AUTOMATING DISASTER RECOVERY

Frequently Asked Questions on the Environment Synchronization and Automation Process (ESAP) Solution

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Today, thousands of organizations around the world leverage multiple Oracle EPM and BI solutions. An enterprise could have numerous applications in Hyperion Planning, Hyperion Financial Management, Essbase, OBIEE, and Data Marts, just to name a few. Each of these requires data integrations and a significant effort to remain synchronized with each other purely from a data perspective.

US-Analytics offers one of the only solutions on the market that can automate the integrations and synchronizations between environments and applications: Environment Synchronization and Automation Process (ESAP). ESAP can copy the entire Production environment to a Disaster Recovery (DR) environment during off hours to ensure immediate hot-site availability. And that only scratches the surface of what it can do.

What is ESAP?

ESAP is a series of scripts and procedures that automates all of the normally manual steps involved with copying and/or migrating environments of applications and their associated artifacts. It accomplishes this by leveraging tools, programs, and applications that clients already own as a part of their Operating System and Database tools or that are available as freeware.

For example, file management utilities that come with the Windows OS, Hyperion backup utilities, PowerShell, and SQL development utilities are all readily available within client environments. Consequently, there are no additional license costs required to implement ESAP.

What does it do?

As one might imagine, automating the series of processes necessary to copy an entire environment, such as Production, to another, like Test or DR, requires all of the tiniest steps and details to occur in a specific order. Stopping and starting of specific services, file comparisons, error checks, and handling are all essential to a reliable automated solution.

All of these automated processes have to be customized for the client's environment limitations. Many clients have specific security policies and protocols in place that require particular pieces of ESAP to be modified for compliance. There are also limitations on the client network and hardware that limit ESAP's ability to transfer data from one environment to another. For example, a slow network means that some components of ESAP's process routines need to be broken up into multiple iterations. With the primary ESAP scripts already written and tested, it is this level of customization that clients engage US-Analytics to perform when purchasing the solution.

What does it not do?

ESAP will not create or add new applications completely automatically. In certain scenarios, ESAP may create parts of a new application, but to function properly, at least some manual intervention may be required. In most instances, a shell application would likely be created manually the first time. As part of the implementation, US-Analytics will ensure these shell applications are created for new target environments within migrations. For example, a new DR environment must have a shell HFM application already created for ESAP to function. This will be addressed during initial implementation. However, subsequent new applications that are created in source will require someone to create a matching shell application, which ESAP will do during execution of the automated processes.

Why choose US-Analytics' automation solution?

Unlike other solutions on the market, ESAP is successfully deployed and highly stable. One competitor in particular, a Global System Integrator, spent 24 weeks and over a hundred thousand dollars of a client's budget attempting to achieve the same functionality without positive results.

Once ESAP is deployed, clients may update the processes for different environments, new servers, and applications as necessary. The only time a client would require US-Analytics to modify the scripts would be during a major software upgrade, when Oracle may change the source code.

What are the use cases for ESAP?

Clients are constantly struggling to maintain Disaster Recovery environments, as well as a regular and reliable backup process. Not only does ESAP address these critical needs, but it can also handle any migrations between environments other than Disaster Recovery. For example, ESAP easily handles migrations between Development, Test, Production, and Quality Assurance as needed.

Security is addressed by ensuring that passwords are not stored, or they are encrypted if stored. Because it also leverages MAXL, ESAP can automate Essbase processes as well.

How long is a typical implementation?

The ideal time to deploy ESAP is at the end of an engagement to install a major software upgrade. At that point, a US-Analytics software developer will remotely customize the solution for a client's hardware and application-specific requirements. ESAP may be implemented separately from an upgrade as necessary, but there could be additional risks, depending upon the quality of the software installation (if done by someone other than US-Analytics).

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What are the risks?

The most critical risks revolve around the installation of the software, as well as the hardware environment itself. For example, if network performance or server hardware is deficient, ESAP will not perform optimally. These areas should be reviewed and risks addressed at the beginning of implementing ESAP.

Conclusion

ESAP can provide tremendous benefit to clients by automating cumbersome migration and backup efforts. In doing so, it provides more assurances for those in the enterprise concerned about having a reliable Disaster Recovery environment, as well as a stable migration process. Many companies do not consider these to be mission-critical tasks until an event occurs that requires restoration from backup or porting to a Disaster Recovery environment. At that point, they discover the costs involved for quick recovery were well below the costs involved with delaying close, missing earnings releases, or postponing Board of Directors meetings.

For more information about ESAP and how it can make maintenance more efficient and remove system risk, please reach out to US-Analytics at **info@us-analytics.com**.

About US-Analytics

US-Analytics is a full-service consulting firm specialized in Oracle Enterprise Performance Management and Business Intelligence solutions. Applying decades of experience along with advanced degrees and certifications, our team of functional and technical experts have helped hundreds of the nation's largest and brightest companies bridge the gap between business goals and IT deliverables.

To ensure end-to-end coverage of your technology, we provide a complete range of services: process and advisory, infrastructure, implementations, upgrades and migrations, training, and managed services.

Learn more at **www.us-analytics.com**.

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