Centerfield Makes SQL Tuning Easier with HomeRun 7.0

by Alex Woodie

S ystem i database performance experts Centerfield Technology recently launched HomeRun version 7.0, the newest version of its suite of application and database optimization tools for the i/OS platform. With HomeRun version 7.0, Centerfield has overhauled AutoDBA, the suite's automated database administrator component of the suite, to make it easier to use and to allow customers to get results quicker than before.

HomeRun is a suite of tools aimed at getting customers the highest level of performance out of their DB2/400 applications. The suite includes five integrated components (INDEX, ANALYSIS, MONITOR, RESOURCES, and SECURITY) that address various aspects of performance monitoring, tuning, resource consumption, security, and auditing.

Tying it all together is AutoDBA, which was introduced during 2007 spring training (and shipped during the dog days of August) to provide a built-in surrogate database administrator (a pinch hitter of sorts) that can make suggestions on complex DB2/400 performance issues. The product also provides wizards that guide the user through the process of applying (or removing) the optimized indexes that are suggested to the user. AutoDBA can be thought of as the distillation of IBM's lengthy technical treatises on DB2/400 optimization by Centerfield's technical whizzes, coupled with autonomic functionality.

Most of the enhancements with HomeRun 7.0 have to do with AutoDBA. For starters, Centerfield has completely overhauled AutoDBA's Windows-based GUI to make it easier for System i administrators (since System i shops traditionally have no *actual* DBAs) to comprehend the advice that AutoDBA disseminates. In particular, this release makes it easier for admins to filter, order, and sort AutoDBA's advice on a graphical grid.

Centerfield has also taken steps to prioritize the recommendations made by AutoDBA, so that customers get the most value from every new index they add. With this release, AutoDBA will also generate its first index recommendations quicker than before--within a few hours by looking at the most active files on the system. The company has also made changes to the policy and permissions filter that make it easier to remove indexes if they are not being used.

The company has also adopted Microsoft's .NET technology to develop new reporting elements of AutoDBA. This gives customers another way to look at the changes AutoDBA recommends. Centerfield also added the capability to export AutoDBA's output to other formats, including Excel, PDF, and Word.

This release also brings more fine-grained controls over the activities performed by AutoDBA. Customers can restrict how much time (and therefore how much System i resource) AutoDBA will take to implement the performance advice. Customers also get new commands that restrict AutoDBA from working on certain types of files.

HomeRun 7.0 is available now. For more information visit the company's website at www.centerfieldtechnology.com.