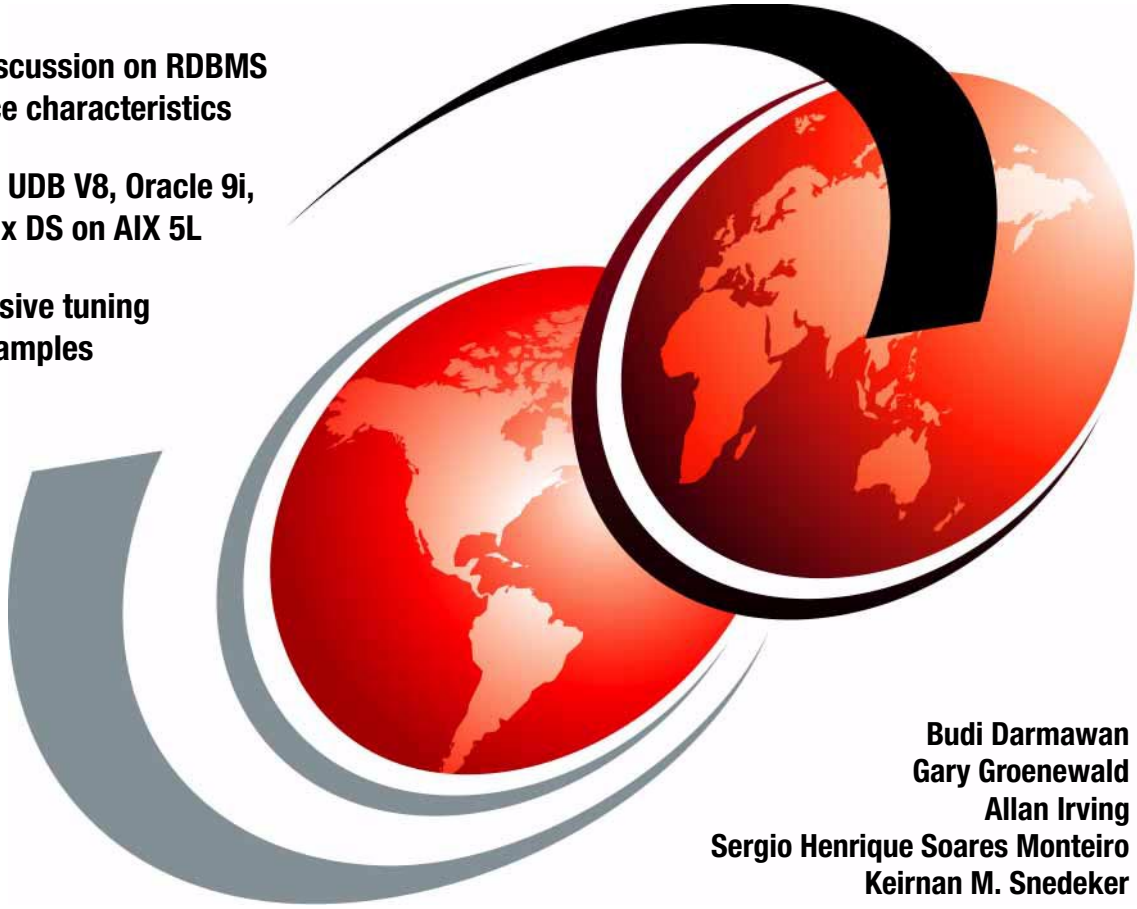
IBM

Database Performance Tuning on AIX

- In-depth discussion on RDBMS performance characteristics
- Covers DB2 UDB V8, Oracle 9i, and Informix DS on AIX 5L
- Comprehensive tuning tips and examples



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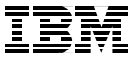

International Technical Support Organization

Database Performance Tuning on AIX

January 2003

SG24-5511-01

Note: Before using this information and the product it supports, read the information in “Notices” on page xix.

Second Edition (January 2003)

This edition applies to Version 5.1 of AIX running DB2 Universal Database Version 8.1, Oracle Database Server Version 9.2, and Informix Dynamic Server Version 9.30.

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Preface

This IBM Redbook is designed to help system designers, system administrators, and database administrators design, size, implement, maintain, monitor, and tune a Relational Database Management System (RDBMS) for optimal performance on AIX. An RDBMS is usually a significant factor in building the profit line of a company. It represents an important investment and its performance is vital to the success of the company.

This redbook contains hints and tips from experts that work on RDBMS performance every day. It also provides introductions to general database layout concepts from a performance point of view, design and sizing guidelines, tuning recommendations, and performance and tuning information for DB2 UDB, Oracle, and IBM Informix databases.

The performance tips provided here relate to the things that a system administrator or database administrator can change. This book does not cover performance tuning issues that relate to application and database design, which includes SQL query tuning.

The team that wrote this redbook

This redbook was produced by a team of specialists from around the world working at the International Technical Support Organization, Austin Center.

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Summary of changes

This section describes the technical changes made in this edition of the book and in previous editions. This edition may also include minor corrections and editorial changes that are not identified.

Summary of Changes
for SG24-5511-01
for Database Performance Tuning on AIX
as created or updated on January 16, 2003.

January 2003, Second Edition

This revision reflects the addition, deletion, or modification of new and changed information described below.

New and changed information

- Covers concepts and tuning tips on the IBM Informix Dynamic Server. We cover IBM Informix Dynamic Server Version 9.30.
- Updated discussion on DB2 and Oracle to cover the following versions: DB2 Universal Database Version 8.1 and Oracle Database Server Version 9i.
- Discussion updated to accommodate enhancements with AIX 5L.
- Information on new storage technologies, such as network disk drives and storage subsystems.
- The hardware platform is now IBM @server pSeries. Specifically, we tested some options using IBM @server pSeries p690, which is commonly called Regatta.

1

Introduction to this redbook

In this chapter, we provide some general overview of the database performance project, show the environment of our project, and describe the document structure. The sections covered are:

- 1.1, “Relational database management systems” on page 2 gives some basic background information on the need for tuning relational database systems.
- 1.2, “Project environment” on page 3 lists the environment where we run our test systems.
- 1.3, “Document organization” on page 3 shows how this redbook is structured as well as a guide through the rest of the chapters.

1.1 Relational database management systems

Relational Database Management Systems (RDBMS) have become more and more the core IT systems of companies and large enterprises. They are vital for companies' profit lines, because RDBMS systems hold data, such as sales, stock, finances, and order income. This data has to be accessible by many people at the same time, often 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, especially since companies are extending their business onto a global market, and people need to have access to the systems from all time zones. Not only production data for the daily business, but also historical data is held in the companies' database systems. This data is used for research and to provide information for major management decisions.

High performance of these systems is very often vital for the success of a company. Customer orders have to be processed quickly, and available stock in the warehouses has to be found and assigned to the according order. Especially for companies with time-critical data, such as airlines, good performance is mandatory. Performance also becomes an increasing issue because the systems get bigger every year, the databases get more complex, and, last but not least, RDBMS systems mean a large investment in resources, both in money and people, and everybody wants value for their money.

Database performance is a very wide area with many different aspects. It is dependent on a large number of factors, such as the hardware, the application, the workload, the layout of the disk subsystem, and an uncounted number of system and database parameters.

Within this book, we want to share our knowledge and experience with you and help you understand what database performance is all about and where to focus on when you plan, run, and tune a Relational Database Management System. We focus on things that you can change as a system administrator or database administrator to improve performance. We do not cover database and application design or SQL statement tuning.

We found that it was often hard to pin down clear facts since the alteration of one little parameter can change the whole picture, but we give you a number of rules of thumb, based on our experience, and we put a large amount of information down for you to make conclusions about the performance needs and impacts of your database system.

We also hope to cut through many myths and legends about performance tuning options that are no longer true or that are only part of the truth, as well as give you an update on the latest features of AIX that you can use to make your database perform at its best.

1.2 Project environment

The project was performed at the ITSO Austin Center. The detailed information of the environment is as follows:

- 1.2.1, “Hardware configuration” on page 3
- 1.2.2, “Operating systems level” on page 3
- 1.2.3, “Database server” on page 3

1.2.1 Hardware configuration

The project was performed using several machine partitions with the IBM @server pSeries p690. Each partitions contains two processors and two internal 18 GB disks and external disks are connected using an SSA adapter. Each partition contains eight SSA disks, with 2 GB each.

1.2.2 Operating systems level

We install the RDBMS on AIX 5L using the FixPack 51D. We then install the Server Bundle and Application Development bundle. We also install VisualAge C++ for AIX to provide the C compiler.

1.2.3 Database server

The following list gives the database level that we use:

- DB2 Universal Database Version 8.1 beta (build level s021014)
- Oracle 9i Version 9.2 database server
- IBM Informix Dynamic Server Version 9.30

1.3 Document organization

You might find this book to be helpful in any stage of your database’s life cycle: In the planning and sizing stage, during implementation, and when running a productive database system. We adapted the structure of our redbook to this life cycle and subdivided it into three major parts:

- RDBMS concepts: Covering the concepts of Relational Database Management Systems, the different workload characteristics, and an introduction into both DB2 UDB, Oracle, and IBM Informix databases, including a brief introduction into parallel database systems.

- System design and sizing for optimal performance: Covering the pre-life phase of an RDBMS sizing to meet the requirements of the predicted workload, and the system design and layout for optimal performance.
- System optimization: Focusing on the implementation of an RDBMS and the monitoring and tuning tasks once the database is installed.

This book is written from an AIX and IBM @server pSeries point of view and focuses on how an RDBMS can use the advanced features of these products.

Even though we are covering DB2 UDB, Oracle, and IBM Informix databases in more detail, a large part of the book also applies to any other Relational Database Management System. We chose DB2 UDB, Oracle, and IBM Informix because they represent the major portion of all databases installed on IBM @server pSeries.

Database design or application programming are large subjects that are common to all platforms. There is a wide range of literature available on these subjects; therefore, we do not cover these subjects in this redbook, nor do we go into great detail on Structured Query Language (SQL). Refer to “Related publications” on page 493 for some useful books.

Parallel databases are briefly mentioned so that you know when to consider them. However, covering parallel database design and performance exceeds the scope of this redbook.

Designing, sizing, and tuning an RDBMS is rather an art than a science, and it requires a lot of technical skills and personal experience. This book, therefore, is a valuable source of information on your way of becoming a professional RDBMS performance expert.

Table 1-1 shows some suggested paths for reading this redbook.

Table 1-1 Reading paths

Step	Task	Where to go	Flow
1	Understanding RDBMS concepts, especially for systems administrators with limited RDBMS experience.	Chapter 2, “Introduction to relational database system concepts” on page 9	For an experienced DBA, you may want to skip this chapter and go to step 2 or step 3.
2	Understanding how RDBMS workload can be categorized and how we segment the different workloads.	Chapter 3, “Types of workload” on page 49	Understand the concept of the RDBMS that you use in step 3.

Step	Task	Where to go	Flow
3	Understanding how a RDBMS systems is structured for DB2 UDB Oracle or IBM Informix.	Chapter 4, “DB2 Universal Database” on page 61, Chapter 5, “Oracle databases” on page 87, and Chapter 6, “IBM Informix Dynamic Server” on page 111	If you need to plan for a new implementation, go to step 4. If you need to implement a new RDBMS, go to step 7; otherwise, go directly to tuning in step 8.
4	Understanding sizing information for RDBMS implementation.	Chapter 7, “Sizing a database system” on page 133	Go to step 5.
5	Understanding server requirements for RDBMS implementation.	Chapter 8, “Designing RDBMS servers” on page 153	Go to step 6.
6	Understanding various options for disk subsystems in RDBMS implementation.	Chapter 9, “Designing a disk subsystem” on page 187	If you just want to perform planning, you are done; otherwise, go to step 7.
7	Understanding considerations for hardware and AIX before, during, and after the RDBMS installation.	Chapter 10, “Implementing your database” on page 233	Go to step 8.
8	Understanding performance monitoring tools and methods for RDBMS.	Chapter 11, “Monitoring an RDBMS system for performance” on page 251	Go to step 9.
9	Understanding tuning methods and concepts.	Chapter 12, “Tuning an RDBMS system” on page 287	Go to step 10.
10	Understanding AIX level tuning that can be performed for RDBMS.	Chapter 13, “AIX and hardware tuning considerations” on page 321	Go to step 11.
11	Understanding practical tuning approaches for RDBMS systems, DB2 UDB Oracle, or IBM Informix.	Chapter 14, “DB2 UDB tuning” on page 339, Chapter 15, “Oracle tuning” on page 377, and Chapter 16, “IBM Informix Dynamic Server tuning” on page 413	Done, or read reference information in the appendixes.
12	Read about performance tools command syntax.	Appendix A, “AIX performance tools summary” on page 439	
13	Review vital SQL statements for each RDBMS.	Appendix B, “Vital monitoring SQLs and commands” on page 459	

Step	Task	Where to go	Flow
15	Read the correct way to open a performance PMR to IBM, for an RDBMS running on AIX platform.	Appendix C, “Reporting performance problems” on page 473	
16	Read an overview of IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases.	Appendix D, “IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases” on page 481	

Part 1

RDBMS concepts

In this part, we describe some general concepts related to the RDBMS structure and design that can affect performance. We start with a general overview of RDBMS concepts in Chapter 2, “Introduction to relational database system concepts” on page 9. The workload that each RDBMS performs typically dictates the performance model of each RDBMS, therefore, we discuss this concept in Chapter 3, “Types of workload” on page 49. The next chapters discusses specific RDBMS implementations:

- Chapter 4, “DB2 Universal Database” on page 61
- Chapter 5, “Oracle databases” on page 87
- Chapter 6, “IBM Informix Dynamic Server” on page 111

2

Introduction to relational database system concepts

This chapter covers the basic theory behind modern Relational Database Management Systems (RDBMS) and how they are implemented on AIX at an overview level. It also details what the RDBMS is meant to achieve and how it keeps the data safe. If you are new to databases, or have forgotten the basics and want a reminder, then this is a good place to start. This chapter contains the following sections:

- 2.1, “RDBMS defined” on page 10 provides basic definition of RDBMS.
- 2.2, “RDBMS characteristics” on page 14 shows some typical characteristics that must exist for a RDBMS.
- 2.3, “RDBMS components” on page 18 describes some key components of RDBMS.
- 2.4, “Defining the RDBMS terms and ideas” on page 25 lists some common terms that you may encounter in our discussion on RDBMS and introduces Structured Query Language (SQL).
- 2.5, “Ensuring data availability” on page 33 discusses some data availability options for RDBMS, including backup types.
- 2.9, “Parallel databases” on page 40 discusses parallel databases issues.

2.1 RDBMS defined

Data is information. A database is a place that you store data. Databases can store three different types of data:

- Common data: Can include numbers, dates, and strings of characters, such as names and addresses.
- Complex and large objects: There are many esoteric data types that can be stored and managed by a database, such as sound, geographical data, such as maps, pictures, graphics, and even videos.
- User defined data: Most modern database systems also allow the user to store new data types that they define and want to manipulate.

A typical database processing is shown in Figure 2-1.

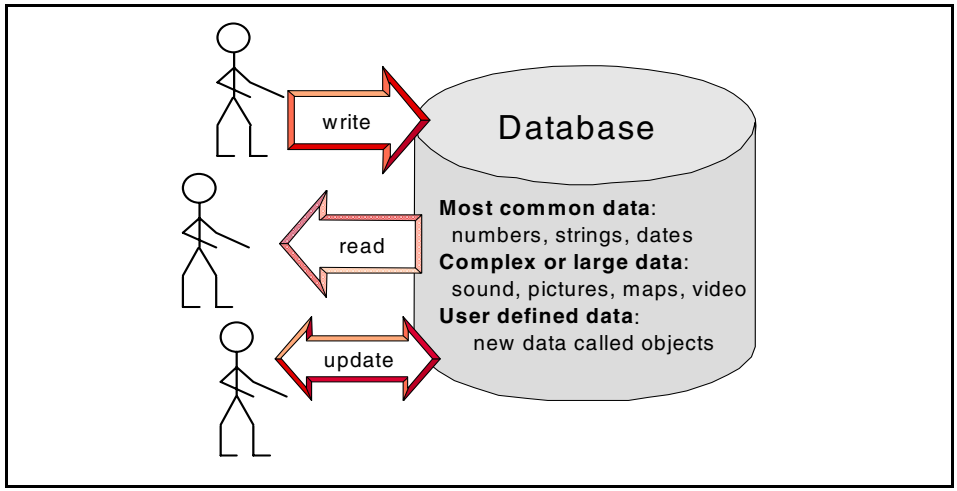

Figure 2-1 Databases write, read, and update many types of data

The database must allow the user to:

- Write information into the database
- Retrieve the information later
- Update the data

Databases must be able perform all these operations in a very reliable fashion (or we would not trust the database with important data) and at high speed. They also should be able to provide these functions to many people at the same time. As a side effect, a database can be used as a common place for information and provide many people with one common view. By this, we mean that if the

database contains details of, for example, a parts inventory, everyone can see the same number of items that are available (there is only one true answer).

Although various types of data can be stored in a modern database, the vast bulk of production databases are used to store simple records of numbers, strings of characters, and dates. In this redbook, we concentrate on these data types.

In UNIX system environments, there is a tradition of each UNIX machine having one purpose. An example might be one machine as an NFS server, another as a printer server, and yet another as an e-mail server, as shown in Figure 2-2.

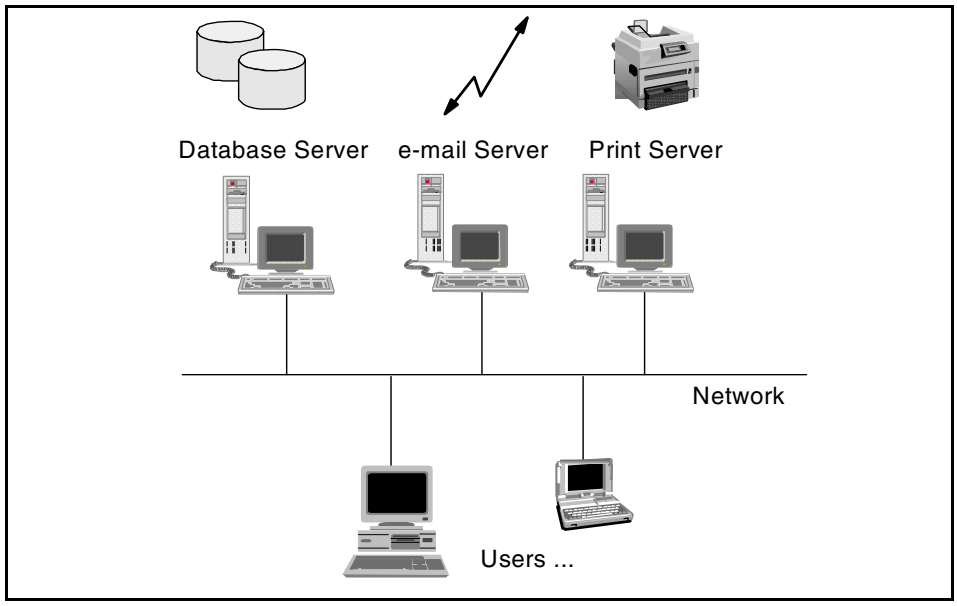

Figure 2-2 Classic UNIX approach of using multiple servers

The multiple machine configuration is for a number of reasons:

- In the early days, UNIX machines were not as powerful as other systems (for example, the IBM mainframe). So, dedicating a server to the workload maximized the computer power for the workload.
- UNIX is strong on networking, which makes client server systems easier to implement; therefore, splitting workloads this way is natural for UNIX.
- Having the workload on different machines avoids interference between the applications. For example, if two compute intensive (or I/O intensive) applications on one machine compete for resources, the performance of both applications suffers.

- There is a limitation on the number of disks a single UNIX machine can support.

