

*SvalTech, Inc. Essay Series*

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## **Essay 2: What is the Right Priority for Database Archiving Within IT?**

Database Archiving struggles to get respect on the priority lists of IT shops. It is widely recognized as a positive function that brings value in many ways. Just about every shop concedes that they intend to deploy Database Archiving some day and expect to reap meaningful rewards when they do. However, it does not seem to be able to get started.

One of the problems is the current recession. It is just hard to deploy a new technology when IT is looking in every corner to cut costs. Decrees of “no new software purchases”, “no consultants”, “put all projects on the shelf”, all mean that Database Archiving must wait for a time when recovery is well on its way.

Another factor is bad experiences that IT shops experienced when experimenting with this topic in the past. These efforts frequently ended up not achieving positive outcomes. This is mostly due to using home-grown efforts that were poorly conceived and incompletely implemented. Another was the immaturity of vendor offerings and the lack of qualified consultants.

But another important problem was a lack of understanding of how Database Archiving should be considered within the priority list of IT shops. Priorities are important. Every IT shop has a list of hot technologies they want to deploy, projects that need to get done, and strategies that need to be pursued. This is the input to game plans for spending money and using staff resources.

Database Archiving, as a singular topic never gets on the list. It is not high on the list; it is not even on the list. It is not on the CIO's radar. Database Archiving is just not a big ticket item.

However, a Data Management Manger who wants to incorporate a Database Archiving practice into the toolbox of professional data management tools can do so in another way.

***Database Archiving should not be advanced as an IT objective and fight its way onto the priority list. Rather, it should be advanced as a supporting technology that will aid in accomplishing the goals of those major issues that are on the list.***

It can provide added value to almost any item on the list when applied as a supporting technology.

Here is a list of common items found on IT priority lists today.

- Keep costs down, reduce costs where possible
- Support mobile computing on major applications

- Improve data security
- Use cloud computing more
- Retire older applications replacing them with more modern ones
- Reduce dependence on legacy systems
- Consolidate applications after mergers and acquisitions
- Expand use of Business Analytics
- Improve IT Compliance and Data Governance

Instead of competing with these priorities, Database Archiving should show how it helps each of these to be realized.

### **Keep Costs Down, Reduce Costs Where Possible**

By moving inactive data to lower cost storage and requiring fewer bytes to support the same amount of data, significant savings can be realized in storage costs. By slimming down operational systems, system upgrades in hardware and software can be avoided. By moving inactive data to archives, older systems and software can be discontinued or repurposed. There is a long list of ways that Database Archiving can save money from current or planned expenditures. Savings are realized early.

### **Support Mobile Computing**

Mobile applications require higher performance of database applications and high availability. When an operational database is clogged with 60-70% of its record being inactive but required to be retained, it is a constant struggle to keep these systems tuned and available. Removing the inactive data to an archive can dramatically, and instantly improve operational performance and shorten data maintenance cycles. This can all be achieved without upgrading operational hardware and software.

### **Improve Data Security**

By moving inactive data off operational platforms and into secure data archives, the security of this data is highly improved. You can reduce the authorized users having access to this data to a fraction of those who have operational access. You can move the data away from operational systems and out of sight of hackers. This improvement happens immediately.

### **Use Cloud Computing**

Database Archiving can use the cloud to store the archive datasets. This is an easy and obvious way to take advantage of cloud storage offerings that can allow you to reap significant savings on storage costs with no startup time or cost.

### **Retire Older Applications**

Retiring older applications that you want to replace with more modern applications requires that you do something with the data collected that must be kept for years. You have three choices: move the data to the replacement application, leave the data in place along with the systems, DBMS licenses, application licenses, and storage they are currently using, or archive the data freeing it up from these assets. Clearly, if the data must be retained for any significant period of time, the last option, Database

Archiving, saves more money, gets the job done faster, and doesn't clog up the new system. By not having to deal with data transformations that are unnatural, the integrity of the older data is preserved.

### **Reduce Dependence on Legacy Systems**

Many IT shops are trying to unshackle themselves from legacy systems. By replacing applications with newer systems and retiring the legacy system's data to a Database Archive, the process of moving applications off legacy systems will occur faster, cost less money to execute, and get the replacement applications off to a good start. The day of ending legacy system use comes much earlier.

### **Consolidate Applications**

During recessions, a lot of mergers and acquisitions occur. Afterwards there is often the need to consolidate duplicate applications inherited through the process. By using a strategy to retire data to an archive from applications not moving forward, it becomes easier, faster and cheaper to complete these consolidations when Database Archiving is used.

### **Expand Use of Business Analytics**

Online Business Analytics requires executing scans over operational databases. Having all the inactive data co-mingled in the operational database will make these scans take longer and possibly limit when they can be run. This is true even though the selection criteria will rarely select inactive data. That is not what the analyst wants. Smaller, highly tuned operational databases will make online analytics more attractive to analysts. It will also accelerate processes that prepare analytic working databases for offline analysis.

### **Improve Compliance and Governance**

IT compliance officers and Data Governance leaders will find their jobs easier if Database Archiving is an integral part of important applications. The data will be safer, easier to access when facing e-Discovery requests, will be easier to defend as authentic data, and give IT a formal records retention story that will stand up to any scrutiny.

### **Summary**

The cost of building a Database Archiving practice is low, the time to implement applications is short, the return on investment is very short, and the cost benefits are high. It only makes sense to expand IT infrastructure to include Database Archiving and make it a service to other projects that can take advantage of its powerful potential.

Don't argue that Database Archiving should have a higher priority; argue that Database Archiving should be considered as an essential infrastructure technology that will better support the high priority tasks ahead.