



## **GridApp: Automating database management**

*GridApp's Clarity product tackles the growing challenge databases pose*

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By Denise Dubie, Network World, 10/15/07

Even with all the talk around data center automation, one vendor says the industry forgets to stress the importance of automation when managing multiple databases.

GridApp, which came to my attention following the most recent roundup of management companies to watch, last week updated its flagship database management product, which the company says offers customers automation features to ease their workload.

Company officials say that while data center automation vendors BladeLogic and Opsware reduce manual efforts around servers, GridApp tackles the challenge databases pose. And those challenges have grown, industry watchers say.

"Deploying, configuring and patching databases have always been a nightmare, but it's just that until recently no one cared about it because you didn't have to do it very often. But now we have blades, clusters and on-demand capacity so database administrators have to provision database environments on a regular basis," says Jasmine Noel, a principal analyst at Ptak, Noel and Associates. "Plus, it used to be that DBAs would ignore the vendor patches because who wants to mess with a working production system? But now we have SOX and HIPPA and all sorts of regulations and Chief Security Officers requiring that all 20,000 database instances get patched within the week of release. So now DBAs have to get this done and since no one is going to hire more talent the only solution is automation."

Other vendors such as CA and Stratavia also offer products to address database management, but GridApp says their Clarity product can align database infrastructure with business demands. The company says it spends a lot of development time building content about managing databases into its product to enable automation.

"One of the things we have been seeing is as organizations get more comfortable with automation, they want to push the patching responsibility further and further away. With Clarity, database administrators can let applications teams patch their own databases because of the content included and the automation features," says Matt Zito, chief scientist of GridApp.

Clarity 4.0 software provides provisioning and patching for database systems. The product has been upgraded with built-in server configuration validation features and is said to help IT managers standardize database environments without having to do a lot of scripting. The product includes software installed on a dedicated server, distributed agents on managed devices, and a Web GUI.

Noel says the vendor is addressing a real pain point for today's data center managers.

"The thing I like about GridApp is that they recognize that sequencing the deployment/patching process is half the battle – because it's not just the Oracle/MySQL software you are patching. You are likely patching the Windows/Linux OS at the same time – and you have coordinate all the little details otherwise the whole thing goes kaput," she explains. "GridApp spends a lot of time working out the right sequencing and delivers that as part of their solution – and that is really the difference between them and a more 'generic' data center automation solution."