Traditionally, RDBMSs run on dedicated UNIX servers. This redbook assumes that most databases are running on dedicated machines. This means that the machine can be tuned for maximum database performance with no concern for other workload types. In the last couple of years, UNIX machines have become very powerful (by adopting many mainframe design characteristics). This results in large SMP UNIX machines on which a variety of workloads are run. An SMP machine is managed as one machine. The application workloads are, however, separated by logical or physical partitions to reduce competition between workloads for CPU, memory, or I/O resources. This means these machines perform like many smaller database servers joined together.

Note: In this redbook, we assume the RDBMS is running on a dedicated machine. Therefore, the system tuning for performance does not have to take other applications or workloads into account.

This redbook is about relational database management systems (RDBMS). What does the word *relational* mean? In a simple database, there are many records, and applications can add more records to the database. This operation is called write, put, save, or add a record. They all mean the same thing. These records can later be retrieved. This operation is called retrieve, read, fetch, or get a record.

Figure 2-3 shows how data is read from a non-relational database.

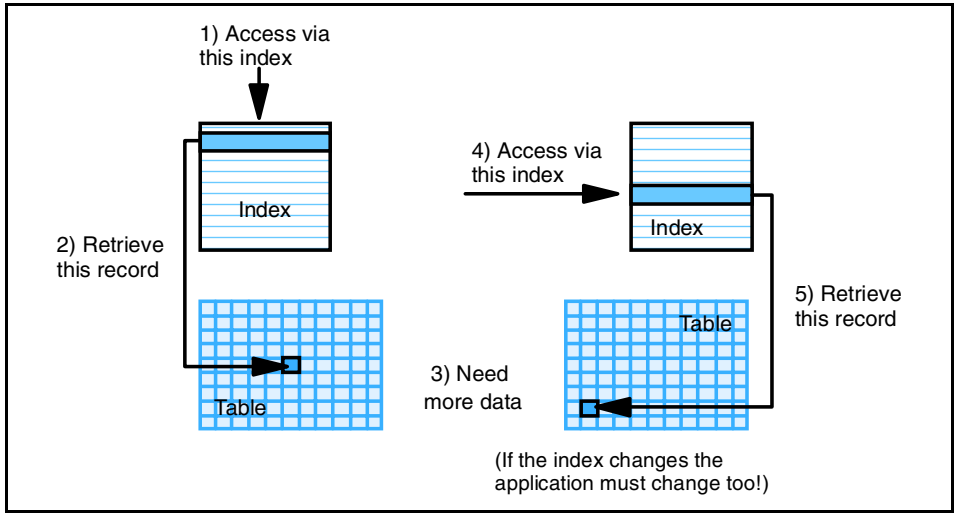

Figure 2-3 Non-relational database method

As shown in Figure 2-3 on page 12, to decide which record to retrieve, the application has to inform the database on how it wishes to see the records (access method, for example, the customer record in last name order) and the record identity (a number or name). If this record contains reference to other data (for example, the first record is for an employee, and it contains the department number), then the application has to include the code used to access these other records. It has to set up the access method and then read the record for the department to find out the department name, address, manager, and so on. This is sometimes called a one row at a time application, which is inefficient.

The alternative is the relational method used by an RDBMS. The database understands relations between data and uses this information to extract the data needed in a single operation. Figure 2-4 shows how RDBMS data is accessed.

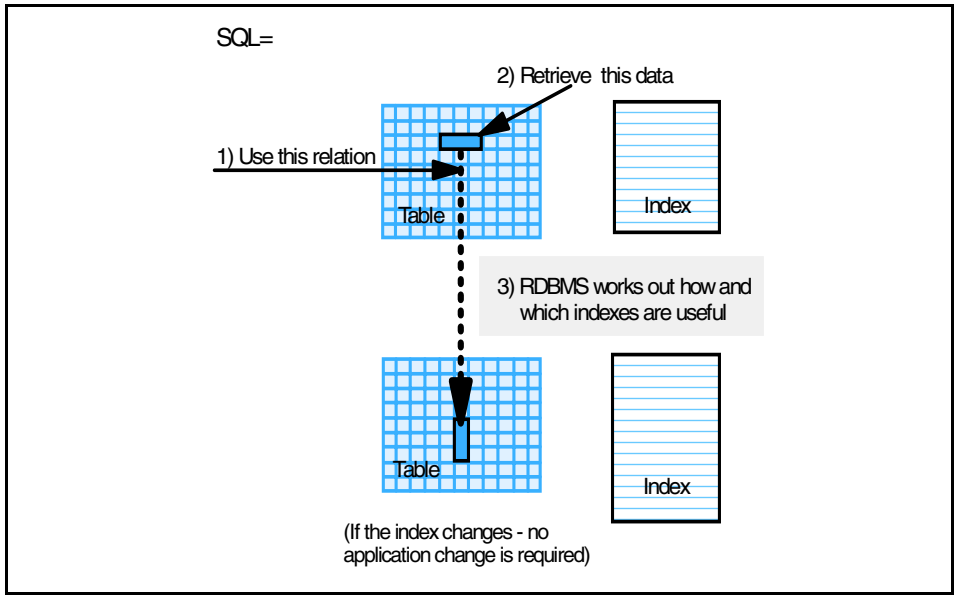

Figure 2-4 Relational database method

It allows the application to read the two records from two tables at the same time and only get back the relevant information it requested. The RDBMS has used the relationship to:

- Save the application making two requests.
- Reduce the information retrieved to what the application really needs (in other words, not the entire record, just the parts needed).
- Save the database from having to process two requests.
- Save the application from having to decide how to access the data.

That last part is probably the most important. In an RDBMS, the application does not need to understand how the RDBMS will access the data, just what data and relationship to use. This allows the RDBMS to intelligently make its own mind up on the best method. It also allows the database administrator (DBA) to change the database without affecting all the applications or requiring them to be recoded. Thus, one change from the DBA, for example, adding a new index, can increase the performance of all applications at a single stroke. The language used to describe what data the applications require and the relationship is called Structured Query Language (SQL).

2.2 RDBMS characteristics

Maintaining a set of records is simple. We all could do this with a simple card index on our desk but imagine 200 people turn up at your desk and:

- 40 of them start adding new cards as fast as they can.
- 40 of them spot mistakes in your cards and start making adjustments to correct the cards.
- 10 start removing cards and throwing them in the waste paper basket.
- 50 of them start cross checking the cards to make sure things, such as addresses and telephone numbers, are correct.
- 40 of them are trying to update the same cards at the same time and start having heated arguments about who should have the card and if the last change was correct or not.
- 20 people have half-updated a card and went for lunch, and then someone else took the card and made other changes.

This then goes on day after day. Chaos would be the result as soon as:

- The number of cards occupy the entire room.
- The heated arguments can result in damaged cards.
- The details on the cards can not be trusted.
- Finding the right card would be increasingly hard and would take longer as the number of cards increases.
- If there was an accident (such as a dropped card, or worse, a fire or flood), we might never sort out the mess.

This is what an RDBMS copes with 24 hours a day. What we need is transactions that are ACID, that is, *A*tomic, *C*onsistent, *I*ndependent and *D*urable.

These attributes are not simple. This is why people use one of the well-known RDBMSs and do not write their own. How then are these attributes actually implemented in practice within the RDBMS?

- Atomic: This means that every change either completely works, and all records are updated, or the update completely fails, and the database is not changed at all. This is particularly important when you are considering things such as a banking system. You should either transfer the money from one account to the other or not at all. A half completed change is not a satisfactory condition. The RDBMS system achieves atomicity by using a database log. If changes or updates are atomic, they are called *transactions*. When transactions make changes to the database, they are noted in the database log. When the outcome of a transaction becomes known (that is, it has finished or been abandoned), the RDBMS will update database records. Either all the records are updated, or all the records will be unchanged. To do this, the RDBMS keeps copies of the original records and the updated records in the log. The RDBMS uses the term *commit* to refer to a finished transaction and *rollback* to refer to an abandoned transaction.
- Consistent: This is achieved by maintaining multiple, concurrent views of the same data. The main point of this attribute is that no program (or user) is able to see the database in a state between transactions. It appears to the user that a transaction takes an infinitely short period of time (which means the database suddenly changes at commit time). Why is this important? Without this attribute, it is possible to get misleading results. Think back to the banking example where, this time, a customer has $1000 in their deposit account and zero in their current account and is transferring all the money between these accounts as a transaction. At all times, the customer has $1000 in total. If the RDBMS was not providing a consistent view of the database, we could find the customer with (depending on the order of updating the records):
  - $1000 (the right answer)
  - $0 (that is, when the money is withdrawn from one account but not yet added to the new account)
  - $2000 (that is, the money added into the new account before it is withdrawn from the first account)

  If one of the last two items on this list takes place for the program that prints monthly bank statements, then the customer could be very worried ($0) or delighted ($2000). Clearly, the database needs to provide consistency, and this is done by temporarily keeping multiple versions of records during transactions. Each transaction will see a consistent state of the data. If necessary, these copies are placed in the database log.
- Independence: This is achieved by using clever locking mechanisms. A simplistic way of updating the database would be to allow only one program to do all the updates, but this would have severe performance limitations. So,

an RDBMS must allow many programs to read and write records at the same time. Before updating records, a program locks the data for reading or writing so that no two programs actually update the same record at the same time. In a large database, there are millions or billions of records; so, the chances of two users wanting the same record is very low and, therefore, this works well. But, there are some records in the database that many users need. A classic example is the sales ordering processing database where the next invoice number is held in a single record. Every invoice needs to take the current number and increment it by one. These issues are well understood, and there are various methods to reduce the problem. These include RDBMS support for supplying simple numbers, the application taking a number and immediately committing to release the locks, pre-allocation of numbers (for example, one program uses the range of 1 million to 2 million and the next using 2 million to 3 million), and letting a background process do the actual updating.

One problem with locking is that two programs can lock each other; therefore, both wait indefinitely for the other to release its locks. This is called a *dead-lock* or *deadly-embrace*. All RDBMS systems have mechanisms to spot this problem and to resolve it. Typically, the RDBMS will fail one of the transactions, and the application can (if coded properly) retry the update slightly later and, hopefully, after the other transaction has completed, it will not cause the same problem again.

- Durable: The data in the database is often vital for the business. If the transactions are lost, then major problems are expected. For example, in sales order processing, if the transaction information is forgotten, not only does the company not make a profit, but the customer gets annoyed when the goods do not arrive and may well take their business elsewhere. To make the transaction durable, we have to make sure that, whatever happens, the transaction's details are remembered. To provide atomicity, we used a database log. Durability uses the log too. When the transaction finishes, the outcome is also placed in the log (committed or aborted). If the database fails in some way (for example, a power cut or a disk crash), then when the RDBMS is restarted, it checks the database log. It will either find that the transaction finished, in which case the updated records are put into the database, or the transaction failed, in which case the RDBMS makes sure the original records are in the database.

Without these ACID attributes, your data is not in safe hands. Fortunately, these are the properties that an RDBMS provides. It is only through thinking about possible bad experiences of incorrect, damaged, or missing data that one can work out how important these attributes are for a database.

Summary: ACID stands for:

- Atomic: Changes are fully completed or not done at all
- Consistent: The data is never seen in a half completed transaction state
- Independent: Changes are not allowed to interfere with each other
- Durable: Once changed, the new data is guaranteed to be available

2.2.1 Database logging

The trick for an RDBMS is to provide these ACID attributes while maintaining high performance and scaling to large volumes of data. The main trick that RDBMSs use for performance is not at all obvious. To provide three of the ACID properties, the RDBMS uses the database log (the other property uses locks that are not logged because they are transitory). Normally, when a transaction finishes, this is noted in the log so that if a failure occurs the database knows the result and, if necessary, can rework the transaction. Once the log is written to disk, the transaction is saved so that the RDBMS does not actually have to immediately go and update the database records themselves. Instead, the database only writes to the database log and then tells the application (and user) that the transaction has finished. It does the updating of the data disks a little later and at its leisure. This method is used because the log and data disks have different characteristics. The records in the database are probably scattered all over many disks. This means updating them would take time, as the user would have to compete with all the other database I/O to the disk, and the disk heads are making large movements, which slows down access times, see Figure 2-5.

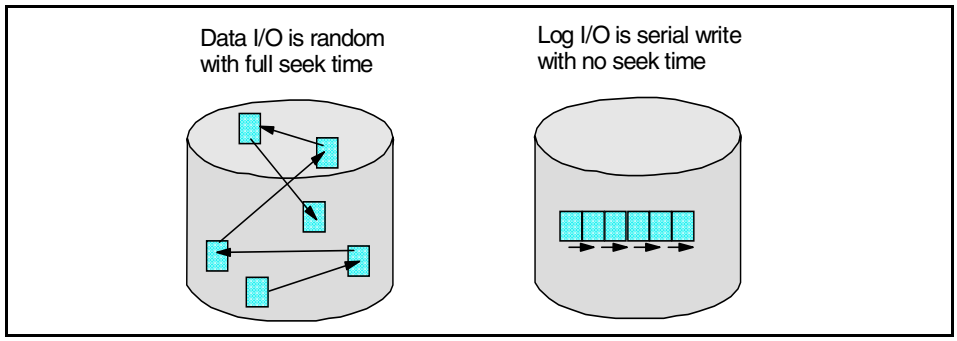

Figure 2-5 Data I/O is slow and random, but log I/O is fast and serial

The log, however, is written out as a sequential file, and if the log disk is dedicated to the log (which is normally the case), writing out to the log will be extremely fast. For the log disk, there is little or no disk head movement, and, thus, it has faster access times.

This RDBMS data logging has three side effects:

- Good performance: Transactions are finished very fast (before the records are even updated) and allow the user to continue with the next transaction.
- Logging performance is a focus point: The log is critical to the performance. This is why RDBMS logs are often on dedicated disks and on the fastest disks possible.
- The log disk is a failure point: As we have not updated the database records immediately, the log is the only place the recent updates are stored. If the log disk fails, we destroy the database because we no longer know which records where updated and which were not. We have lost three of the ACID properties. Most RDBMSs will refuse to allow access to the database until this log is recovered in some way. The solution to the single point of failure is to protect yourself from the disk crash by mirroring the log disk or by using RAID-5.

Summary: The RDBMS log is the key to RDBMS performance and recovery.

2.3 RDBMS components

This section explains what to expect on a system that is running an RDBMS and what components provide what features. These components are:

- 2.3.1, “RDBMS data” on page 18
- 2.3.2, “RDBMS cache” on page 20
- 2.3.3, “RDBMS processes” on page 21
- 2.3.4, “RDBMS tools” on page 23

2.3.1 RDBMS data

The first thing you need for an RDBMS is somewhere to store the data, and that is on disks (occasionally also called DASD). Databases are getting larger every year, and most people now refer to the size of a database in GB. The definition of *very large database* (VLDB) changes each year. Table 2-1 on page 19 is a guideline for database sizes. But, note that this is the data size not the disk size. For disk sizes, use the 1:3 rule of thumb (for more information see Chapter 9, “Designing a disk subsystem” on page 187).

Table 2-1 Typical sizes of database

Database description	Raw data size
Minuscule or sample	Less than 1 MB
Experimental or test	100 MB to 2 GB
Tiny	Less than 1 GB
Very small	1 GB to 5 GB
Small	5 GB to 10 GB
Moderate	10 GB to 50 GB
Medium	50 GB to 100 GB
Large	100 GB to 200 GB
Very large (called VLDB)	200 GB to 300 GB
Extremely large	300 GB to 500 GB
Massive	Greater than 500 GB

For a good performance, there is a minimum number of disks required for an RDBMS. For the following example shown in Table 2-2, we assume that the disks are a few GB in size, and the database size is very small.

Table 2-2 Minimum disk requirements

Disk use	Number of disks and comments
Operating system	1 disk.
Paging space	Use the operating system disk above or use 1 - 3 disks for larger memory sizes (2 GB or more).
RDBMS code	1 disk: To allow for upgrade of the RDBMS independently.
RDBMS data RDBMS indexes RDBMS tmp/sort	3 disks: It is recommended that you use one disk for each of the three parts as a minimum (for databases that are less than the size of one disk, this could be the same disk, but this is likely to become a performance bottleneck).
RDBMS log	1 disk: Dedicated for performance.
Totals	6 disks is the minimum.

The conclusion is that, even for the smallest database, about six disks is the minimum for a well performing RDBMS.

In addition, extra disks would be required for mirroring or RAID 5 to allow full disk failure protection. Most databases allow the use of either file system files for the database or raw devices (that is, direct access to the disks by the RDBMS). The file system database is visible to all UNIX users, for example, using the **`df`** or **`ls`** UNIX commands, but the files are not readable or writable by anyone other than the RDBMS processes. Figure 2-6 shows a typical structure of an RDBMS.

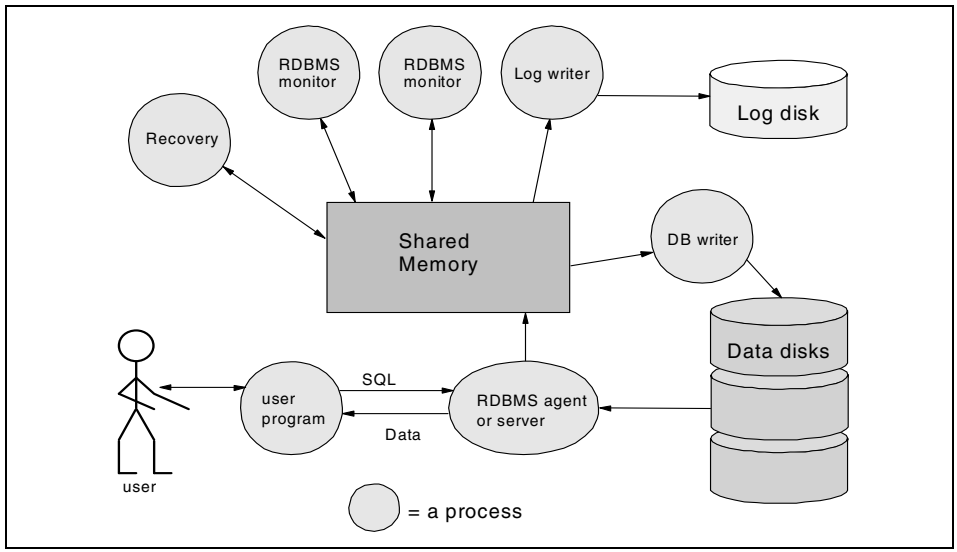

Figure 2-6 Structure of an RDBMS

2.3.2 RDBMS cache

All RDBMSs have to read and write data from the disks and into memory. But in computer terms, the disks are very slow when compared with memory. The access time to a disk is approximately 10 milliseconds, and the access time to memory is approximately 10 nanoseconds, that is, a ratio of one to a million (1,000,000). Therefore, to save time, the RDBMS keeps all the recently used disk blocks in memory. This is referred to as the RDBMS buffer cache or RDBMS disk block cache. This memory gives an RDBMS a major boost in performance. Ideally, the RDBMS would like to copy the entire database into memory. Unfortunately, memory is a lot more expensive than disks. The ratio is one to 40 for memory and disk space of the same size. This means, in practice, that only a small, but frequently used, part of the database is kept in memory. The RDBMS allocates memory using a *least recently used* (LRU) algorithm so that it dynamically works out the most important data. This memory on UNIX systems allocated by the RDBMS is called IPC Shared Memory and allows all the RDBMS processes to have concurrent access. A rule of thumb is that 5% of the

database data is kept in memory. Also held in memory are a lot of internal data structures of the RDBMS itself. So, the shared memory includes:

- The RDBMS buffer/block cache
- The RDBMS lock data
- The log entries to be written to the log disk
- The SQL statement and query plan cache, so that the RDBMS does not have to work out the best strategy for answering the same statement twice
- Some special tables used internally by the RDBMS

In practice, this memory is implemented as UNIX shared memory and is visible to the UNIX user using the `ipcs` command.

Note: The RDBMS cache or pool is the key to performance by reducing disk I/O and allowing many users concurrent access to the same data.

