

## MySQL Acquisition Edges Sun Closer to a Complete OSS Stack

Donald Feinberg, George J. Weiss

The MySQL purchase immediately casts Sun in the role of a major open-source database management system vendor with heterogeneous operating system solutions. IBM, Oracle and Red Hat will likely feel some market pressure.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

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### Event

On 16 January 2008, Sun announced that it has agreed to acquire MySQL, the open-source database management system (DBMS), for approximately \$1 billion in cash and options. Sun plans to integrate MySQL into its software, sales and service organizations. MySQL CEO Marten Mikos will join Sun's executive leadership team and report to Rich Green, Sun's executive vice president of software. The deal is expected to close in April or May 2008.

### Analysis

Sun's longtime partnerships with IBM DB2, Greenplum, Oracle and Sybase offer evidence of its strong history in the DBMS market. For a number of years, Sun has also been an open-source software (OSS) advocate, moving the Solaris operating system, Java and other software into the OSS space. MySQL will be enhanced and aided by other Sun products, such as HPC (Lustre), high-performance file systems (ZFS), Suncluster, Java, Xen virtualization (xVM), identity management and DTrace's diagnostics. In turn, MySQL will add management capabilities to Sun's DBMS environment.

MySQL's largest user base resides on Linux, with the next largest user base residing on Windows. This will enable Sun to:

- Attract more Linux and Windows users as Sun customers
- Position itself more heterogeneously and shift its focus from primarily supporting Solaris-based (SAMP) systems to offering more inclusive support for Linux-based (LAMP) systems
- Demonstrate its willingness to support a stack on other operating systems in addition to Solaris
- Exploit more market and revenue-generating opportunities by reaching large MySQL users (for example, Facebook and YouTube), who do not overlap with the Solaris installed base

Sun will deliver a Java and MySQL software stack through open-source subscription support licenses, though some advocates of "pure" OSS may now object to defining MySQL as an OSS product. Sun now will be able to deliver both a commercially licensed and a freely downloadable OSS stack.

Sun faces the challenge of integrating MySQL. If it succeeds, it will have created a solid OSS DBMS stack offering. This would increase pricing pressures on proprietary stack vendors (such as IBM, Microsoft and Oracle) as well as on the leading Linux vendor, Red Hat, by offering an alternative for users' current hardware. Sun has had mixed success with its previous acquisitions, but we believe that if it retains the MySQL management team, developers and support organization, it is likely to benefit greatly from this acquisition. The similarity between the two companies' cultures and the licensing models for MySQL and Open Solaris will make this task easier.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### All enterprises:

- Use MySQL and Sun to apply competitive pressure to proprietary DBMS vendors by planning to switch spending on suitable requirements to MySQL.
- MySQL is capable of supporting clusters, delivering atomic, consistent, isolated and durable (ACID) functionality and handling some mission-critical applications. Evaluate MySQL as an alternative to IBM DB2, Oracle and other DBMSs.
- Monitor Sun's effort at integrating MySQL to confirm whether Sun is succeeding in its effort to become a different breed of OSS vendor.

**MySQL customers:**

- View this deal as positive and continue with your current strategy regarding the use of MySQL.

**RECOMMENDED READING**

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- "Open Source Database Management Systems Are Maturing and Usable" — Increases in scalability and maturity and wider adoption by third-party software vendors has led to increased use of open-source DBMSs in production environments. **By Donald Feinberg**
- "How Sun is Recasting Solaris and What It Means to Users" — Solaris' success is becoming more noticeable as a result of Sun repositioning it in a class of its own, rather than simply among legacy Unix vendors. **By George Weiss**

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