions that have locked the database, freeing resources to process other transactions in the queue more quickly. This significantly improves database performance and, therefore, application performance for end users.

Toad also delivers additional performance enhancements for end users. The software has a very light footprint on the server, for example, which helps improve overall system performance. In addition, Toad supports the latest versions of Oracle, enabling customers to take advantage of the latest, value-added Oracle functionality.

AN EFFICIENT, UNIFIED TOOLSET FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

With Toad, AEP has a single environment for managing required development projects. Developers consistently report positive experiences when they submit questions for Toad support, and performance issues are resolved quickly for all end users across the company.

In addition, AEP’s Application Services Group has dramatically improved productivity by reducing time spent on routine development and troubleshooting tasks from hours to minutes, helping the team achieve competitive advantage over external competitors.

STREAMLINED REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Working in the energy industry, AEP has to conform to industry standards for application development and database management, and Toad is helping streamline compliance.

“To conduct business, we must conform to an industry standard established by governing organizations such as the Federal Energy Commission,” says Foster. “They require us to implement a particular data format throughout our entire corporation,” he adds.

Because Toad provides a single, unified environment for database administration and application development and testing, it is helping AEP and other major utilities achieve, document and demonstrate compliance to the regulator.

ABOUT QUEST

Quest helps our customers reduce tedious administration tasks so they can focus on the innovation necessary for their businesses to grow. Quest® solutions are scalable, affordable and simple-to-use, and they deliver unmatched efficiency and productivity. Combined with Quest’s invitation to the global community to be a part of its innovation, as well as our firm commitment to ensuring customer satisfaction, Quest will continue to accelerate the delivery of the most comprehensive solutions for Azure cloud management, SaaS, security, workforce mobility and data-driven insight.

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