2.3.3 RDBMS processes

The RDBMS code, data, memory, and processes have to be owned by a UNIX user. So, while installing the RDBMS, one of the first tasks is to create this user to own the RDBMS files, memory, and processes. Other normal RDBMS users can access the database, but only if they have their permission set up to the RDBMS and only using RDBMS programs.

The users (or their programs, applications, tools, or code) are never allowed direct access to the RDBMS memory or files. This is because users are not trusted. If a single user damages the database in-memory database structures due to a poor program (or deliberately), then database's data could be corrupted, and the database could crash. User programs (from any source) can only interact with the RDBMS using a special library, which, itself, interfaces using a RDBMS supplied process that is connected to the RDBMS memory and files. This seems like overkill, but user level RDBMS programmers are famous for making mistakes (particularly with pointers in the C code), which can compromise the RDBMS.

Each RDBMS has a set of processes that provide the core function of the RDBMS. These processes have to do a number of things:

- Recovery: Recover the database when it fails. This is actually done on the next database start.
- Sanity checking: Monitor the RDBMS to check for major problems.
- Clean up: Monitor transactions and user processes and, if they fail, put the record back to its original state and remove the locks.

- Log writing: Write the database log to disk whenever a transaction finishes.
- Database update: Write the updated data and indexes from memory back onto the database disks.

Each RDBMS uses different names for the various parts.

- In DB2 UDB, all the processes are named db2<something>.
- In Oracle, the processes are named ora<something>.
- In Informix, each virtual processor is started with the **`oninit`** command.

Note that the processes described above are doing RDBMS housekeeping.

So, which processes actually do the work for the user in terms of:

- Executing the SQL statements?
- Reading data from the disks into memory?
- Returning data back to the user program?

When a user program starts up, it has to make a connection to the RDBMS. We said before that user programs are not allowed to directly use the RDBMS resources; so, during the connect, the RDBMS starts or allocates a special RDBMS process to do the work requested by the user program. These special programs are called differently by the various RDBMS vendors. For DB2 UDB, they are called DB2 agents; for Oracle, they are known as Oracle servers, background servers, or Oracle slaves, and for Informix, they are named listen threads. Until the user program stops, crashes, or disconnects from the database, these RDBMS processes are dedicated to this user program. This is illustrated in Figure 2-7 on page 23.

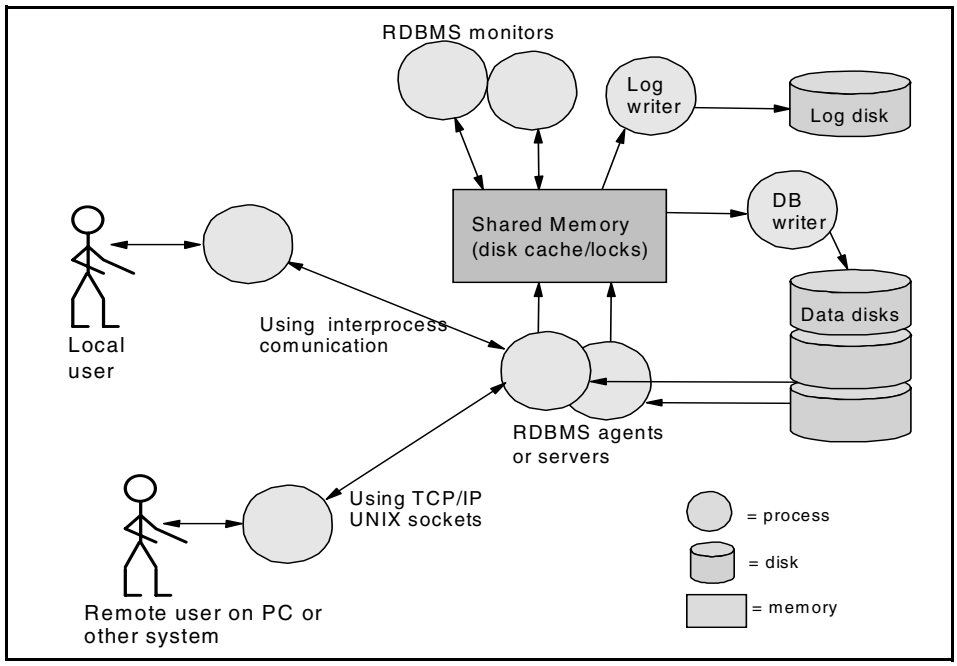

Figure 2-7 Local or remote user access

Users can actually be using local dumb terminals, accessing the RDBMS from another system, or using a PC. This connection to an RDBMS can be local or remote. The same thing happens in both cases, but the communication method used is different. Typically, local connections use UNIX Inter Process Communication (IPC) services, and remote connections use UNIX sockets over TCP/IP. Whichever method is used, the user ends up communicating to the RDBMS using the DB2 agent, Oracle server, or Informix poll thread.

Tip: UNIX IPC services are shared memory, shared message queues, and shared semaphores. These are used to communicate between processes on the same machine at high speed.

2.3.4 RDBMS tools

Users are quite often not good program developers. So, how do non-technical users get access to the data that is stored in the database? First, they can use applications written for them. These may be written by their company, or they might be bought in from third parties. Either way, the user either starts the application or starts a graphical interface that communicates with the application.

For database administration (and for experienced users that can write SQL), there are actually applications written by the RDBMS vendor. Before the RDBMS is started, and to control the RDBMS once started, there is a Database Administrator (DBA) tool. This tool (or group of tools) allows the DBA to create the initial database, start the database in exclusive mode (only the DBA has access), make large changes to the database and the way it operates, and, of course, shut the database down.

There is one final important tool available to the DBA and to normal database users (if given the permissions to run it). This tool has the generic name of the database *interactive monitor*. For DB2 UDB, it is the **db2** command, for Oracle, it is the **sqlplus** command, and for Informix it is the **dbaccess** command. These tools allow the user to type in SQL statements directly, send them to the RDBMS, and output the results in a reasonably sensible format. This allows the user to:

- Type in an SQL statement and run it (without writing a program every time)
- Experiment with SQL statements for education
- Do ad-hoc SQL to answer specific questions from the data
- Try alternative SQL statements to determine one with the best performance

These tools also have non-SQL features that control the output format, provide response time information on the SQL, and output details about the database, tables, and indexes. In DB2, the UNIX shell can be used to provide programming features to the basic SQL statements. The Oracle **sqlplus** tool also provides a complete programming language PL/SQL (like BASIC with SQL added). Informix **dbaccess** provides stored procedure language (SPL) that may be used to control SQL. Figure 2-8 shows the various methods of interacting with the RDBMS.

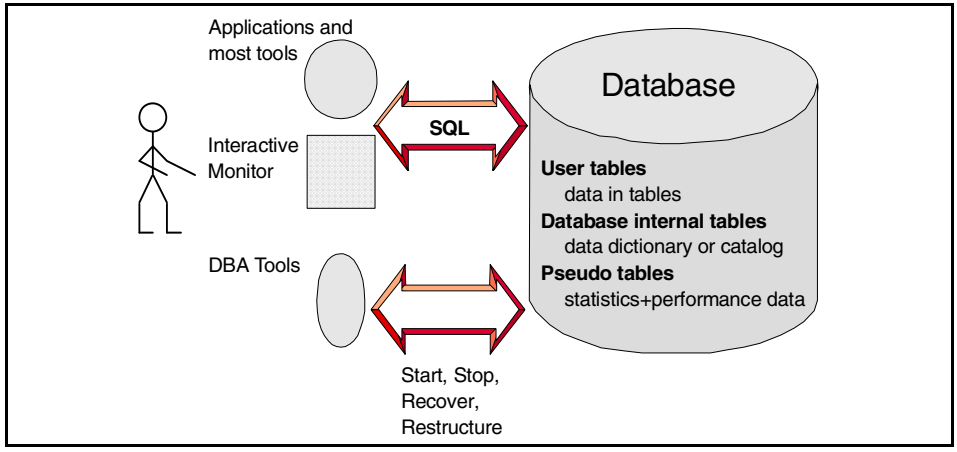

Figure 2-8 User tools and table types

The database has the tables and indexes for the users. But how does RDBMS keep track of all the table names, column names and types, the indexes, user details, and structures? The answer is simple: the database has yet more tables that describe the user tables, indexes, and users themselves (names, passwords, and privileges). It also has many internal tables used to control and monitor the RDBMS while it is running. In effect, it has a database about the database. This is called a catalog or dictionary in all RDBMSs. In DB2 UDB and Informix DS, it is called the *catalog* or *system catalog*, and in Oracle, it is called the *system data dictionary*. Some of these internal tables do not actually exist as tables on the disk, but are internal, temporary, and dynamic variables within the RDBMS about the currently running system. The RDBMS gives the DBA and database user an SQL interface to this data so that there is one interface to all the data. This is a mandatory feature of a relational database, which states there should not be any other data access method to internal data. Therefore, each vendor's interactive monitor gives both the user and DBA one consistent interface to this internal RDBMS data, the RDBMS internal table structures, and the user's own data tables. This makes this interface a very important tool.

There are yet more tools with RDBMS, but each has a specific purpose. For example:

- A data loading tool to rapidly load vast quantities of data and as fast as possible. These can either use SQL to load the data or bypass the RDBMS and load directly into the databases files.
- Backup and recovery tools to save the contents of the database and reload it. There is often various methods and options that balance safety against speed and may interface with tape management software, such as IBM ADstar Storage Manager (ADSM); see also Tivoli Storage Manager (TSM).

Note: The database administrator has many tools to use and learn. Effective usage of these tools is vital for a safe database and good performance.

These tools are very specific to each RDBMS. Some are covered in more detail in Chapter 11, "Monitoring an RDBMS system for performance" on page 251.

2.4 Defining the RDBMS terms and ideas

In the previous section, we have deliberately been a little vague in the use of terms describing the ideas behind the RDBMS. In this section, we will define the terms more accurately.

2.4.1 RDBMS terms

This section provides several important terms that applies in our discussion on RDBMS.

RDBMS transaction This is a unit of work that is either committed or aborted. This means the changes required are either completely done or no changes are made at all. In an RDBMS, a transaction is automatically started whenever the user (actually their application) performs any SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE, or DELETE SQL statement. At the end of the transaction, the user has to use the COMMIT or ROLLBACK SQL statement. In the COMMIT case, the RDBMS logs the transaction, the changes are made, and the lock is released. If it is ROLLBACK, then the RDBMS undoes any updates made so far, logs the failure in the database, and releases the locks. Transactions are assumed to fail unless the COMMIT is found in the log. Most transactions COMMIT, so the RDBMS attempts to make this happen as fast as possible. Figure 2-9 shows a typical application in a RDBMS transaction.

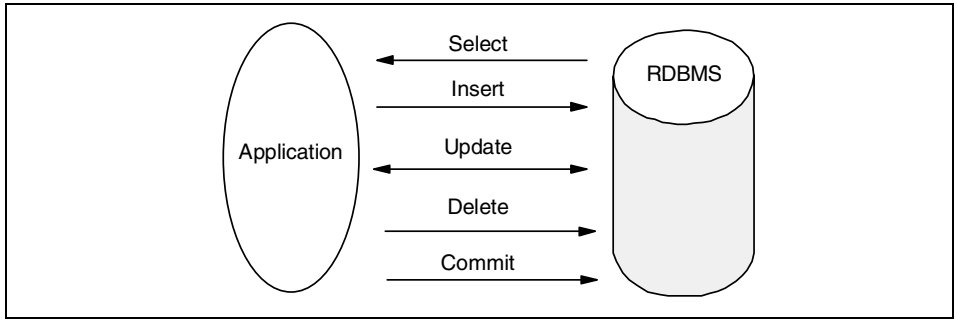

Figure 2-9 RDBMS transactions

Business transaction Business transactions are often confused with RDBMS transactions. These are the transactions that occur as the user views the system. A business transaction might be creating an invoice. Depending on the application, this may actually be many RDBMS transactions. The initial filling of the user's screen might be an RDBMS transaction to extract basic data like the customer details. Further RDBMS transactions might be used to look up data, such as part numbers or supplier details. Finally, when the invoice details are

finished, and the user hits the commit key, the RDBMS will do a transaction to save the new details in the database. Applications use many small RDBMS transactions during one business transaction because this reduces the length of time locks are held on the records. A typical business transaction is shown in Figure 2-10.

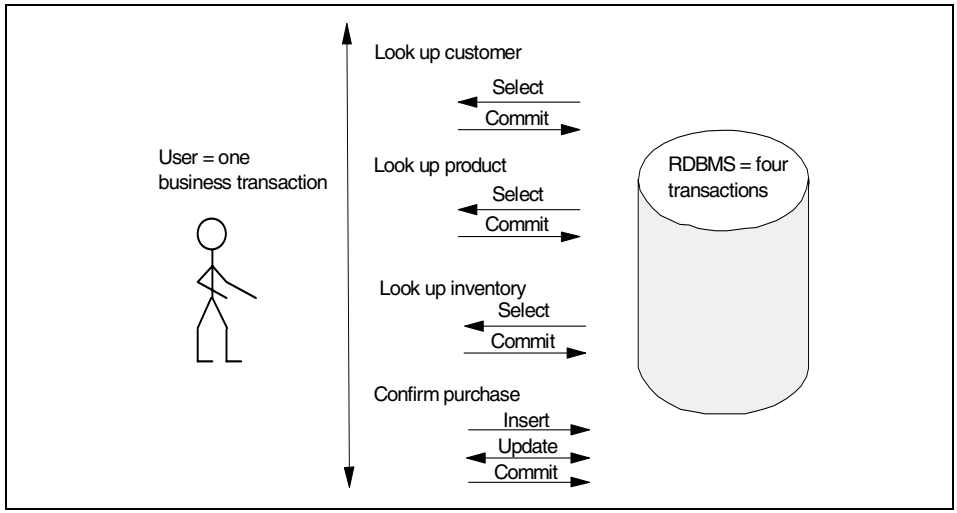

Figure 2-10 Business transactions

Commit One possible result of an RDBMS transaction, which saves the data or updates to the database. You can see the RDBMS transaction and the other result, which is rollback.

Rollback One possible result of an RDBMS transaction, which removes all changes of this transaction. In the database, nothing will have changed after the abort. You can see the RDBMS transaction and the other result, which is commit.

Instance This term has two meanings, depending on the RDBMS. For DB2 UDB and Informix DS, it means the physical database data and files. For Oracle, it means the set of RDBMS processes that are connected to the database.

RDBMS This term includes the database data, files in which the data is stored, the running database processes, and

the database shared resources, such as shared memory, the code, and tools.

Shared memory This is memory on the machine that is dedicated, in this case, to the RDBMS. All of the RDBMS processes have access to this memory and mainly use it to store copies of disk blocks and control information. The RDBMS processes cooperate in using the memory and use locks to control access.

Data buffer This is the part of Shared Memory used to store copies of disk blocks to update them and to speed up processing. Buffer pool is mainly a DB2 UDB and Informix DS term, and Buffer cache is mainly an Oracle term, but the use of these terms is often intermixed.

SGA System Global Area. This is the Oracle term for all the information in Shared Memory.

Tables All of the information in the RDBMS is stored in tables. This concept closely matches the common spread sheet. The table has *rows* and *columns*. The columns are the various attributes of the data, for example, the name, the address the telephone number, and a date.The rows are the data items. These are similar to records (rows) and fields (columns) in non-relational database files (tables). This is shown in Figure 2-11.

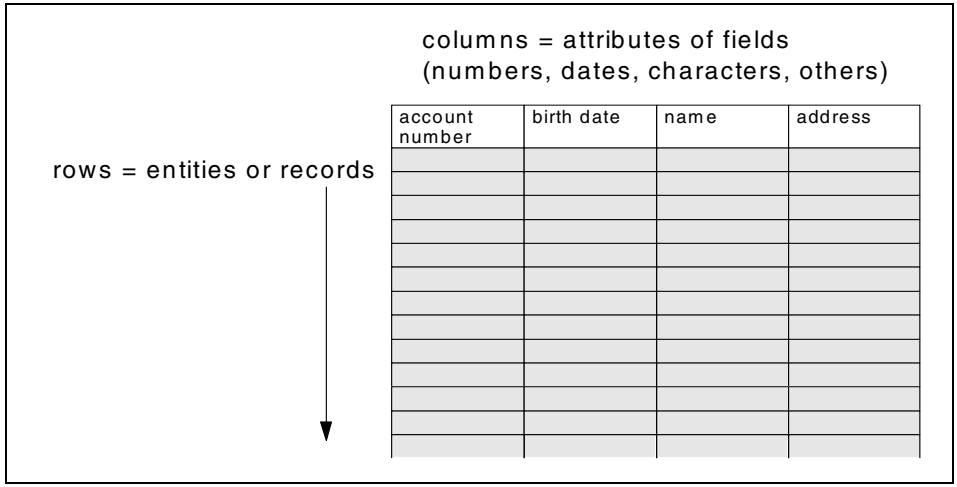

Figure 2-11 Tables, rows, and columns

Row Rows contain the data of the database. In relational theory, they are called entities, and in a non-relational database, they are called records. See also tables.

Column Columns are the various parts of a row. Each row of a table has the same number and type of columns. A column can be of only one type of data, such as numbers or characters. Columns in relational theory are called attributes of the entity, and in non-relational databases, called fields of a record. See also tables.

Relationship This is a term used to describe how the RDBMS should connect two tables in the database. The relationship is made between two columns in the two tables. Typically, each table has a special column that is unique for each row (see keys). When one row refers to a row in the other table, it has this unique identifier in one of its columns. The relationship is described in the SQL statement by referring to these two columns. It should be matched up in the where clause.

View A view presents one or more tables in a way that makes the view seem like a new table. The view does not contain any data, as the data is still in the original tables. A view can also be thought of as a pre-defined SQL statement that can hide the underlying table's details and relationships. A user or application cannot tell the difference between a table and a view.

Keys Columns used to build relations between tables are said to contain keys. SQL relations are created using these key columns. Do not confuse these with index values, as SQL does not use indexes directly. There are two types of keys: primary and foreign.

Primary key To be able to refer to a particular row of a table, there needs to be something unique about it. Database designers usually add a column to every table specifically for this purpose. These numbers or character strings are called primary keys. When a row wishes to refer to data in a row of another table, all that is needed is the primary key. This reference to the primary key is called a foreign key, (see foreign key). The primary key is a good candidate for an index because many SQL statements will often specify a particular row using this key.

Foreign key This is a column of a table that refers to the primary key in another table so that the tables can be joined in an SQL statement (see primary key).

Multi-part key Sometimes the primary key is made from more than one column. Provided the columns together uniquely define a row, this combination can be used as a primary key.

Security The RDBMS has a complete security system with users clearly defined to have access rights to particular tables. There are SQL statements to define a user and grant and revoke privileges. This redbook does not cover security in any further detail, as it is not a performance issue.

Indexes In SQL, language indexes are not mentioned in the data access statements of SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE, and DELETE. A RDBMS will run without any indexes. Indexes are added to tables by the DBA to speed up finding particular rows in large tables. A table can have more than one index, and an index can be on one or more columns.

Temporary storage Also called Tmp Area or Sort Area. When an RDBMS is performing indexing, sorting large tables, or preparing the results of SQL statements, it quite often needs to hold very large volumes of data. If this does not fit into memory, then the RDBMS temporarily stores the data on disk. This will slow down the processing but still provide the possibility to eventually finish. This area on disk is large. It can be as large as the raw data size of the database; so, it represents a large proportion of the disks.

Logs The database uses the log to save the updates to the database data. It also provides disk crash protection and good performance.

Locks To make sure the two processes or transactions do not attempt to update the same information at the same time, the database uses locks.

Tablespace/DBSpace These are the places where tables and indexes are created. It is not part of the SQL standard, but DB2 UDB, Informix, and Oracle use these concepts. The DBA creates tablespaces from files or raw devices in the UNIX system and then creates a table within it. This allows the DBA to place tables and indexes onto

particular disks or sets of disks. Tablespace is a DB2 UDB and Oracle term, and DBSpace is used by Informix DS.

