

Maersk Sealand Keeps its Data Challenges Contained with Monarch

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When Maersk Sealand founder Mr. A. P. Moller wrote, "No loss should hit us which can be avoided with constant care", he summarized in a few words one of the central themes of the company's business philosophy. Constant care can be quite difficult to exercise when you have to keep track of millions of shipping documents and close to 1 million containers, moving all over the world! Maersk Sealand has successfully used Monarch for years to help contain its data access and analysis needs.

"Maersk Sealand has a variety of very large mainframe IT systems where container movements, cargo details, and financial information is constantly being updated," says Michael Hansen, General Manager, Technical Development and Projects at Maersk Sealand's Customer Resource Center in Houston. "The systems have been developed individually over the years, and are not fully integrated with each other. All the legacy systems have reporting capabilities, but since they are all mainframe based, programming changes to report outputs can often take up to three months to have done, even though we own our own IT company."

Michael Hansen and his colleagues instead use Monarch to mine data from reports from different systems and put the data to use immediately. "We often need to make decisions based on information kept in a number of different systems and consisting of millions of records in different formats," says Michael. "Monarch Pro's ability to join information from different sources into one data view, quickly and easily, without the need for assistance from programmers, has proven a major benefit for us.

"Best of all, once the information is joined, Monarch's filter and summary capabilities

lets us quickly present the information in various ways, and it is quite easy to create 'what if' scenarios by using calculated fields to, for example, change a budgeted rate of exchange, etc."

In addition to ad hoc management reporting, Michael briefed Datawatch on some specific operational areas in which Monarch has greatly reduced the manpower necessary to produce timely business information for Maersk Sealand:

Status reports for Customers. "Many of our customers are very large companies, but rely solely on us to provide them with status information about their cargo, such as where the containers are right now, when they can expect them delivered to their premises, what is the U.S. Customs status, and so on," says Michael.

"Information about container movements is kept in one system, customer specifics, cargo details and money due in another, and U.S. Customs statuses in a third. Monarch Pro Version 7 now lets us join data from all of these reports in one go, and export the information to MS Excel, which is the format most of our customers require we provide the information in."

Container turn times. "Maersk Sealand has a fleet of close to 1 million containers; obviously, a very large investment. So, we need to ensure that the containers are sitting idle for as short a period as possible. The canned reports from our equipment management system are massive, so it is very challenging to spot containers that have been sitting idle for a given number of days. But, running the reports through Monarch and adding filters give an easy overview of exactly the containers where

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we need to follow with the customers why they have not returned them after use."

Data quality. "We have an application that provides each end user by User ID information about data entries that resulted in a data quality issue," Michael explains. "Each user is supposed to check this application at least on a daily basis and fix the data issues logged to him/her. However, there was no good management tool for the lower level managers to consolidate these errors for their individual group(s) within the system. With Monarch, this was easy: we established a spreadsheet with User ID's and corresponding names and departments, and by joining this information with the data quality report, we gave managers a great tool for follow up. When we implemented this Monarch-powered solution, our data quality issues dropped by over 50 percent overnight!

Michael adds, "We just recently upgraded to Monarch Pro Version 7. The enhanced data lookup capabilities, which now allows us to combine up to nine different data tables together has saved us a tremendous amount of time.

"Also, the new Runtime Parameter feature has eliminated the need for users to go in and change manually filters in models to suit their needs; using Runtime Parameter, the end user is prompted to enter, for example, a certain cargo location that they wish to filter for, and Monarch will then give the desired result without the user having to change anything in the model.

"Project exports is another very useful feature that enables us to enforce the format and location of exported summaries and tables, where we had to rely on the user exporting to the right file folder before, which did not always happen.

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