



## Microsoft powers National University of Singapore's big data journey with SQL Server 2012

*Leading global university in Asia saves 50% in man-hours using SQL Server Power View to analyze massive amount of user data*

**Singapore — March 19, 2013** — Microsoft has today announced the successful deployment of SQL Server 2012 with the National University of Singapore (NUS), a leading global university in Asia. The University has chosen SQL Server 2012 for its combination of power features, cloud readiness and ease-of-use in creating business insights from large amount of data.

“Organizations such as NUS are making the leap forward in embracing big data,” said John Fernandes, Chief Marketing & Operations Officer, Microsoft Singapore. “Microsoft’s rich set of information tools can help organizations report, analyze and predict insights from all types of data, giving them a competitive edge in a new world where consumer expectations are ever growing, while pressures to constantly reduce operational expenditures is real.”

Completed in December 2012, this big data deployment has already enabled NUS to capture real-time analytics to improve the user experience of its online learning management system, Integrated Virtual Learning Environment (IVLE).

Developed and maintained by NUS’ Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT), IVLE hosts 90 percent of all academic modules offered in NUS and is accessed by most of its 37,000 student cohort on a daily basis. The portal provides students with one-click access to learning tools such as discussion forums, chat rooms, and file hosting.

To ensure top-notch user experience of its online learning portal, CIT has invested heavily in man-hours since 2010 to dig deeper into terabytes of data to understand the user habits of a diverse set of students using IVLE. Questions such as how students access IVLE, peak traffic periods, popularity of features and functions are all important insights in understanding consumption behaviors.

The labor intensive task in generating insights involved analyzing web traffic data, log-in information, and student profiles to glean useable insights. Jeffery Tay, Associate Director of CIT, NUS, said: “To stay relevant and fresh to our diverse set of students, we needed to constantly evolve and improve the user experience of our online learning portal. In analyzing large sets of data about user behaviors, we were faced with the challenge of consolidating different sets of structured and unstructured data; and uncertainties in the accuracy of insights gathered.”

### **Mastering Big Data**

Microsoft SQL Server 2012 is a cloud-ready information platform that enables organizations to unlock breakthrough insights across different operations, as well as quickly build solutions to extend data across on-premises and public cloud infrastructure. NUS has chosen Microsoft’s SQL Server 2012 Enterprise Edition, particularly for its Power View feature where it can provide an interactive browser-based data virtualization and presentation experience for all levels of users.



Tay added: “Microsoft SQL Server’s produces significantly more accurate datasets and provides better insights. More importantly, we were able to speed up the data analysis process by as much as 50 percent. The insights gleaned from such trends and patterns went a long way in helping IVLE designers stay on the forefront of development, creating a learning experience that is personalized and tailored to each individual student.”

For example, CIT noticed an increasing number of students accessing IVLE through mobile devices. As a result, it spearheaded a program to create mobile apps and encouraged NUS students to create their own unique apps (icreate.nus.edu.sg) that tap into IVLE’s versatile platform.

As CIT continues to keep an eye on data analytics and provide constant feature updates to IVLE, for the university at large, making sense of student learning habits and patterns is only the beginning. NUS intends to add a wider range of data to its fast-growing pool. For example, with sufficient data, the crowd at the university’s busy canteens can be mapped and analyzed for insights into crowd-control strategies.

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