2.4.2 Structured Query Language

The relational database is based on the use of the Structured Query Language (SQL). SQL is a standard syntax for accessing relational database systems based on a relational theory, which is documented in *The Relational Model for Database Management* by E. F. Codd. This book covers the 12 rules that database management systems need to follow in order to be described as truly relational.

Early work on SQL was performed by IBM, but SQL is now a formal international standard to which most RDBMSs conform. SQL provides the core language to access data from an RDBMS.

The prime statements in the language are the Data Manipulation Language (DML) statements. These statements give access to the data within the database. The DML statements are:

- SELECT
- INSERT
- UPDATE
- DELETE

There are also Data Definition Language (DDL) statements, such as:

- CREATE TABLE, CREATE INDEX, and CREATE VIEW
- DROP TABLE, DROP INDEX, and DROP VIEW

The last group is called Data Control Language (DCL) statements, which includes the statements GRANT and REVOKE. DCL statements are used to control user access to data.

Each database has added to the standard basic statements for the following reasons:

- To make the language easier to use (extra functions for common SQL tasks)
- To reduce programming effort (to save time and reduce the amount of coding required)
- To clarify certain ambiguous parts or options in the language (for example, outer joins)

- So that it can also be used to control the databases behavior itself (creating roll back areas and logs)
- For performance optimization (such as parallelization and optimizer control)
- To be very specific on data placement and space use (such as table defaults)

To make matters confusing, some extensions are simply new SQL statements, but others add new options to the standard statements. Typically, programmers can (if careful) avoid RDBMS specific extensions and, thereby, make their application portable between RDBMSs. The DBA, however, is forced to use the extensions because these are used for data placement on disks and for performance tuning. The DBA also uses very RDBMS specific options and internal database parameters for tuning the RDBMS.

If you are looking for an introduction to SQL or an advanced manual, please refer to “Related publications” on page 493 for some excellent references to whole books on the subject.

The following are SQL statements or terms:

SELECT An SQL statement to read data from the database.

JOIN statement The relation used to connect two tables so that data can be extracted. The two tables are joined to form one large logical table.

WHERE clause Part of SQL used to specify a join or a restriction.

INSERT An SQL statement to add new data to the database.

DELETE An SQL statement to remove data from the database.

UPDATE An SQL statement to modify data already in the database.

SQL functions SQL provides standard functions that can be used in SQL statements. Most RDBMSs add other non-standard functions to make SQL more useful.

Aggregates These are SQL standard defined functions that perform useful operations on groups of rows returned by the RDBMS. These include sum(), avg(), count(), max(), and min() functions.

CREATE An SQL statement used to make something in the database, for example, database objects such as a table or index. The RDBMS vendors make additions to the standard SQL. This allows creation of the database itself and tablespaces, and offers fine tuning to database structures and resources. These additions are not standard between vendors.

DROP	An SQL statement to remove a table or index completely. As with **CREATE**, the RDBMS vendors make additions to the standard SQL to remove other database objects.
Sub-query	The answer to one SQL statement can be used within the where clause of another SQL statement. This is called a sub-query.
Relational operators	=, >, <, =>, and <= used in an SQL statement.
Logical operators	AND, OR, or NOT; used in an SQL statement.
Singleton select	A SELECT statement that returns one row.

2.5 Ensuring data availability

Based on business needs and available budgets, every customer has to determine how safe they need to make their database systems. A helpful way of viewing the important decision is: What is the cost of the RDBMS not being available? Many businesses cannot survive without their computer system because it controls many operations of the company. Some industries start losing money if the system is down for more than two minutes, for example, airlines and telephone ordering systems. Some businesses can run manually for a few hours or a day or two. Other systems are mainly back room activities and not visible to customers or directly involved with the company's finances. For example, some Business Intelligence systems do not stop sales when they are not available.

The following sections discusses data availability:

- 2.5.1, "Data loss cause and options" on page 33
- 2.5.2, "Backup and performance" on page 37

2.5.1 Data loss cause and options

Another important factor is: What is the damage of losing data? For sales systems, this means lost business and angry customers. Some systems capture data that can never be replaced, and on other systems, wrong decisions may be made based on inaccurate data.

Modern computers are very reliable and get more reliable all the time. But, occasionally, they do have failures. The most common failures of RDBMS systems on AIX are:

- Temporary power loss to the system.
- Network goes down.

- Disk crashes.
- AIX system administrator makes a mistake or has problems with something that should work, such as upgrading software.
- RDBMS administrator makes a mistake, for example, dropping a table.
- Hardware failure in CPU, memory, adapter, or motherboard.
- Total site disaster, such as fire, flood, bomb, hurricane, tornado, and so on.

What can we do about these problems, even if they are very unlikely? First, every RDBMS site must determine a policy regarding the down time that is acceptable. This can range from 60 seconds to five days. This, on the other hand, affects the time and money that is spent on making the RDBMS systems really safe. For each of these problems, there are options to remove or reduce the impact. First, assume we have no disk protection (how to protect disks is covered later).

- Power loss: This is the most common problem with any computer and can be caused by accidental pressing of the off button or removing the wrong power plug, fuses, or whole site power loss. Whatever the cause, once power is returned, the machine restarts automatically, and the RDBMS will also automatically recover the database up to the last committed transaction. The database recovery time depends on the volume of transactions on the system. This can be from a few minutes to a few hours in the worst case. Using an uninterruptable power supply can avoid this problem or at least give a period of time to stop the system cleanly.
- Network: This means the system is unavailable, but once the network is fixed, the RDBMS is still OK. The only counter measure is alternative routes between users and the RDBMS server and good management practices. Networks are typically controlled by a different group of people than the database specialists. A network failure means the RDBMS is, strictly speaking, not available to users and can, therefore, be regarded as a lack of RDBMS service.
- Disk crash: This affects the RDBMS directly. Assuming there is no disk protection, such as RAID 5, mirroring, or a standby system, then the damage depends on which disk is faulty. If the faulty disk is a:
  - Data disk: The disk can be replaced and a backup (see 2.5.2, “Backup and performance” on page 37) can be recovered onto the disk. When the RDBMS is restarted, it will replay the RDBMS log and, in effect, do all the transactions again since the backup. This will bring the replacement disk back up-to-date. This might, however, take a long time and depends on having an available disk, the speed of recovering the backup file, and the number of transactions the database has to recover.

- Index disk: There are two choices for index disks. First, this can be treated like a data disk and recovered in the same way. The alternative is to replace the disk, inform the RDBMS that the index has been destroyed, and then re-create the index from the data. The time taken to re-create the indexes depends on the number of indexes and the size of the tables. Usually, the quickest method is used, but it can be very hard to determine which is fastest.
- Temporary or Sort Area disk: This data does not need to be recovered. There is no data on these disks that the database needs. The RDBMS should restart with this disk missing or after the DBA has informed the RDBMS to ignore the disk. The DBA should try to find alternative disk space to make up for the missing temporary or sort area space.
- RDBMS Log disk: This is a disaster. Without the RDBMS log, the database cannot be restarted. All recent transactions are lost forever. The only option is to reload the entire backup. If older parts of the load (since the backup) were copied to other disks, they can be used to recover some of the transactions. This is why the RDBMS log should always be the first to have some sort of disk protection. If the log cannot be recovered, then the only alternative is to go back to the last backup.
- Operating system, RDBMS configuration files, RDBMS code, or application code disks: These must be recovered from the system backup.

- AIX system administrator: To try to stop this from happening, system administrators should be well trained and maintain high skill levels. Nothing replaces experience in running large production systems. All operations, such as updating the AIX system, RDBMS code, or application code, should be tested on other systems and only implemented after full backups and out of normal working hours. Sites that make a lot of changes to their system suffer a great deal more than those with tightly controlled update schedules and methods. If this machine is part of a High Availability Clustered Multiple Processing (HACMP) or replication cluster, then the alternative backup machine should spot the failure, and the service is resumed a few minutes later.
- RDBMS administrator: DBAs do make mistakes, and a full and tested RDBMS backup system is the only precaution that can help. HACMP would not help, because both the machines now share the corrupted database. Unfortunately, a replica system would not help in this situation, because the mistake will be replicated to the other machine, and both machines now have corrupted databases. A backup is needed to recover from this problem. The database then needs to be recovered to the time just before the corruption.
- Hardware failure: This failure is unlikely to corrupt the database, so once the system is repaired, RDBMS will recover the database quickly. The time depends on the number of transactions in the RDBMS log. An HACMP or

replica configuration would mean a takeover to the duplicate machine while the failed system is repaired.

- Total site disaster: A number of things are vital to recover from this problem.
  - A full recent off-site backup
  - Clear documentation on the way the system was configured
  - Alternative hardware and network
  - The skills to do the job

  Note that some transactions will be lost. Alternatives to avoid this problem are using geographic, high-availability solutions, such as HAGEO, remote disks, such as the SSA disk sub-systems can allow, or remote replication.

From the above, three important facts should have become clear:

- Disk protection.

  One important benefit of AIX is that it does monitor disk errors and reports them to the AIX system error log. Disks tend to start reporting intermittent errors before they actually fail completely. A good administrator should be monitoring the AIX error logs, and if this is being reported, actions should be taken immediately to prevent losing data. With AIX, logical volume data can be migrated to alternative or spare disks with the system up. This means the disk can then be replaced at a convenient time.

  But, some disks do fail without warning or before data can be saved. Therefore, it is highly desirable for a reliable RDBMS that the disks are protected in some way. There are various alternatives:

  - Mirroring: Good for performance, but adds extra cost.
  - RAID 5: Lower cost, but also lower performance if the fast write cache option is not used.

  These options are discussed in more detail in Chapter 9, “Designing a disk subsystem” on page 187.

- Standby machine.

  With a database system, there are two alternatives for a standby service to recover in a short time from many of the above problems. Both of these require duplicate hardware:

  - HACMP can provide alternative CPU, memory, and network resources, but use a shared disk and database (no duplicate disks are required). This IBM AIX product is a market leader in monitoring the status of a cluster of machines and automatically taking over workload, disk, network addresses, and services when a problem is detected. HACMP does require careful setting up and testing, but will automatically recover from many of the problems above.

- RDBMS replication is a service on a duplicate machine and a duplicate database. The primary RDBMS sends all local database updates to the replica RDBMS so that the two databases are the same. In practice, the replica will be slightly behind the primary database due to the time it takes to complete replication. Note that there is a performance cost, as replication adds significantly to the workload of the primary RDBMS. Every row that is changed is also copied to a replication table. From there, it is read by the replication process and sent on the network to the replica. When the replica confirms it has done the update, the entry can be deleted. This can double the workload on the RDBMS server. RDBMS replication is available from the RDBMS vendor.

- The database backup is vital for recovering disk crashes.

  Having a regular backup of the database is not optional but mandatory. There are many ways and options to perform a backup. We list and comment on many of these below and then recommend the best approach. Note that deciding the full details of a backup strategy and method, and then testing it, is a large amount of work and often left until too late.

Table 2-3 summarizes some common cause and precautions on RDBMS failures.

Table 2-3 Making your RDBMS safe from common problems

Problem	Impact	Precautions
Power	Low	UPS
Network	Low	Alternative routes
Disk crash	High	Disk protection and backup
UNIX system administrator	High	Backup and HACMP
DBA	High	Backup
Hardware	High	HACMP or replication
Site disaster	High	Backup

2.5.2 Backup and performance

It might sound strange to consider backups and performance at the same time. Unfortunately, taking a backup either requires the database to be stopped, in which case there is zero performance, or the backup is performed with the database running, and the backup will have a large performance impact. In this section, the various options are detailed.

Before the backup, the data is on the database disks. The backup process involves getting a copy of the data to some other media that is reliable, inexpensive, and moveable to an alternative site.

Backup media

There are many options in choosing the media for backing up databases:

Tape This is the classic backup media. Tapes are inexpensive and can hold a large volume of data in a small package. The IBM @server pSeries has the typical UNIX tape formats, such as 4 mm and 8 mm DAT tape drive and 9 track tapes. But it can also connect to the tape drives commonly used on AS/400 and mainframe machines that can offer higher performance in terms of throughput. Also, multiple tape drives can be attached to reduce backup time and also offer redundancy in case of a problem with a tape drive. The best tape drives currently available can match the speed of disks in their data transfer rates.

Disk One option is to back up the database disks to a different set of disks. This means an extra expense of more disks, but can reduce the time the backup takes significantly. Once the backup is complete, the database can return to normal operation. The disks are then often backed up to tape or other media. If the database disks fail, this extra disk copy is very convenient because the data is immediately available for a recovery to start. Care must be taken to maximize the performance of these disks, or the disk to disk backup can take a long time. As this is a copy of the real database, many sites do not use disk protection on these backup disks. Some sites even move the disks to another site.

Mirror breaking If the database disks are using mirrors for disk protection, then one copy of the data can be made by splitting the two copies of the data. The original is still part of the database, but the copy can be used to perform the backup without affecting the database disk performance. There are two problems with this. First, if the database had a mirror for disk protection, then when the mirror is split off, there is no longer any disk protection. This means most sites use a three way mirror and split the third copy off, and the two remaining will still give disk protection. Secondly, after the mirror has been used as the source for the backup, the mirror has to be rejoined to the original disks. This is called *resilvering*. As all the disk blocks of

one disk have to be read from the original and written to the resilvered mirror, the disks will be very busy for a long period of time. This will significantly affect database performance but is often forgotten. Mirror breaking is used to reduce the time the database is not available.

Network The database can be backed up over a network. Many sites have a collection of tape drives connected to a backup and tape management system. The database system sends the data across the network. This assumes the network is available, can be dedicated to the backup, and can provide the bandwidth requirements for the backup. The backup system will eventually place the data on the backup media. Often, they temporarily store the data on internal disks as a staging area before writing to tape at high speed.

Optical Some sites have legal requirements to archive data for many years and achieve this by using optical storage for their backups. Optical storage has a reputation of not being very fast.

Full or partial backup

Usually, you want to back up the whole database and the whole system in a *full backup*. This means that one set of tapes, for example, contains the whole computer system: operating system, applications, RDBMS code, and data. But backing up the entire system means a large volume of data and the maximum backup time.

One way to reduce backup time is to reduce the data volume that is backed up every time. This is called a *partial backup*. For example, during the week, one fifth of the database is backed up every day with a full backup only once a week. This means, though, that the recovery time might be a lot longer (because the weekly and partial backups will need to be restored), but this still can be a good compromise. For example, for databases that contain a lot of read-only data or data that is not changed much on a day-to-day basis, the partial backup of this part of the database is a good choice, because the recovery time will be low.

If large parts of the database are completely read-only, most databases allow this part of the data to be accessed in a special way, which means the database cannot modify it. This guarantees no changes to the data so that only one backup is ever required. This read-only data is common for DSS databases.

Physical and logical backup

Most backups are performed on the actual database files. This is either directly using AIX commands, such as **dd**, **tar**, **cpio**, and **backup**, or indirectly by RDBMS vendor tools, application vendor tools, or tools from the backup system. This is called a *physical backup*. It is the system administrator's and database administrator's job to make sure they back up a complete set of files that make up the database.

The alternative is the *logical backup* of the database. This makes a copy of the database, but it includes the instructions on how to create the database, tables, indexes, and the table data. This copy is often in an ASCII format and in a format that is portable between different machines even with different architectures. For example, this could be used to move a database between AIX and a PC based system. Logical backups can be performed on tables or complete databases.

- In Oracle, a logical backup is performed with the Oracle **export** DBA tool.
- In DB2 UDB, a logical backup is performed with the **db2 backup** command.
- In Informix DS, a logical backup of data is performed with the UNLOAD statement.

The advantages are that the backup is portable between hardware platforms and operating systems and is a readable ASCII file, as opposed to the normal binary database files.

The disadvantages are that a logical backup is much slower because a single tool is used to perform the backup (although some parallelization is possible for table level logical backups), and it can generate a huge file, which is much larger than the capacity of the disks, so they are often sent directly to tape.

Logical backups are ideal for moving smaller test databases or smaller tables between systems.

Online and off-line backup

Everyone affiliated with database administration is comfortable with the idea of stopping the database (and any other services offered by the machine) and then, when no data can be changed, backing up the files of the system to a backup media (usually a tape). This is the classic off-line full backup and sometimes also called a *cold backup*. Once completed, that set of tapes contains the entire system that is consistent at a particular point in time.

One problem is that users are often still using the database or are connected to the database using their application that is still running late. Most sites have a policy to forcibly removing users from the system at a particular time. This can be done by forcibly halting the database; however, vendors recommend backing up the database only after a normal shutdown. To achieve this, the database is

forcibly taken off-line and then restarted in a mode that stops users and then cleanly shuts down before the backup.

However, an increasing number of systems are required to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This does not leave any time for a full off-line backup. One way to nearly achieve this is stopping the database, breaking a mirror copy of the database off, and restarting the database. This can reduce the database down time to a few minutes. But, even this is not acceptable to many truly 24 hours a day, global company's system and, for example, Web sites where users are online every hour of the day.

The only option is to back up with the database still running. This is called an *online backup* or *hot backup*. Most sites know the usage patterns of the database system based on user workloads. This means the backup can take place during the time of least workload. This makes the backup faster, and even though the backup may slow the system down, less users are effected, and the machine should have some spare capacity.

The various types of files on the system are treated differently:

- The AIX operating system should be backed up using the **mksysb** command.
- The user files, RDBMS configuration files, RDBMS code, or application code disk can be backed up using the AIX backup commands.
- The temporary or sort area files do not need to be backed up, as these are re-initialized every time the database is restarted.
- The data and index files of the database must clearly be backed up. To achieve the backing up of these files while they are being modified is impossible. So, the RDBMS vendors have special features to make this possible. The procedure is:

  a. The DBA informs the RDBMS that a particular part of the database needs to be backed up.

  b. The RDBMS stops modifying these files but puts all the updates that would go into them into the database log instead.

  c. The DBA does the backup of the data and the index files.

  d. The DBA informs the RDBMS that the backup is finished.

  e. The RDBMS searches the log for the updates and brings the files back up-to-date.

  While the backup is taking place, a lot of extra data is sent to the database log, so there is a performance impact from online backups. Once finished, it may take some time for the RDBMS to get the data and index files updated. This also takes additional space in the log file. Note that not all of the data and indexes have to be backed up at one time. The data and index files of one

tablespace can be backed up as a group. This limits the reduction in performance, but the backup may take a little longer.

- RDBMS log disks are the final part of the database to get backed up. As the database is running, these files are being updated nearly all the time. This means that they cannot be backed up. But, an RDBMS does not just have one log. The various RDBMSs organize the logs in different ways, but they all allow the DBA to switch between log files or switch to a new file. This means that the old log file is no longer in use and can be backed up. This process is called archiving the log files. Because the log is vital for recovery, this log switching is going on regularly. To back up the RDBMS log, the DBA forces a log switch and then backs up the original log file.

Provided the DBA can find some time in the day that is less busy, then the online backup should not slow the performance of a database too badly. The problem with online backups is that you do not end up with one set of tapes that are a complete and consistent backup at one point in time. The various parts of the backup all happen at different times, and it is the database log that allows the database to recover fully. The RDBMS stores the backup files and times in the control files, so it knows when each backup took place and the particular log files that are required to recover the database from a particular backup file. Some people find this worrying because it is not under their control.

Backup recommendations

The following list shows some backup recommendations that can help you ensure data availability:

- Plan for backing up your database during the design of the system for high performance. If it is added at the last minute, you may find it cannot be backed up in the available time or budget.
- Have more than one tape drive so that it does not become a single point of failure.
- Test the backup and tapes regularly.
- Perform a disaster recovery test once a year.
- Do not be afraid of online backups, as they are used often.
- The RDBMS vendor's manuals have all the backup methods and options, but they are not very good at recommending any particular strategy, schedule, or method.

There are excellent books on backing up Oracle that cover all the options in great detail, for example, *Oracle Backup and Recovery Handbook*, by Rama Velpuri. If you want to avoid making typical mistakes and save a lot of time testing, then these books are definitely worth reading.

