

## Extreme Healthcare Information



Wolters Kluwer Health Saves Time, Money and Resources with Syncsort MFX

There is a good chance you have seen more than one television commercial that reports what four out of five hospitals recommend. Hospitals, physicians, pharmacies, pharmaceutical companies, and other healthcare businesses depend on the collection and circulation of accurate statistical data to competitively market their products and services. Therefore, when they need this information, they demand an information service provider with a rich understanding of the market environment for which the data is intended.

Wolters Kluwer Health is a leading provider of information for professionals and students in medicine, nursing, allied health and pharmacy.

Not surprisingly, the preparation of such information involves the management of massive amounts of data. The ongoing challenge faced by Wolters Kluwer Health is to process and deliver this growing amount of information quickly, without requiring growing expenditures of money and time.

### Evolving the Standard Method

Over the course of two years, an application group at Wolters Kluwer Health had amassed a large file of prescription data each month called the Analysis Transaction File. On average, each monthly file was about 250 GB in size and

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used four high-density cartridges for storage. Efficient sorting of each of these 24 months' worth of tape files posed quite a challenge. The standard processing method, which reads in one tape at a time, was taking twelve

to eighteen hours of elapsed time to complete, depending on the size of the file. Project managers estimated it would take three weeks to complete all 24 files, assuming they would be able to run only two or three jobs at a time whenever resources were available.



#### INDUSTRY

- Business Services

#### CHALLENGE

- Processing and delivering massive amounts of statistical data quickly
- Efficiently sorting two years' worth of monthly tape files, each of which contains about 250 GB of data across four high-density cartridges
- Limiting growing expenditures of time and money

#### SOLUTION

- Syncsort MFX

#### BUSINESS VALUE

- Reduced the elapsed time for a standard sort by 58%; completed jobs that would normally take three weeks in seven days
- Accelerated the sorting process without the need for additional CPU resources
- Saved time, money and resources by completing projects ahead of schedule
- Achieved a level of sort processing performance that was not previously possible

Charlie Jones, a Technology Manager at Wolters Kluwer Health, knew his team needed a way to reduce the elapsed time for the project. "I had been testing with MFX Parasort, and I thought about using it to process these huge monthly files," said Jones. "I converted the standard sort process into a Parasort process and then executed it. The standard process was taking about twelve hours to complete. With Syncsort MFX, it was only taking about five hours."

Parasort is a feature of Syncsort MFX that uses specially designed parallel techniques with large multivolume or concatenated tape data set input. This technology allows MFX to read data from multiple tape drives concurrently, significantly improving the elapsed time performance of sorts.

Parasort automatically manages tape units and minimizes the use of tape drive resources by de-allocating excess tape drives during initialization and releasing all extra units at the end of the sort input phase. "We were able to execute two of these processes at a time around the clock each day," said Jones. "With Syncsort MFX, we completed the job in about a week, even though we expected it to take three weeks with the standard process."

### The Right Tool for Focused Analysis

An additional project required the application group to generate subsets from these large files for focused analysis of specific data. Syncsort MFX was implemented for this project

as well, with similarly impressive results. "We've created some resource reports, and not only do the Syncsort MFX jobs run faster, but the CPU time doesn't significantly affect overall resources," said Jones. "When we used Parasort, even though the jobs completed faster, they were taking about the same amount of CPU time."

Parasort implementation required no additional financial investment from Wolters Kluwer Health, since the feature is included in the MFX solution they were already using. "The Syncsort MFX Parasort process has not only saved us time and resources, but it will save us money in the long run, too. It has actually put projects ahead of schedule, and the programming staff thinks it's a strong tool," said Jones. "Apparently, there has been some positive word of mouth spreading. I have only told a couple people about it. Since then, I have gotten calls from others asking me, 'How do I set this up? What do I do?'"

By leveraging the industry-leading Parasort feature, available as part of Syncsort MFX, Wolters Kluwer Health has been able to achieve a level of sort processing performance that was previously not possible and is experiencing significant savings in time, resources, and money as a result.

## About Syncsort

Syncsort is a global software company that helps the world's most successful organizations rethink the economics of data. Syncsort provides extreme data performance and rapid time to value through easy to use data integration and data protection solutions. With over 15,000 deployments, Syncsort has transformed decision making and delivered more profitable results to thousands of customers worldwide.

**syncsort** RETHINK THE ECONOMICS OF DATA\*

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