

Sparkassen Informatik converts dataset names with DSN/Change

Many companies finish consolidating a data center by announcing that they have now integrated all their zOS partitions into one system. No thought is given to additional cost-saving opportunities that result from this integration.

Finanz-iT GmbH, data center operator of more than half of all German Sparkassen (savings and loan associations), has gone a step further.

The company is the result of the merger of several operating companies and inherited four different dataset naming systems. In daily operation these differences led to a lot of extra time spent on maintenance. In addition, introducing new applications was made unnecessarily difficult. That's why Finanz-iT decided to introduce a new, consistent dataset naming system.

Environmental conditions

Four productive SYSPLEX systems, a validation LPAR and a test LPAR had to be integrated .

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The IT departments of the various banks use identical programs, but their dataset names are different. These dataset names are made up of variables that result from JCL procedures. These procedures and variables had to be taken into account for every single dataset in order to ensure consistent conversion.

A further requirement was that the conversion had to take place on one weekend and online operation was to be interrupted for as short a time as possible. No tapes were to be converted, only datasets on DASD. Migrated datasets were also excluded from conversion. However, they could be recovered manually if necessary and assigned their new name. .

Preparing the project

Finanz-iT opted for DSN/Change, a HORIZONT product. DSN/Change supports the conversion of dataset names and all their dependent constructs in JCL, IDCAMS and REXX. Conversion is consistent and can be cancelled and restarted at any time. DSN/Change recognizes the link between symbolic and physical dataset names. A large numbers of datasets can be converted in batch mode in a relatively short amount of time. All changes are logged for recovery purposes and can be simulated in advance.

Implementing the project

Conversion began in the test LPAR. A test environment is usually more problematic than a productive environment for a conversion. In this case, though, conditions in the test environment were similar to those in the productive environment. The actual conversion took place on a weekend. 50,000 datasets with about 150,000 references in JCL, REXX and parameter datasets were converted. Issues arose due to oversights, but these issues were brought under control within a day. The knowledge gained from this was used by HORIZONT and Finanz-iT to improve the conversion process and refine the programs.

Next, the validation LPAR was converted. This went a lot more smoothly than the first conversion.

Dataset conversion runs parallel to online operation. Datasets being used by online programs are not converted. After the online programs are stopped, the datasets being used by them are renamed and the programs are then restarted.

Three productive data centers have now been converted. The number of datasets converted ranged from 56,000 to 64,000 and the number of references from 179,000 to 246,000. These dataset names were referenced by up to 370 libraries. The time needed for conversion was 22 hours per data center and online operation was interrupted for a maximum of five hours. Sequential datasets, GDGs, VSAM datasets, libraries, load libraries, job libraries and procedure libraries were converted.

Summary

Finanz-iT now has client-specific, consistent dataset names. Administration has been streamlined and new handover procedures now use standardized dataset names. As a result, costs have been reduced dramatically.

Final remarks

Gero Saxlehner, project leader at Finanz-iT: "Give me a data center and I'll convert it tomorrow afternoon." For questions: gero_saxlehner@informatik-kooperation.de

Josef Böck, responsible software developer at HORIZONT: "I've never converted such an incredible number of datasets with a better project leader!" For questions: jboeck@horizont-it.com

Uwe Hahm, Managing Director of HORIZONT: "If we had known that, the price would have been higher." For questions: uhahm@horizont-it.com

Sabine Saxlehner, wife of the project leader: "Another weekend like that and I'm moving out!"