2.6 Parallel databases

This section's purpose is to provide information about the parallel versions of DB2 UDB, Oracle, and Informix DS. These are called DB2 UDB ESE, Oracle Parallel Server (OPS) in Oracle8i and early or Oracle Real Cluster Application (RAC) in Oracle9i, and Informix Extended Parallel Server (XPS). All of these products are covered in greater detail in other Redbooks and are, therefore, not the main subject matter for this redbook. They have been included here to highlight the functional differences between the standard (sometimes called classic) versions of these databases and the parallel. This section allows you to gain an understanding of the parallel database concepts, how they benefit from the IBM @server pSeries cluster architecture, and in which workload environments they are most efficiently used.

Parallel Database Management Systems are designed to store and manage very large databases and to provide better performance than purely serial database systems. The term Very Large Databases (VLDB) is used to refer to databases that are 200 GB or larger in size. Databases for Decision Support Systems (DSS), Data Warehouses, or OLAP typically contain a large amount of data generated over a large time frame. They usually have one, very large table called a *fact table* and some small tables called *dimension tables*. OLTP databases can have very large tables too, but this is not as common.

The implementation of parallel RDBMSs depends on the hardware architecture on which the database system runs. This section provides information about how parallel database concepts are implemented by DB2 UDB, Oracle, and Informix on the IBM @server pSeries cluster. Some reflections about the advantages and disadvantages of parallel database systems are made.

2.6.1 Parallel concepts in database environments

Large and parallel databases benefit from certain system architectures, such as shared memory, shared disk, or shared nothing architectures. The implementation of parallel databases also depends on the hardware architecture on which the database system runs. This section is meant as a short introduction into these system architectures.

Shared memory

In a shared memory environment, the system consists of two or more processors. These multiple processors access the same memory and also the disks of the system concurrently. This is called a Symmetric Multi Processor (SMP) environment. The database system uses the availability of multiple processors to split the workload of a query onto these CPUs in order to improve

the query's response time. This is shown in Figure 2-12 and is typical of the IBM @server pSeries clustering machines.

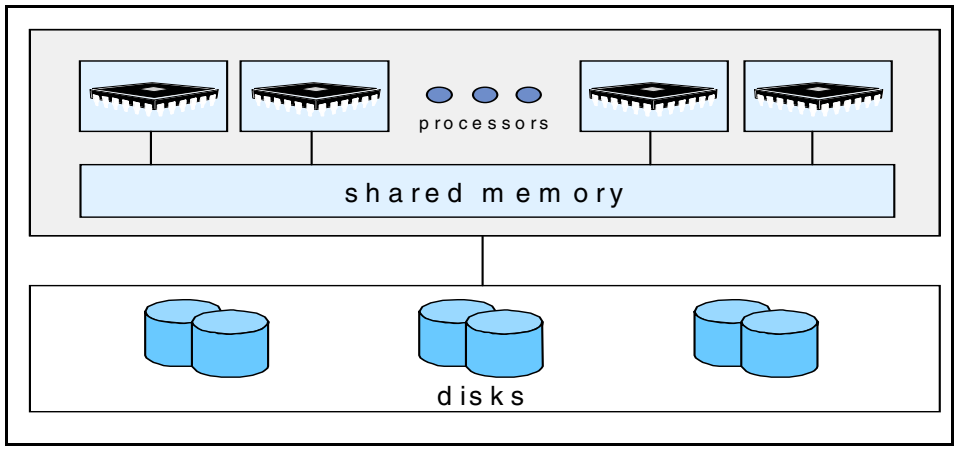

Figure 2-12 Shared memory

Shared disks

In a shared disk environment, every CPU has its own dedicated memory, but all processors share the same disks within the system. An RDBMS on this system consists of one database system that stores data and indexes across all disks. Every process running on any CPU has access to all data and indexes that are placed on all disks of the system. In order to improve performance, it is easy to add additional CPUs and memory. Therefore, systems with shared disk architecture have good scalability. This is shown in Figure 2-13 and is used in IBM @server pSeries HACMP clusters for fast recovery.

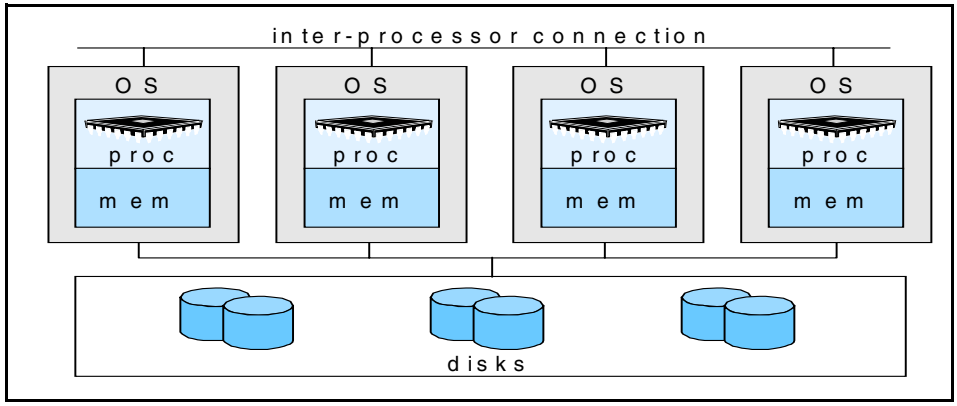

Figure 2-13 Shared disk

Shared nothing

In a shared nothing environment, every CPU has its own memory and its own set of disks and, therefore, does not have to compete for resources with other processors. These *loosely coupled* systems are linked by a high speed interconnection (see Figure 2-14). As nothing is shared, the system can scale to a high number of nodes. This environment is referred to as Massively Parallel Processors (MPP). It can be implemented by two or more separate IBM @server pSeries systems connected using fast communication adapters (Token Ring, Ethernet).

An implementation of this concept is the IBM @server pSeries cluster system. This system has several nodes installed in one or more frames. A node is an independent IBM @server pSeries model with CPU, memory, internal disks, and communication adapters. The nodes are connected using the switch for inter-communication. Within the IBM @server pSeries platform, parallel databases means IBM @server pSeries cluster.

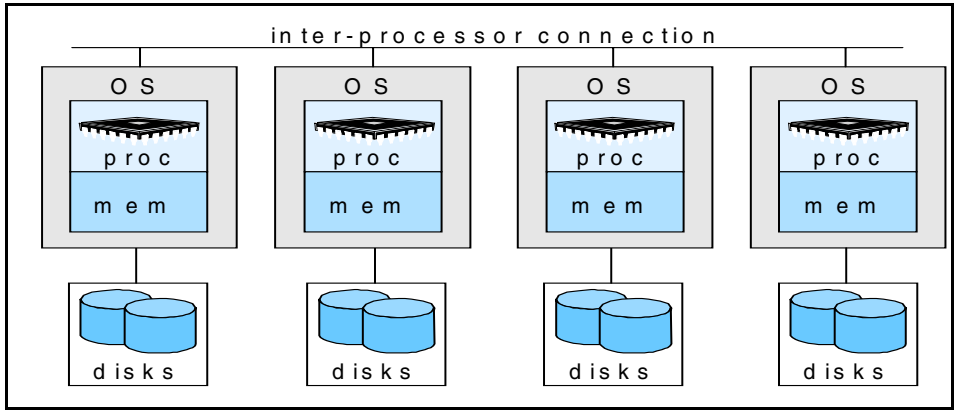

Figure 2-14 Shared nothing

2.6.2 Advantages and disadvantages of parallel databases

The overriding advantage of a parallel database is that it can be used with database sizes far bigger than the largest database that can be connected to an SMP system. Some recent IBM @server pSeries cluster systems are in the 10 TB to 80 TB range of disk space.

There are three workloads to cover:

- For decision support queries that are very complex and involve very large volumes of data, the parallel databases allow the whole system to split down the work into small components so that the parallel machine can work on it.

This gives good performance gains in reduced response times and increased throughput.

- For medium complex queries (such as data mart, OLAP, or batch loads), where there are a number of users (for example, five to 50), the various levels of parallelization means that the parallel database can spread the demands across a portion of the machine to give concurrent access and reduced query times. If there are high numbers of users (for example, higher than the number of CPUs in the system), then the queries are typically not made parallel. For this to work, the users of the system have to be requesting small to medium size queries.
- For small queries (such as OLTP), there are issues for the parallel database. These evolve around three critical areas that are harder for parallel databases than for classic databases:
  - Function shipping: For DB2 UDB ESE, if the query only involves very low numbers of rows, the request is sent to the nodes with the data. The results are sent back to the original node for final manipulation to return them to the application. This requires inter-node communication and CPU resources. The classic DB2 UDB does not have this overhead and, therefore, will appear faster.
  - I/O shipping and locking: For Oracle OPS with more than three nodes, the majority of the I/O is done remotely (using VSD). This takes extra time, but also involves locking the data using the DLM, which takes extra time too. In the worst case, however, every transaction requests the same block (or small set of blocks). This involves the DLM forcing the release of the lock and the block being repeatedly written to disk in order to be read into another node (called block pinging). Applications requiring this will run much slower on a parallel database. The new Oracle9i RAC and Oracle8i OPS does not use block ping. Instead they implement a technique called *cache fusion*, that address performance issues in the pinging approach.
  - Data consistency: For those RDBMS that use a shared disk approach, there is an overhead in keeping data consistency between nodes. If a block is written to disk by two or more nodes, the database could be inconsistent or even corrupted. Oracle OPS and RAC deal with this problem by using DLM and cache fusion.

  Therefore, for OLTP type workloads, there are problems to consider. These can be tackled with:
  - Careful design of the database and partitioning of the data.
  - Careful design of the application to reduce inter-node workload.
  - Use of a transaction processing monitor, such as CICS, Encina, Tuxedo, or Top End, to make sure the transactions go to the right node and data.

Parallel databases and large databases go hand-in-hand. This means the problems of parallel databases are mainly due to the size of the database. Large and parallel means:

- Large systems cost more, are complex to justify in the initial stages, and take longer to implement and, thus, have management focus. Therefore, they need careful and experienced project management. Many large system problems stem from lack of project management rather than technical problems.
- Large systems take higher people resources. A single parallel 5 TB system might take less man-power than managing 50 * 100 MB systems, but will take more than a single 100 MB system.
- Parallel RDBMS and the IBM @server pSeries cluster are more complex and require that database and system administrators have additional education and experience.

Given a choice between a large SMP system or a small parallel system, we usually recommend an SMP system, unless the database size will outgrow the capabilities of the largest SMP. The size of IBM SMP systems, like the IBM @server pSeries Cluster 1600 family, are growing every year due to the developments in processor design and SMP technology. There is some cut off between the largest SMP available today and a set of nodes. It can be very hard to determine where that is, but remember the extra complexity of a parallel database added to the path length for a transaction. This means more CPU instructions are executed on a parallel database. A single node parallel database will run slower than a single node classic database with the same CPU power. This negative impact is removed as soon as the parallel database has more nodes. For these reasons, we do not recommend less than four nodes in a parallel database environment.

3

Types of workload

In order to understand the performance issues associated with a particular database, it is helpful to have an understanding of the different database profiles and their unique workload characteristics.

RDBMS systems can be put to many different uses, that is, holding different types of data and allowing different types of processing to be performed against that data. In this chapter, we outline typical databases and their characteristic workloads, but there will always be deviations that do not fit within the models described here and combination of these models.

Throughout this chapter, we will use as our reference a database that contains 50 GB of raw data. Depending on the exact nature of the database, more or less disk space may be required in order to actually implement the database. We also describe typical user numbers and transaction response times for the different workloads.

Most IT departments are responsible for managing more than one database system, so real environments are more complex than suggested here. There are typically multiple transaction and decision support systems in use that, together, satisfy all the processing requirements of the company. Data is often moved between these databases so that different applications with different transaction types and user populations can access the data.

3.1 Transactional workload

The transaction based databases are typically used for mission critical application and most widely used database workloads. This type of workload typically consists of multiple short query, insert, and update operations. In this section, we examine several types of transactional workloads:

- 3.1.1, “Online Transaction Processing (OLTP)” on page 50
- 3.1.2, “Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)” on page 51
- 3.1.3, “e-business” on page 53

3.1.1 Online Transaction Processing (OLTP)

Online Transaction Processing (OLTP) databases are among the most mission-critical and widely deployed of any of the database types. Literally, millions of transactions encompassing billions of dollars are processed on OLTP systems around the world on a daily basis. The primary defining characteristic of OLTP systems is that the transactions are processed in real-time or *online* and often require immediate response back to the user. Examples would be:

- A point of sale terminal in a retail setting
- An Automated Teller Machine (ATM) used for withdrawing funds from a bank
- A telephone sales order processing site looking up inventories and taking order details

From a workload perspective, OLTP databases typically:

- Process a large number of concurrent user sessions
- Process a large number of transactions using simple SQL statements
- Process a single database row at a time
- Are expected to complete transactions in seconds, not minutes or hours

OLTP systems process the day-to-day operational data of a business and, therefore, have strict user response and availability requirements. They also have very high throughput requirements and are characterized by large amounts of database inserts and updates. They typically serve hundreds, if not thousands, of concurrent users, which can severely impact system performance.

Special consideration should be given to the following areas when designing an OLTP system for performance:

- Use indexes to improve performance. However, too many indexes can degrade the performance of insert and update operations.

- SQL statements should be as well-tuned as possible.
- Database block sizes should be small, in the range of 2 to 4 KB.

In comparison to our example 50 GB database, a typical OLTP system would have the following characteristics:

- Would require three times the disk space; standard rule of thumb for the data plus indexes and temporary work areas.
- Would support 200 to 600 users.
- Response times would be less than two seconds.
- Specific queries might be allowed to take 45 seconds.
- Available during normal business hours, typically 8 am to 6 pm. An increasing number of systems require 24 x 7 availability, especially international companies.
- Upgrades are planned in advance to occur over a weekend.
- The application is often written in-house but is increasingly likely to be a third party package possibly modified for particular business needs.

3.1.2 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems have gained enormous market share in the last decade primarily due to their ability to consolidate multiple data sources into one system offering tightly integrated applications. They are typically implemented in a *three tier* client/server configuration with the database at the core of the system. Application vendors, such as SAP, Baan, JBA, PeopleSoft, Siebel, Retek, and Oracle Financials are among the current market leaders in the ERP arena.

ERP systems can be considered something of a hybrid from a database workload perspective, as they most often exhibit the same workload characteristics as traditional OLTP, OLAP, DSS, and batch reporting systems. Originally, ERP systems were primarily used in an OLTP capacity, but increasingly, they are offering more DSS functions or modules as an extension.

ERP systems have the following characteristics:

- They are three tier client/server solutions in that they include:
  - A central database server.
  - Multiple application servers: Are mainly compute bound systems running a few processes that actually do the work for users and cache data from the database server for performance. A typical configuration would be one

database server with four to eight application servers. These application servers also limit the number of user connections to the database.

  - User workstations (normally PC based) that provide user friendly GUI based applications and graphics.

- The databases structures are complex, having hundreds or thousands of tables.
- The application is completely generic. As supplied, it needs a lot of tailoring to meet the specific business needs of a company. Most of this tailoring goes into the tables of the database. For example, the various divisions, departments, and reporting structures and their cost and profit centers would be stored in the database tables. The effect of this on the database is that queries are much more complex than those on OLTP systems and join many more tables.
- To increase response times and the number of users supported, most ERP vendors do not allow users to directly modify the database. The updates are typically queued to background processes that do the updates at a later time. This reduces database locking problems and speeds up user response times.
- Serve a large number of users (same as OLTP systems).
- Process a large number of transactions by utilizing both simple and complex SQL statements (mixture of OLTP and OLAP).
- Interactive user response times are measured in seconds (same as OLTP).
- Process many database rows at a time (same as OLAP).

Workloads should be clearly defined and separated in order to avoid performance problems associated with mixing transactional and decision-support activities on the same system at the same time.

In comparison to our example 50 GB database, a typical ERP system would have the following characteristics:

- Would require three to five times the disk space (standard rule of thumb).
- Would support 100 to 1000 users.
- Response times would be less than four seconds.
- Available 24 x 7 for most production systems. Development and test systems would need to be available during normal business hours.
- Zero system down-time for production systems; 4 to 8 hours per night for development and test systems due to the lack of a 24 x 7 availability requirement.

- The application would be a well known third party package, possibly modified for particular business needs during the implementation phase, which is likely to take many months.

3.1.3 e-business

e-business, as defined by IBM, is "any activity that connects critical business systems directly to their critical constituencies (customers, employees, vendors, and suppliers) using intranets, extranets, and over the World Wide Web." The explosive growth of the Internet in the mid-90s has forced businesses to radically change the way in which services are provided to their customers. Companies have had to Web-enable core business processes to strengthen customer service operations, streamline supply chains, and reach new and existing customers. These changes have forever altered customer's expectations regarding support and response.

At the core of any e-business transaction is the database used to satisfy user queries. These queries are typically generated as a result of user input using HTML pages that eventually end up being processed by the database server. The Web server normally has a special interface module that calls the database server to supply the information. The Web server also has to provide the information back to the user in HTML format so that the raw database data has to be packaged up before being returned to the Web server. The generation of the connection to the database as a result of the user request is known as a *Web hit*.

Connecting and disconnecting to a database takes a lot of processing power and is not a good option for each Web hit in terms of providing good performance. Therefore, a *Web application server* is typically used to provide this permanent connection and sits between the Web server and the database server.

When compared to an OLTP or ERP database, a Web database is actually small in size. The actual data content is not very large for most Web sites; however, there are exceptions. A less desirable alternative is to connect the Web server and application server to the real production OLTP or ERP system. The major risk is security, as a Web hacker effectively has a network connection to your vital database. This is one reason why there is such a great deal of interest in security on the Web and why there are a multitude of products to help provide this security.

In workload terms, these databases are like OLTP systems, but there is an additional problem. Unlike a company machine where the user population is well known and understood, the Web is unpredictable. Sizing a Web-enabled database can be very hard to nearly impossible, due to the volatility in the number of users accessing the site and the tendency to initially underestimate the demand that will be placed on the servers.

There are two different approaches that can be taken when sizing the system:

- Over-specify the machine by a factor of two or three to ensure it can take the unexpected peak hit rates.
- Have a machine that can be rapidly upgraded, particularly from a CPU standpoint.

Also, a high availability solution (like IBM HACMP) should be in place from the start, as a site that is failing or very slow can quickly result in users migrating to a competitor's Web site.

In comparison to our example 50 GB database, a typical e-business system would have the following characteristics:

- Would require three times the disk space (like OLTP).
- No real concept of a user, but each database hit usually results in the execution of a database transaction.
- Response times would be less than two seconds.
- Available 24 x 7 due to the fact that it is connected to the Web.
- The application would be a third party package, possibly modified for style.

3.2 Decision Support Systems (DSS)

Decision Support Systems (DSS) differ from the typical transaction-oriented systems in that they most often consist of data extracted from multiple source systems for the purpose of supporting end-user:

- Data analysis applications using pre-defined queries
- Application generated queries
- Ad-hoc user queries
- Reporting requirements

DSS systems typically deal with substantially larger volumes of data than OLTP systems due to their role in supplying users with large amounts of historical data. Whereas 100 GB would be considered large for an OLTP system, a large DSS system would most likely be 1 TB or more. The increased storage requirements of DSS systems can also be attributed to the fact that they often contain multiple, aggregrated views of the same data.

While OLTP queries tend to be centered around one specific business function, DSS queries are often substantially more complex. The need to process large amounts of data results in many CPU intensive database sort and join

operations. The complexity and variability of these types of queries must be given special consideration when designing a DSS system for performance.

DSS systems fall into several categories, typically using data warehouses and data marts. Both data warehouses and data marts have the following workload characteristics:

- Complex and very complex SQL statements
- Long running SQL queries that may take minutes or hours to complete
- Diverse query types that answer complex business questions
- Applications often model the logical structure of the business and hide the database and SQL structure from the end user
- Perform mostly full table scans or use summary tables built by the database administrator

Business Intelligence (BI) is a general term used to describe the process of extracting previously unknown, comprehensible, and actionable information from large databases and using that information to make *intelligent* business decisions.

3.2.1 Data warehouses

Data warehouses normally consist of a single large server that serves as a consolidation point for enterprise data from several diverse database systems. Data warehouses typically contain years worth of historical data in order to serve as a single source of information for all the decision support processing in the entire business organization. Whereas transactional systems are primarily concerned with changing the data contained in the database, data warehouses are used to extract data for end-user reporting and data analysis needs.

In comparison to our example 50 GB database, a typical data warehouse would have the following characteristics:

- The data warehouse might include six other databases and contain a great deal of historical information, therefore increasing the database size by a factor of 10 (500 GB) and increasing the disk space required by a factor of 3 (1500 GB).
- A limited number of users with super-user authority that create the data aggregates and perform cleanup operations on the data.
- Response times could be one hour to one week.
- System available 24 hours a day with particular tables taken off-line for periodic updates.

- Supports one view of the business data extracted to data marts for further analysis.
- The application is often written in-house, but it is increasing likely to be a third party package to automate common and repetitive work.

3.2.2 Data marts

Data marts can be defined as more narrowly focused data warehouses. Data marts are created with a subset of the operational production data in order to satisfy the reporting needs of a specific organizational unit or to solve a particular business problem.

In comparison to our example 50 GB database, a typical data mart would have the following characteristics:

- Would require five times the amount of disk space; this is the standard rule of thumb for building a data mart. Extra space would be required for new data to be cleaned and modified before adding to the database and extra summary tables.
- Would support 20 to 100 users.
- Response times would be less than two minutes, with many simpler requests under 10 seconds. Once the data is extracted to the user tool, the users analyze the data for five to 30 minutes before requesting more.
- Large user requests might be allowed to take 20 minutes.
- Available during normal business hours.
- System taken down for data loads and creation of summary tables.
- Data can be re-extracted and loaded from the warehouse or original data source.
- Application third party package resides on PC for graphical modeling and analysis. Often there is a business model on the PC to hide the complexities of the database design and SQL.

3.2.3 Online Analytical Processing (OLAP)

Modern Online Analytical Processing (OLAP) databases are based on a set of 12 rules developed by E.F. Codd in 1993 in his whitepaper entitled *Providing OLAP to User-Analysts: An IT Mandate*. This whitepaper outlined a methodology for designing systems that would be capable of providing live, *ad hoc* data access and analysis.

The primary defining characteristic of OLAP databases is that they provide multi-dimensional or aggregated views of the data. The multi-dimensional data is

called usually a *data cube*. This term is used to express the idea that the data has been transformed into different dimensions, such as geography, sales figures, and product line. There are many other dimensions that can be used at the same time, but it is easier to think in terms of only three dimensions.

Using an OLAP system, a user can asks such questions as: Which geographical area has the best sales? They could then select a particular geography, turn the data cube to see the next dimension (product lines), and ask: Which product lines sold best in these geographies? Then they might turn the data cube again and ask: How has that changed with time?

The aggregate views used by OLAP databases are summary tables that are used to perform these types of analyses. The RDBMS could search the entire database to answer each question, but this would be very expensive in disk I/O and CPU terms and reduce the response time or numbers of users that the system could support. After the OLAP database has received more data from other systems, the database creates a series of summary tables containing averages and totals for sales figures from the individual sales details. The application then uses these much smaller summary tables to answer most of the user and application queries.

The workload characteristics of OLAP databases differ from those of OLTP databases in that they:

- Serve a smaller number of users
- Support a large number of queries using complex SQL statements
- Process many database rows at a time

In comparison to our example 50 GB database, a typical OLAP system would have the following characteristics:

- Would require five times the amount of disk space to allow for the large summary tables.
- Would support 20 to 50 users.
- Response times would be less than 20 seconds.
- Large user requests that require the query to read the fine details from the database might be allowed to take 15 minutes.
- Available during normal business hours. The database needs to take data updates from OLTP systems so that the aggregrates can be re-created or updated, usually every night.
- The vast bulk of the database is very static; only the last month's data changes.

- System down time allows for improvements of the summary tables based on the results of monitoring user activity.
- The application is nearly always a third party package with a business model created for this particular company's product or services.

3.2.4 Data mining

Data mining is a relatively new data analysis technique used to find and exploit previously unknown relationships between seemingly unrelated data. Unlike traditional reporting and multi-dimensional analysis techniques in which very specific queries are used to extract the data, data mining uses several statistical data analysis algorithms to extract previously unknown information from the existing data.

For example, a data mining application might study car insurance claims to spot particularly good or poor risk customers, and their insurance premiums could change as a result. The application can spot correlations in the data, such as particular areas of the country, age groups, car types, and jobs that might otherwise go undiscovered.

Unlike OLAP and data marts, where the user formulates a question and the RDBMS finds the answer (or graphs the data), which might then pose further questions, the data mining application not only finds the answers but goes on to explain the relationships between the selection criteria upon which the answers are based. Care must be taken to ensure the new information is really a trend and not a quirk in the data.

Data mining solutions often consist of a mixture of database tools and technologies. These include such IBM products as DB2 OLAP Server and Intelligent Data Miner.

3.2.5 Reporting

It might sound strange that, in what many people thought should be a paperless world by now, many large databases are used simply to create reports. Often, small volumes of reports can be performed on the customer's live OLTP system. However, the fact that report generation often involves processing huge volumes of data can cripple OLTP performance. The most common solution is to move the data to a dedicated report database system.

While some databases receive their information from the customer's live OLTP systems, others are updated directly for the purposes of data collection and summarization. An example would be a water company that receives data from

thousands of water flow meters into the system and automatically updates the database at a defined interval. The database is then used to report:

- The state of the overall system
- Quirks that might need investigation
- Data used to spot long term trends

There are some third party or RDBMS tools that are often used to generate reports. These tools allow an advanced user or DBA to reformat the report and describe the data columns and totals. The user then activates the report after supplying specific limitations, such as the period in which the report should cover or particular areas to be included or excluded. An example would be the sales report for the North region for the past three months.

Often, there is a trade off between using the report tool, which is quick to implement and simple to modify and maintain, and performance. For high capacity, customers of high volume reports typically use the report tool as a prototype and then recode the report in a 3 GL language, such as C or COBOL for better performance.

In comparison to our example 50 GB database, a typical reporting system would have the following characteristics:

- Would require three times the amount of disk space; very similar to the OLTP database.
- Would support one to 40 users. Access might be using a batch queue for ad-hoc reports or a scheduling system for a report needed at fixed intervals.
- Response times are dependent on the nature of the report. Large reports, for example, could take eight hours or more.
- Available nearly 24 x 7.
- The system will be taken down for updates and backups only.
- The application would consist of RDBMS tools or a third party package with very specific, pre-defined reports.

4

DB2 Universal Database

This chapter describes the different physical and logical structures for DB2 Universal Database (UDB) as well as the processes used to access and manipulate the databases. It is recommended that these basic concepts are totally comprehended, since they are referenced in the other chapters.

In this chapter, we discuss the following:

- 4.1, “New features and enhancements” on page 62 lists some new features for DB2 Universal Database Version 8.1.
- 4.2, “DB2 UDB database architecture” on page 63 describes in detail the architecture of DB2 UDB.
- 4.3, “DB2 UDB parallel database considerations” on page 80 discusses how DB2 UDB handles parallel processing and the clustering requirement.

4.1 New features and enhancements

In Version 8, there is a product packaging change that has merged DB2 UDB Enterprise Edition (EE) and DB2 UDB Enterprise-Extended Edition (EEE) into a single product, DB2 UDB Enterprise Server Edition (ESE). The ability to create and manage multiple database partitions is a part of the ESE product. However, if you wish to have multiple partitions on a single server (with symmetric multiprocessing) or to create and manage multiple database partitions across more than one physical server (Clustered Hardware Configuration), you must acquire the Database Partitioning Feature (DPF), which is a separate license.

This section gives you an overview of some new features and also some enhancements that are delivered with DB2 UDB Version 8. These are not directly involved in tuning of databases, but may give performance, scalability, or manageability improvements in their own right. For further detailed information on the following items, refer to *IBM DB2 Universal Database What's New*, SC09-4848.

- Manageability
  - Load enhancements: Now at table level, simplified and enhanced
  - Logging enhancements: Enhanced dual logging, maximum log space increased to 256 GB, infinite active logging, and block on log disk full configuration parameter
  - RUNSTATS enhancements to statistics collected
  - Type-2 indexes: Improves concurrency, index can be created on columns with a length greater than 255 bytes, enables online table reorg, and are required for multidimensional clustering.
- Performance
  - Multidimensional clustering: Allows clustering on more than one key, so it will maintain clustering and improve query performance
  - Prefetching enhancements: Can create bufferpools to make use of block I/O
  - Page cleaner I/O improvements: Exploits asynchronous I/O in AIX
  - Catalogue and authorization caching on multiple partition databases
  - Threading of Java UDFs and stored procedures
  - Connection concentrator
  - Materialized query tables
  - Declared Global Temporary Table enhancements: Including index and statistics support

- Availability
  - Online table load, table reorganization and index reorganization
  - Configurable online configuration parameters
  - Online bufferpool creation, deletion, and resizing
  - DMS container operations
- Scalability
  - Compression of nulls and defaults
  - INSERT through UNION ALL views

4.2 DB2 UDB database architecture

The DB2 UDB databases are stored in both physical and logical structures. When the database is accessed either locally or remotely, some internal DB2 UDB processes will interact with another structure created on memory.

This entire structure makes DB2 UDB easily configurable for the different system workload characteristics. All possible administration tasks can be done either locally on the AIX platform or remotely from a workstation.

The discussion is divided into:

- 4.2.1, “Memory structures” on page 64, which holds the information that is necessary to process the requests generated by the applications and user connections.
- 4.2.2, “Logical storage structures” on page 66 shows how DB2 logically divides the objects inside the database.
- 4.2.3, “Physical storage structures” on page 69 discusses where the data and all other objects that belong to a database are stored.
- 4.2.4, “Processes” on page 72 shows processes that access the memory structure, and manipulate and return data requested by the applications and user connections.
- 4.2.5, “SQL extensions: Stored procedures” on page 76 describes the usage of some SQL extensions and stored procedures.
- 4.2.6, “DB2 tools” on page 77 shows some graphical tools that can be used for administering DB2.

4.2.1 Memory structures

When DB2 UDB is running on an AIX operating system, the amount of real and virtual memory used will basically depend on how the database manager (instance) configuration parameters and database configuration parameters are set. Based on these parameters, the RDBMS will allocate more, or maybe less, memory resources to process the requests generated by the applications and user connections.

It is important to point out that if the resources requested by DB2 UDB cannot be satisfied with real memory, some pages will be requested from paging space, which causes a performance degradation.

The memory will be allocated for four different memory requestors. The memory allocation for each of them will happen at different times, depending on the following:

- Database Manager Shared Memory is allocated when the **db2start** command is run and deallocated with the **db2stop** command execution.
- Database Global Memory is allocated when the database is activated using the ACTIVATE DATABASE command or when the first connection is established.This is calculated by the database manager at activation or can be set using the database_memory configuration parameter
- Application Global Memory is allocated when an application connects to a database in a partitioned environment, when the intra_parallel parameter is enabled, or in an environment when the connection concentrator is enabled. This memory is used by agents working on behalf of the application in order to share data and coordinate activities among themselves.
- Agent Private Memory is allocated when an agent is assigned to work for a particular application.

More detailed information regarding the memory structures and their management can be found in *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-4821. Refer to Chapter 14, “DB2 UDB tuning” on page 339 for further explanation of which DB2 UDB parameters can be tuned for better system performance.

The memory structure of DB2 UDB is shown in Figure 4-1 on page 65.

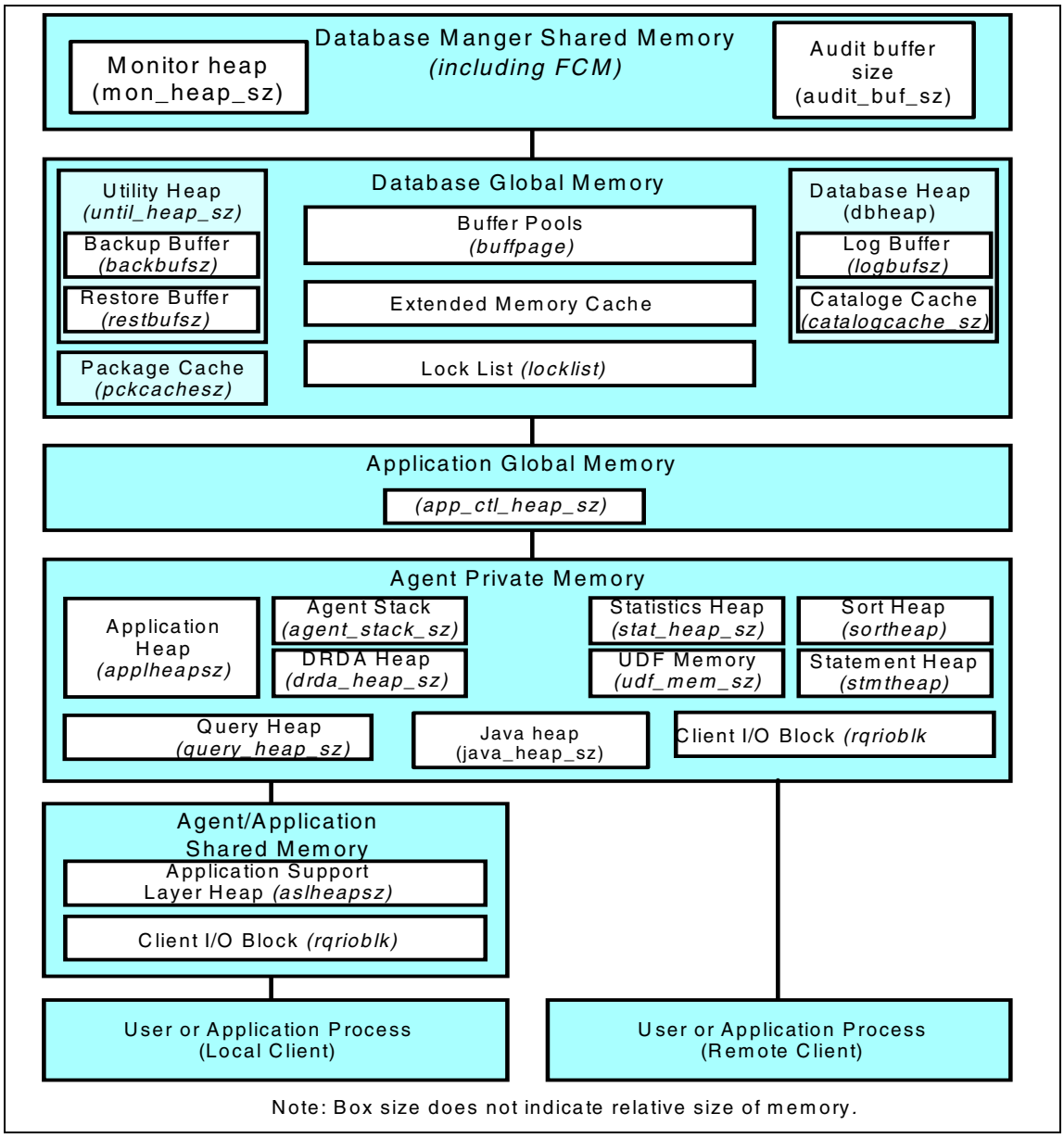

Figure 4-1 Memory structure of DB2 UDB

4.2.2 Logical storage structures

The primary data storing object in a database is a row. A row is composed of one or more columns that store logically related information. A table is composed of a certain numbers of rows, from zero to an undetermined number. The amount of existing rows in a table defines the table is cardinality. Cardinality means number of distinct values.

A DB2 UDB table can store data in the following listed types of columns:

SMALLINT	Small integer.
INTEGER	Large integer.
BIGINT	Big integer.
REAL	Single precision floating point number.
FLOAT	Double precision floating-point number.
DECIMAL	Decimal number.
CHARACTER	Fixed-length character string of length integer.
VARCHAR	Varying-length character string.
LONG VARCHAR	Varying-length character string.
BLOB	Binary large object string.
CLOB	Character large object string.
DBCLOB	Double-byte character large object string.
GRAPHIC	Fixed-length graphic string.
VARGRAPHIC	Varying-length graphic string.
LONG VARGRAPHIC	Varying-length graphic string.
DATE	Date.
TIME	Time.
TIMESTAMP	Timestamp.
DATALINK	A link to data stored outside the database.
XML	Holds XML values.
DISTINCT-TYPE-NAME	A user-defined type that is a distinct type.
REF	Reference to a typed table.
STRUCTURED	Structure that is defined in the database.

See *DB2 UDB SQL Reference, Volume 1*, SC09-4844 and *DB2 UDB SQL Reference, Volume 2,* SC09-4845, for details on the supported data types.

Once the database administrator defines a table with the appropriate columns, the table is ready to maintain relationships with other tables, and their data can be retrieved though a standardized language called SQL (Structured Query Language).

In order to speed up the access to the data in a table, one or more indexes can be created. Indexes consist of search-key values and pointers to the rows containing those values. In Version 8, DB2 UDB introduces support of the type 2 index and continues to support the older type 1 index. It is important to remember that a table cannot support both types of index. The type 2 indexes offer:

- Improved concurrency
- Indexing on columns greater than 255 bytes in length
- Support for online table reorg and online table load
- Multidimensional clustering support

Further information on indexes and their management can be found in *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-4821.

All the tables and indexes are stored on logical space divisions called *tablespaces*. There are two types of tablespaces:

- System Managed Space (SMS): Data is stored in file system directories.
- Database Managed Space (DMS): Data is stored in file system files and/or on raw devices.

The physical disk space assigned to a tablespace is called a *container*.

Both types of tablespaces allow the user to store tables and indexes together in the same tablespace. However, if DMS tablespaces are used, it is possible to split a single table into three different tablespaces containing, respectively, the data, the indexes, and the Large Objects (LOB) type columns. This operation allows the same table to be stored on three different devices, thus enabling parallelism and performance improvement.

By default, three SMS tablespaces are created:

- SYSCATSPACE: Stores the internal database control tables called catalog tables.
- USERSPACE1: Stores the user defined tables.
- TEMPSPACE1: Used to store temporary tables for operations, such as sorts and reorganizations.

Tablespaces are stored in *database partition groups* (nodegroups in previous versions of DB2 UDB). Database partition groups are a set of one or more

database partitions. When using the DB2 UDB Enterprise Server Edition, you can have one database partition existing on the machine, or multiple database partitions can be defined on one or more machines.

All the tables, indexes, catalog tables, DB2 UDB objects, tablespaces, and database partition groups form an entity called a database. Each database has its own set of physical control files, log files, and data files. For more information about the physical structure, please refer to 4.2.3, “Physical storage structures” on page 69.

One or more existing databases reside within an instance. An instance is a complete environment that holds the databases. It controls the access to all databases created within it. Other instances access those databases by communicating with the owning instance. The more instances defined on a system, the more machine resources will be needed.

Each physical machine represents one system that is composed of one or more instances. Figure 4-2 illustrates how the DB2 UDB is logically structured.

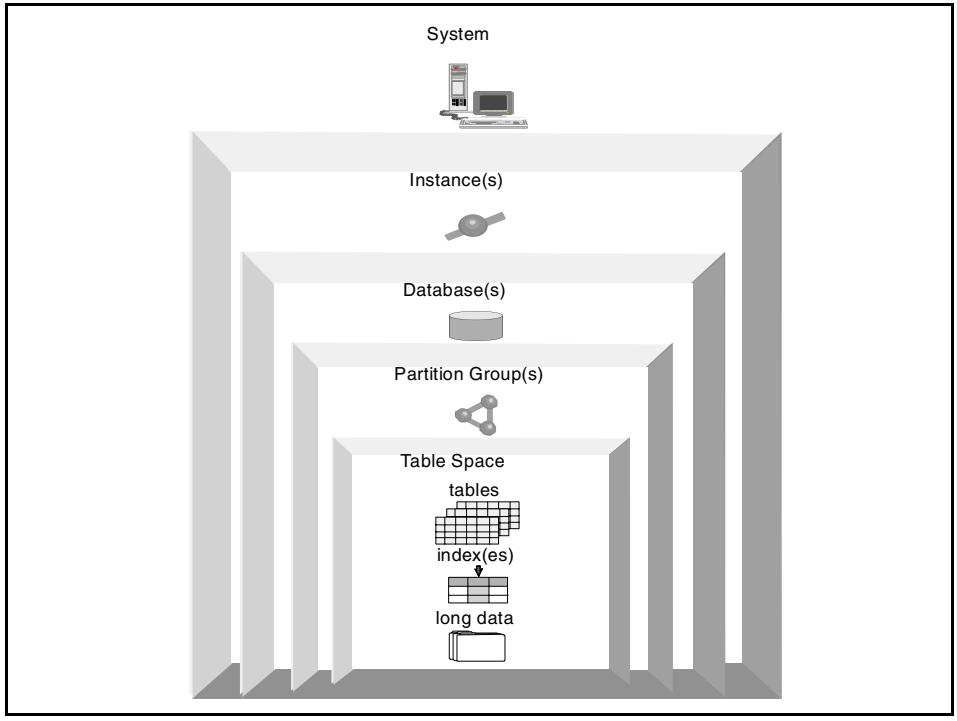

Figure 4-2 DB2 UDB logical structure

4.2.3 Physical storage structures

When the DB2 UDB Version 8 code is installed on an IBM @server pSeries machine, all the product files will be located in the /usr/opt/db2_08_01 directory. The previous version of DB2 UDB is installed under /usr/lpp.

Each instance will be created on a physical directory that is the home directory of the user ID specified at the instance creation time. This user ID will have the same name as the instance name and will have the system administrator privilege for this instance.

After the instance is created and started, databases can be created within it. Databases are created on existing directories or file systems specified by the ON clause on the **create database** command:

```
create database sample on /db_sample
```

This command will create the database sample on the following physical structure:

/db_sample/*instance_name*/NODE0000/SQL00001

where:

instance_name	The name of the instance where the database was created.
NODE0000	Identifies the partition number in a partition environment. For a single partition database, this entry is always NODE0000.
SQL00001	Identifies the sequence in which the databases were created. The next database that is created will be located under SQL00002.

Internal files

After the database is created, some internal control files will be located under the /db_sample/instance_name/NODE0000/SQL00001 database directory. Each file will be responsible for a different database functionality, as follows:

- SQLDBCON: Stores the database configuration parameters and flags for the database.
- SQLOGCTL.LFH and SQLOGMIR.LFH: Tracks and controls all of the database's log files.
- Syyyyyyy.LOG: Restores the database into a consistent state in the event of a database failure situation or system crash.

- SQLINSLK and SQLTMPLK: Ensures that a database is only used by one instance of the database manager.
- SQLSPCS.1: Contains the definition and current state of all table spaces in the database.
- SQLSPCS.2: A copy of SQLSPCS.1.
- SQLBP.1: Contains the definition of all the buffer pools used in the database.
- SQLBP.2: A copy of SQLBP.1.
- DB2RHIST.ASC: The database recovery history file.
- DB2RHIST.BAK: A copy of DB2RHIST.ASC.
- DB2TSCHNG.HIS: A history of tablespace changes at a log file level.

These files are used exclusively by the RDBMS and should not be deleted or removed from this location.

Log files

The log files (Syyyyyyy.LOG) will have their file names varying from S0000001.LOG through S9999999.LOG. This files are used to ensure the database's consistency in case a failure or a system crash occurs. The number of existing logs in a database will depend upon the log size, number of primary logs defined, number of secondary logs defined, the setting of the LOGRETAIN parameter, and the amount of transactions that insert, update, and delete data rows.

It is recommended that logs be placed on their own disk to avoid any I/O contention.

In Version 8, you can now mirror the log files to a specific path using the database configuration parameter mirrorlogpath.

The size of the logs used by the database (measured in 4 KB pages) will be determined by the logfilsiz database configuration parameter. The number of primary and secondary logs will be determined by the database parameters logprimary and logsecond, respectively.

By default, the database uses circular logging, that is, the connections will record their transactions on the primary logs until they are filled. At this time, the secondary log will be allocated according to the amount of log space requested. The logging operation continues until both the active primary and secondary logs are completely used. From this point on, each command that generates a change to be recorded on the log files will be refused unless a COMMIT or ROLLBACK statement is executed. Closed logs will be re-used. This logging behavior is ideal

for a read-only environment, when few database changes are expected, since the number of primary and secondary logs is limited.

However, if the database is updated frequently, the recommended logging mode is the log retention logging. With this approach, a command will only be rolled back when its unit of work exceeds the total amount of space defined by the sum of primary and secondary logs. The number of log files will increase until they reach S9999999.log, then the log name counter will be restarted. It is important that closed logs are archived using user exit, as they are vital to the recovery of the database. Using this logging method also allows an online database backup, a backup of chosen tablespaces, as well as a point-in-time recovery.

Refer to 8.4.1, “DB2 UDB backup restore scenario” on page 171 for more information about database and tablespace recovering scenarios.

Data files, index files, and temporary space

Table rows and indexes are stored in tablespaces, as well as temporary tables that are used for reorganizations and sorts. The tablespaces can be either System Managed Space (SMS) or Database Managed Space (DMS). The main difference is how the disk space will be allocated and how these tablespaces will increase in size. The physical disk space allocated for a tablespace is called a container. Containers store data and indexes in disk pages of 4 KB, 8 KB, 16 KB, or 32 KB sizes. The choice for the value to be used will depend basically on the system workload as well as on SQL limits. See also Appendix A, "SQL Limits", in the *IBM DB2 Universal Database SQL Reference, Volume 1*, SC09-4844.

SMS tablespaces

By default, three System Managed Space (SMS) tablespaces are created when a database is created. The physical storage space allocation and management tasks within the SMS will be the responsibility of the operating system's file system manager. The data and index pages will be recorded in files within file systems or directories. Every time the amount of data, indexes, or temporary tables increases, DB2 UDB will determine the name of the files to extend in order to accommodate this data, and the operating system will be responsible for managing them. The two most important characteristics of this tablespace type is that the disk space is not pre-allocated and, once the number of containers is specified, it cannot easily be changed. Only through an operation called *redirected restore* it is possible to add more containers to an SMS tablespace.

Note that the file extension will be one 4 KB page at a time unless db2empfa (Enable multi-page file allocation) has been run. This utility causes the extension to be allocated one extent at a time. An extent is a number of pages, the default being 32.

The following is the list of files that compose an SMS tablespace:

- SQLTAG.NAM: One for each container subdirectory and used to verify that the database is complete and consistent.
- SQLxxxxx.DAT: Table file, where all rows of a table are stored, with the exception of LONG VARCHAR, LONG VARGRAPHIC, CLOB, BLOB, and DBCLOB data.
- SQLxxxxx.LF: File containing LONG VARCHAR or LONG VARGRAPHIC data.
- SQLxxxxx.LB: Files containing BLOB, CLOB, or DBCLOB data.
- SQLxxxxx.LBA: Files containing allocation and free space information about the SQLxxxxx.LB files.
- SQLxxxxx.INX: Index file for a table.
- SQLxxxxx.DTR: Temporary data file for a REORG of a DAT file.
- SQLxxxxx.LFR: Temporary data file for a REORG of a LF file.
- SQLxxxxx.RLB: Temporary data file for a REORG of a LB file.
- SQLxxxxx.RBA: Temporary data file for a REORG of a LBA file.
- SQLxxxxx.BMP: Block allocation information for an MDC table.

DMS tablespaces

When Database Managed Space (DMS) tablespaces are used, the database manager will be responsible for the control of the physical storage space allocation and management.

The containers for a DMS tablespace are raw devices or file system files with pre-defined sizes, that is, the disk space is pre-allocated when a DMS tablespace is defined. Usually, a DMS tablespace performs better than an SMS tablespace, since it does not have to spend time extending a lot of files when new rows are inserted. Using DMS tablespaces also allows a single table to store its data, index, and large objects on up to three different DMS tablespaces, thus improving performance through parallel disk I/O. Furthermore, a DMS tablespace can be easily increased by just adding new containers to it. Any new containers added should be the same size as the other containers.

4.2.4 Processes

The DB2 UDB RDBMS architecture is based on processes. Through this architecture, DB2 UDB is able to communicate with remote and local client applications.

How the client connections are managed in DB2 UDB Version 8 depends on whether the connection concentrator is on or off. The connection concentrator is on when the max_connections database manager configuration parameter is set larger than the max_coordagents configuration parameter.

- If the connection concentrator is off, for each client application that connects to a database, a single coordinator agent is assigned. This coordinator agent is a process named *db2agent*, and it is responsible for serving the requests from the clients to the database. On a database where the intra-partition parallelism feature is enabled, the db2agent will use one or more agent processes, named *db2agntp*, and coordinate their work in order to retrieve the information requested by the clients more quickly. Refer to 4.3.3, "Inter-partition and intra-partition parallelism" on page 83 for more information about the different types of parallelism.
- If the connection concentrator is on, each coordinator agent can manage many client connections, one at a time, and might coordinate the other worker agents to do this work. In a situation with many relatively transient connections or small transactions, the connection concentrator can improve performance by allowing many more client applications to be connected. It also reduces system resource use for each connection.

As client applications could easily interfere with the internal engine processes, the DB2 UDB implements a firewall that isolates the DB2 UDB engine's processes from the application processes in order to avoid a possible instance crash. In previous versions, two processes remained outside the firewall:

- db2udfp: Fenced user-defined functions (UDFs) and methods
- db2dari: Fenced stored procedures

In Version 8, these two processes no longer exist independently. They are now known as *routines* and are implemented using a thread based model. The process is:

- db2fmp: Stored procedures, user-defined functions, and methods

The term routine is used to encompass stored procedures, UDFs, and methods. This reflects the fact that DB2 UDB Version 8 parameter styles, data type mappings, and system catalogs are the same for all three routine types. The merged catalog views for the three types are:

- SYSCAT.ROUTINES
- SYSCAT.ROUTINREPARMS

There are further enhancements that can be studied in more detail by referring Chapters 3 and 10 of *IBM DB2 Universal Database What's New*, SC09-4848 and Part 1 of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Application Development Guide:*

Programming Server Applications, SC09-4827. You can also refer to 4.2.5, “SQL extensions: Stored procedures” on page 76 for further information about stored procedures.

Figure 4-3 illustrates how the DB2 UDB processes are structured.

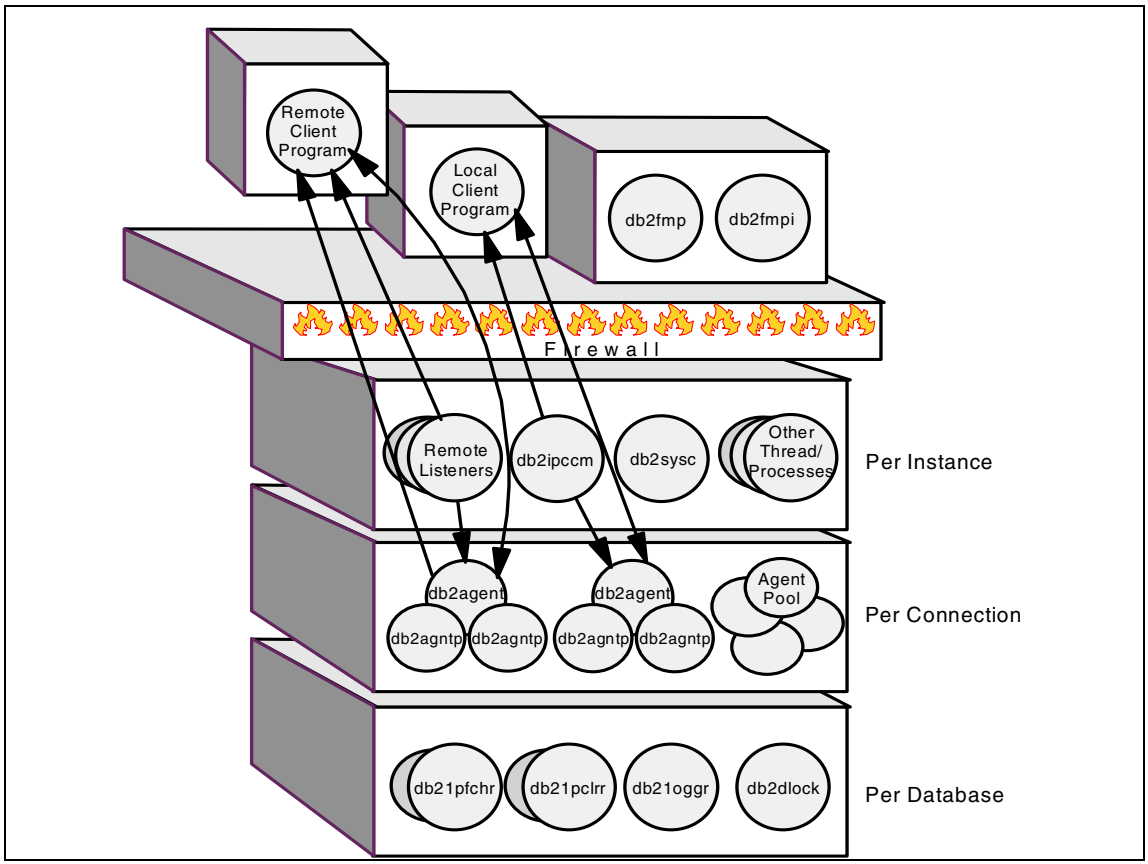

Figure 4-3 DB2 process model for Version 8.1

The DB2 UDB listeners are responsible for the communication between the client and server processes when the clients ask the server for a connection. For each different communication protocol, there is an associated listener. They will only be available if DB2 UDB is asked to support a specific communication protocol (defined at the DB2COMM registry variable). For treating local connections, a special inter-process communications (IPC) listener will be used. The IPC processes can be queried with the **`ipcs`** command.

There can be up to four listeners available in an AIX environment:

- db2ipccm: For local client connections
- db2tcpcm: For TCP/IP connections
- db2snacm: For APPC connections
- db2tcpdm: For TCP/IP discovery tool requests

Each different instance on an AIX machine will have their own set of processes that are responsible for keeping the instance running as well as managing other operational needs. Basically, this system availability is achieved through the use of the system controller process *db2sysc*.

Along with db2sysc, the following processes are also needed at the instance level:

- db2resyn: The resync agent, which scans the global resync list.
- db2gds: The global daemon spawner on UNIX-based systems, which starts new processes.
- db2wdog: The watchdog on UNIX-based systems, which handles abnormal terminations.
- db2fcmdm: The fast communications manager daemon, which handles inter-nodal communication (used only in DB2 ESE with multiple partitions).
- db2pdbc: The parallel system controller, which handles parallel requests from remote nodes (used only in DB2 ESE with multiple partitions).
- db2glock: Associated with the catalog node for the database and controls global deadlocks across nodes where the active database is situated (used only in DB2 ESE with multiple partitions).
- db2panic: The panic agent, which handles urgent requests after agent limits have been reached at a particular node in a partitioned environment.
- db2fmtlg: Pre-allocates log files when LOGRETAIN=ON and USEREXIT=OFF are set.
- db2cart: Archives log files by invoking userexit on a per instance basis.

DB2 UDB also uses the following processes for each created database:

- db2pfchr: For input and output (I/O) prefetching
- db2pclnr: For buffer pool page cleaners
- db2loggr and db2loggw: For manipulating log files to handle transaction processing and recovery
- db2dlock: For deadlock detection
- db2logts: Used for two phase commit type logging/transaction checking

Among all the possible client, listener, database, and instance processes, the db2agent (or db2agntp on an intra-parallel database) is the one that can allocate and possibly hold the largest amount of memory resource in the system.

When a connected application ends the connection, the agent (or agents) associated with that specific application turn to an idle status. The number of agents allowed to remain idle, but still holding resources, will be determined by the database parameter num_poolagents.

In order to verify all the DB2 UDB processes running on a AIX machine, the **ps -ef | grep db2** command can be issued.

None of the DB2 UDB processes should be killed by the system or database administrator since any attempt in this direction could cause the whole instance to crash. DB2 UDB controls the creation and removal of all the existing processes from memory.

4.2.5 SQL extensions: Stored procedures

Many programmers code repetitive sequences of inserts, updates, deletes, and selects. Depending on how often the same sequence is executed by the client machines, the usage of stored procedures might be recommended. Stored procedures are programs that reside on the server machine and that can be called by the client machine through a regular CALL command within a transaction.

The usage of stored procedures can improve the overall database performance by reducing the number of the transmissions on the network. The faster the network can send a request and deliver the output, the quicker the client application will finish processing.

The stored procedures can be written in four different languages: JAVA, SQL Procedure, COBOL, and C.

The choice of which language should be used will depend on how familiar the application designers are with the language. In the other cases, it is recommended that SQL Procedure language or JAVA are used due to their easy writable code.

- JAVA

  The DB2 UDB Stored Procedure Builder Tool generates stored procedures written in JAVA without the need to know the language. Only the SQL statements need to be defined. DB2 UDB also implements support for both static and dynamic SQL in the body of the stored procedure.

- SQL Procedure

  SQL Procedure is an IBM programming language extension to the SQL language based on the ANSI/ISO standard language SQL/Persistent Stored Modules (SQL/PSM). It is similar to Sybase, Microsoft SQL, Oracle, and Informix SQL languages, which allows the users of those RDBMSs to easily get adapted to it.

4.2.6 DB2 tools

The DB2 UDB GUI tools provide you with the ability to set-up and configure DB2, administer DB2, and monitor DB2, and also some development tools. For administration, the main tool is the Control Center.

The following information is a brief introduction to these tools; for more detailed information, we suggest that you refer to Chapters 3 and 4 of *IBM DB2 Universal Database Guide to GUI Tools for Administration and Development*, SC09-4851.

Depending on the products installed, you can select the following tools from the GUI tool bar:

- The Control Center can be launched by using the **db2cc** command from the toolbar, or from the tools menu of another tool. Using the Control Center, you can administer all of your systems, instances, databases, and database objects, such as tablespaces, bufferpools, tables, indexes, and triggers, and, as stated above, you can open other tools from the toolbar. The DB2 Control Center looks as shown in Figure 4-4 on page 78.

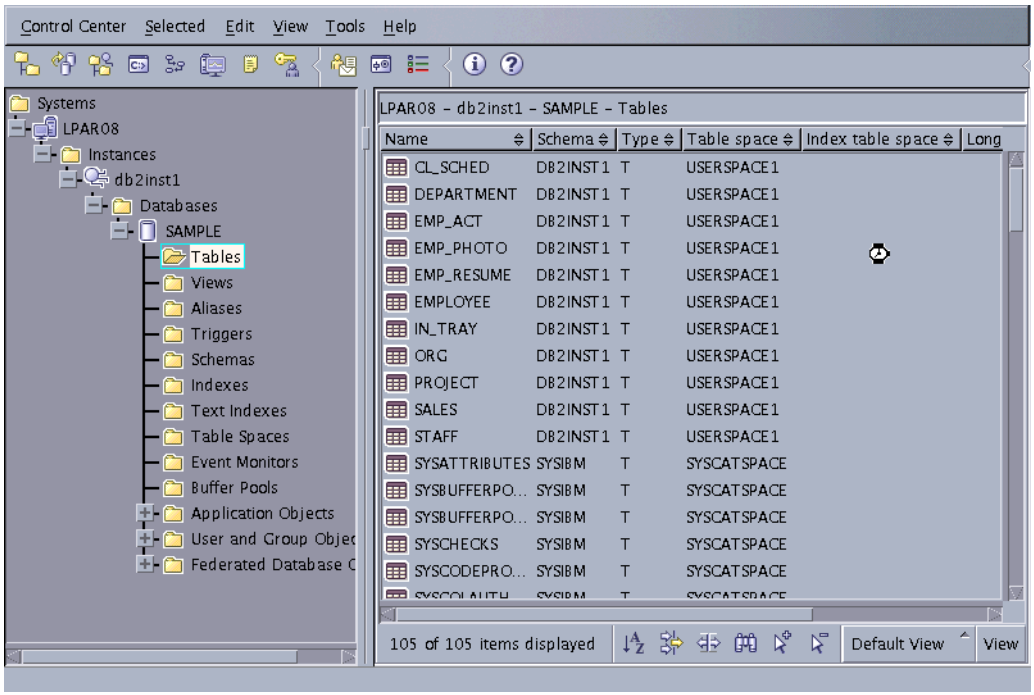

Figure 4-4 DB2 UDB Control Center

- The Replication Center can be launched by using the **db2rc** command, from the toolbar, or from the tools menu of another tool. Using the Replication Center, you can administer replication between a DB2 database and another relational database.
- The Satellite Administration Center can be started either from the tools menu of another tool or from the toolbar. Using the Satellite Administration Center, you can set up and administer a group of satellites, such as a group of DB2 servers that perform the same business function. These servers will all run the same application and have the same database definition to support this application.
- If the Data Warehouse option has been installed, the Data Warehouse Center can be launched by using the **db2wc** command, from the toolbar, or from the tools menu of another tool. Using the Data Warehouse Center, you will be able to automate Data Warehousing tasks, for example, extraction and transformation of data.
- The Command Center can be started either from the toolbar or from the tools menu of another tool. Using the Command Center, you can execute DB2 commands or scripts, execute SQL statements, and view graphical representations of the access plan for explained SQL statements.

- The Task Center can be launched by using the **db2tc** command, from the toolbar, or from the tools menu of another tool. Using the Task Center, you can define tasks (scripts) and either schedule or immediately run them.
- If the Data Warehousing Option has been installed, the Information Catalog Center can be launched by using the **db2icc** command, from the toolbar, or from the tools menu of another tool. Using the Information Catalog Center, you can organize and search for business information.
- The Health Center can be launched by using the **db2hc** command, from the toolbar, from the tools menu of another tool, or by clicking the Health Center status beacon when it appears on a DB2 window. Using the Health Center, you can monitor the state of the database environment and make any necessary changes. This is done by monitoring a set of health indicators. If the current value of a health monitor is outside an acceptable operating range, defined by warning and alarm thresholds, an alert is generated.
- The Journal can be started either by selecting it from the tools menu of another tool or by clicking the icon from the toolbar. Using the Journal allows you to record and display historical information about tasks, database actions and operations, Control Center actions, messages, and alerts.
- The License Center can be started either by selecting it from the tools menu of another tool or by clicking the icon in the toolbar. Using the License Center allows you to administer the licenses for installed products, including adding, removing, displaying, and monitoring functions.
- The Development Center can be launched by using the **db2dc** command, from the toolbar, or from the tools menu of another tool. Using the Development Center allows you to more easily develop the routines (stored procedures, user-defined functions, and structured types) discussed earlier in 4.2.5, “SQL extensions: Stored procedures” on page 76.
- The Information Center can be launched by using the **db2ic** command, from the toolbar, or from the tools menu of another tool. Using the Information Center allows you to find information about DB2 UDB.
- The Configuration Assistant can be launched by using the **db2ca** command. Using the Configuration Assistant allows you to configure clients or provides a light-weight alternative to the Control Center, for example, where you do not want to install the complete set of GUI tools.
- The Indoubt Transaction Manager can be launched by using the **db2indbt** command. Using the Indoubt Transaction manager allows you to work with global transactions that are in an indoubt state, such as when a communications failure could leave a transaction prepared but not committed or rolled back. This should not be used lightly or as a replacement for Transaction Manager resynchronization.

Further tools can be invoked from within another tool:

- The Memory Visualizer can be started by opening the Control Center, right-clicking an instance, and selecting **View memory usage**. Using the Memory Visualizer allows you to monitor the memory allocation of a DB2 UDB Version 8 instance and manipulate the configuration parameters accordingly.
- If purchased, the Spatial Extender is enabled through the Control Center on a database and thereafter invoked from the Control Center by right-clicking on an enabled database and selecting **Spatial Extender**.
- The SQL Assist tool can be started by clicking the SQL Assist in one of the following tools:
  - Control Center
  - Command Center
  - Replication Center
  - Development Center
  - Data Warehouse Center

  Using the SQL Assist tool allows you to create SQL statements that are appropriate to the context of the tool in which you selected the SQL Assist tool.
- The Visual Explain tool is started by opening the Control Center and either selecting **Show Explained Statements History** or **Explain SQL** or by opening the Command Center and executing an explainable statement on either the interactive page or the script page. Using the Visual Explain tool allows you to view the access plan for explained SQL statements graphically.

In addition, there are browser invocable versions of the Web Command Center and Web Health Center. These tools require an HTML 4.0-compliant Web browser and a middle tier with DB2 Web Tools installed.

4.3 DB2 UDB parallel database considerations

IBM's implementation of parallel database concepts on AIX is the DB2 Universal Database Enterprise Server Edition (DB2 UDB ESE) with the Database Partitioning Feature (DPF). This product enables the distribution of data and indexes over multiple database partitions. For this reason, it is also called a *partitioned database system* or *clustered system*.

An overview of the product is given in the following sections:

- 4.3.1, “Concepts and functionality” on page 81
- 4.3.2, “Optimizer” on page 83
- 4.3.3, “Inter-partition and intra-partition parallelism” on page 83
- 4.3.4, “Hardware implementation” on page 84

4.3.1 Concepts and functionality

What makes DB2 UDB parallel databases different from DB2 UDB non-parallel databases is the capability of splitting the data into multiple *database partitions*. Non-parallel databases are often referred to as *single-partition databases*, while parallel databases are referred to as *partitioned databases*. There is a further type to consider, which is the single-partition multi-processor database, as distinct from the single-partition single processor database, which is referred to as *Symmetric Multi Processing* (SMP). A database partition is a logical concept that must be mapped to the available hardware by the database administrator. On an IBM @server pSeries SP, you may decide to assign one partition to every single node of your system, but it is also possible to declare several partitions per node. On large SMP machines, you logically assign a number of processors, memory, and a couple of disks per partition. The decision of how many partitions your system should have must be a balance between the overhead a partition adds to your configuration (in terms of CPU, memory, and administrative resources) and the higher level of parallelism you gain for some operations, such as loads, backups, and all those workloads that are often referred to as *batch jobs*. In previous versions of DB2 UDB, database partitions were called *logical nodes*, which gives an idea of the internal processing independence that one database partition owns.

On each database partition, one database manager is responsible for a portion of the databases data. Each database server has its own set of data. The fact that data is partitioned across database partition servers is transparent to users and applications. Each database system has one database partition on which the **`create database`** command for the database was issued. This database partition contains the database system catalogs for the entire database and is called the *catalog node*. The user interaction with the database is handled from the node the user is connected to. This database partition is known as the *coordinator node*. Each database partition can act as a coordinator node to handle the distribution of system resources.

Data and indexes are stored in tablespaces. DB2 UDB ESE uses *database partition groups* to define to which database partition every table space is distributed. In previous versions, database partition groups were known as nodegroups.

DB2 UDB ESE executes everything in parallel. All database functions, such as SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE, and DELETE are performed in parallel on all database partitions. Both database activities, such as data scan, index scan, joins, sorts, index creation, or table reorganization and DB2 UDB utilities, such as data load, backup, and restore, are executed simultaneously on all partitions. Particularly, the loading of very large amounts of data can be performed much faster in this parallel database environment than on a serial database system.

DB2 UDB ESE provides excellent scalability. If the number of concurrent connected users grows over time, or the amount of data reaches the system resource capacity, a parallel database system can be extended by adding additional physical nodes to the system and defining new database partitions. DB2 UDB ESE provides the capability to redistribute the data onto the newly added node. This means that after adding a database partition, the database manager starts to move a part of the data to the new database partition in order to get an equally balanced system. This process is referred to as *data redistribution*.

Communication across all database nodes is realized by the *Fast Communication Manager* (FCM). Each database partition has one FCM daemon to provide communication support in order to handle DB2 UDB agent requests and to manage message buffers. For example, in an SP environment, the FCM daemons might interact over the SP Switch and TCP/IP sockets and on an SMP system, this communication happens in shared memory.

DB2 UDB ESE uses a *hashing strategy* to partition the data. If you want a partitioned table, you have to decide on which database partitions the data will be distributed. These database partitions will form a database partition group that can be reused for other tables you want to partition as well. Internally, DB2 UDB will create a *partitioning map* for you, which plays an essential role for the hashing process. Then, you have to declare a tablespace and assign it to the database partition group previously created. It will contain the definition of the physical layout, that is, you specify directories, files, and raw devices where the data will be physically stored. Again, this tablespace can be reused for other tables and indexes as well. Finally, you declare your table in this tablespace, specifying a *partitioning key* (the second essential player in the hashing process) and start to insert or load data. DB2 UDB will decide to which node each record must be sent.

The partitioning key consists of one or more columns of the table. Do not forget that all columns of the partitioning key must be included in the primary key or unique indexes you might want to create on this table. Briefly, the partitioning process starts when a new row must be inserted: DB2 UDB applies its internal hashing function, taking the value(s) of the column(s) defined as partitioning key argument(s), and produces a *hash-value* for this row. Then, DB2 UDB scans the

partitioning map of the database partition group searching for the hash-value. The partitioning map contains the information on which database partition is assigned to which hash-value. Finally, the row is sent to the database partition according to the definition of the partitioning map and is stored in the datafiles specified in the tablespace.

The determination of the best partitioning key is important for the most effective distribution of rows and is, therefore, essential for optimal system performance. See also *The DB2 Cluster Certification Guide*, by Cook, et al., for more information.

4.3.2 Optimizer

DB2 UDB ESE uses a cost-based optimizer. It compares different data access methods and selects the most efficient one. The optimizer uses information about how base tables and the intermediate tables that result from queries are partitioned across the system and determines the best execution strategy. As a result, the optimizer determines a cost optimized access plan for that query that can be visualized through performance tools, such as Explain. When generating the access plans, the optimizer considers different parallel methods for joining tables, including *co-located, directed,* and *broadcast* joins. The optimizer features extensions, such as SQL query rewrite, SQL extensions, Star Joins, Dynamic Bit-Mapped Indexing ANDing (DBIA), and OLAP extensions, to find the optimal strategy for joining very large tables with one or more small tables.

4.3.3 Inter-partition and intra-partition parallelism

All database operations, such as index scans and table scans, aggregation, set operations, joins, inserts, deletes, and updates can gain significant performance improvements provided by *intra-query parallelism* and/or *inter-query parallelism*. The DB2 UDB cost-based optimizer decides whether a user statement runs in parallel or not, which stages of that user statement are parallelized, and how these stages are parallelized. The decision is based on:

- Available hardware (such as the number and speed of processors, the number of database partitions, and the number and speed of disks)
- Configuration parameters
- Current workload (how many queries run on the system and how many resources are consumed)
- Type of operation
- Physical layout (database partition group configuration and tablespace containers)

- Available information about the objects referred to in the statement (table and index statistics)

Inter-partition parallelism means that the function is executed in parallel by each database partition. An example would be when a user or application issues an SQL statement, such as a SELECT statement, to fetch data with certain conditions from many tables spread over multiple database partitions. In this case, the coordinator database partition (also referred to as the coordinator node) sends this request to all the relevant database partitions. The database manager on each node selects the data from tables stored on the disks, sorts the data, and sends all rows that meet the selected conditions back to the coordinator node. On this database partition, all rows are finally merged and returned to the user or application. In this example, the function (query) is shipped to all nodes, and only the data that satisfies this request is sent back across the network. This concept reduces the network traffic and is known as *function shipping.*

Intra-partition parallelism allows different operators in the same query to be executed in parallel by the same database partition. If, for instance, an application performs a query including a SCAN, a JOIN, and a SORT, the database manager can execute this request in parallel depending on the setting of dedicated DB2 UDB configuration parameters or allow the system to calculate the degree of parallelism.

It should be pointed out that you can combine inter-partition parallelism with intra-query parallelism at the same time. This can provide for faster query processing and would typically be used in a MPP system which involved SMP clustering.

4.3.4 Hardware implementation

As mentioned above, DB2 UDB ESE is designed for two different types of hardware configurations involving parallelism:

- MPP (Massively Parallel Processing) systems with shared nothing architecture
- SMP systems with shared memory and disk architecture

DB2 UDB ESE on MPP systems

Typically on a MPP system, each node is an independent server with one or more CPUs, memory, internal disks, and several adapters for communication, external disks, and devices. One key part of the system is the connection, which is responsible for high performance data transfer, for example, the High Speed Switch. The communication protocol used by the nodes to communicate through the switch is TCP/IP with the advantage of easy implementation and

configuration associated with this protocol. The administration of this system is done from a single point of control using a dedicated machine. For example, this is known as the Control Workstation (CWS) on the SP and the Hardware Management console on an IBM @server pSeries model p690. This is an IBM @server pSeries model with enough disk space to hold all management tools and all LPP sources for all nodes. It also contains a graphic adapter, monitor and keyboard, a CD ROM for software installation, and backup devices, such as tape drives.

Additional software must be installed on all nodes and the CWS/HMC in order to provide inter-communication support and management. This software is the AIX Parallel System Support Programs (PSSP), which is also responsible for authentication, security, and administration.

This environment is best suited to make use of all the features that DB2 UDB ESE provides for optimal performance.

If the system contains SMP nodes, it is possible to combine the advantages of MPP systems with those of SMP systems. In this environment, two or more database partitions reside on one SMP node, and each node is part of a clustered databases system.

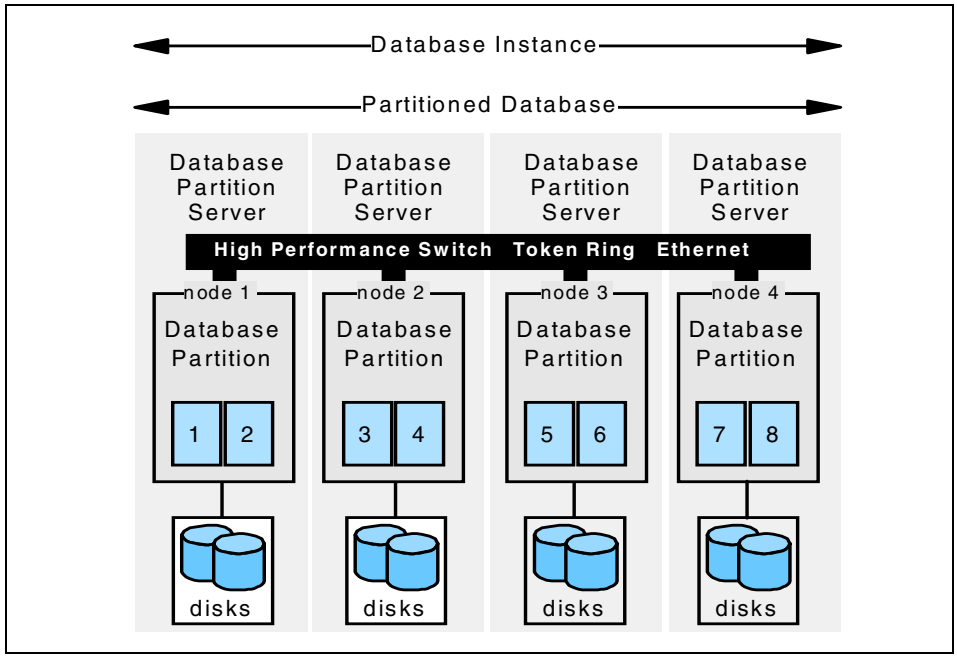

Figure 4-5 DB2 UDB ESE parallel structure

DB2 UDB ESE on an SMP system

DB2 UDB ESE installed on an SMP system corresponds to the concept of a shared memory implementation. Optimal performance will be achieved by using a system with eight or more CPUs, on which one database partition uses one, two, or four processors. The amount of memory should be as large as possible to provide enough space for buffer pool and buffers for all database manager processes. In order to prevent the disk subsystem from becoming a bottleneck for I/O throughput, it is recommended to use more than one SCSI adapter or more than one SSA subsystem to provide a larger bandwidth.

This environment might be a good solution for DSS databases, Business Intelligence applications, and Data Marts where many complex queries run in a loop against a larger table, and the most used computer resource is the CPU.

5

Oracle databases

This chapter describes the different physical and logical structures for Oracle as well as the processes used to access and manipulate the databases. It is recommended that these basic concepts be totally comprehended since they are referenced in the other chapters.

In this chapter, we discuss the following:

- 5.1, “Oracle database architecture” on page 88 discusses the architecture of Oracle database system.
- 5.2, “Oracle Real Application Cluster” on page 101 describes briefly the parallel version of Oracle.

5.1 Oracle database architecture

Oracle databases have both a logical and physical storage structure. This separation of physical from logical allows the physical aspects of the database to be managed without affecting access to the logical storage structures. The logical storage structures dictate how the actual physical space of a database is used.

Oracle also uses several memory and process structures to access and manage the database. The memory structures are used to hold executing program code, information shared and communicated among Oracle processes as well as the actual data from the underlying physical storage structures. The various Oracle processes perform such tasks as interfacing with user application programs and monitoring the database for availability and performance.

5.1.1 Memory structures

Oracle utilizes several different types of memory structures for storing and retrieving data in the system. These include the *System Global Area* (SGA) and *Program Global Areas* (PGA). These memory structures and the relationship between them is depicted in Figure 5-1.

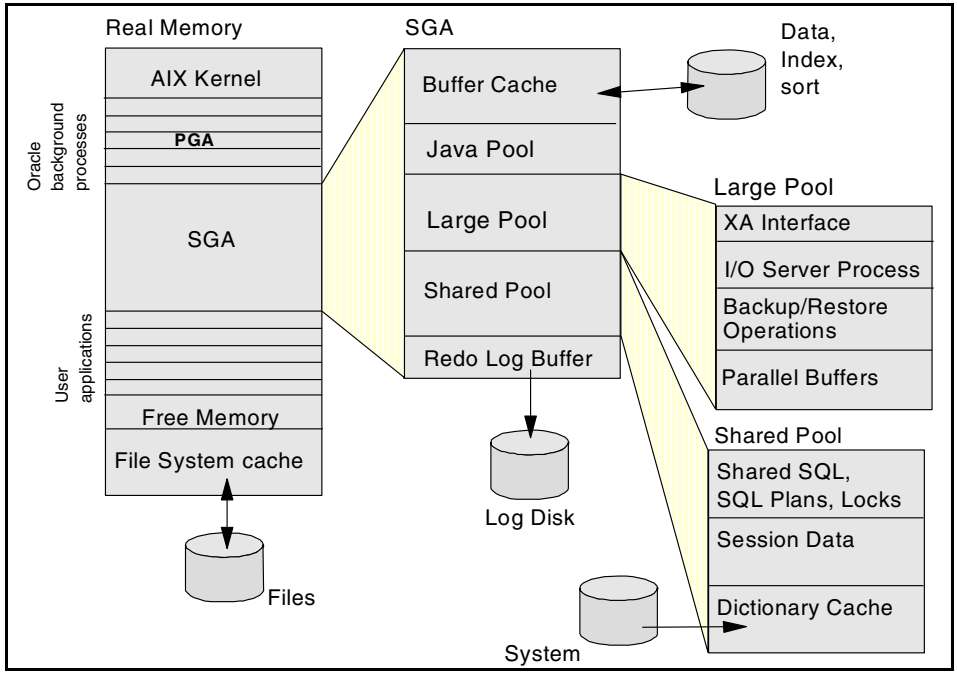

Figure 5-1 Oracle memory structures

The Oracle SGA is a shared memory region used to hold data and internal control structures of the database. This shared memory region details can be displayed in AIX with the **ipcs -ma** command. The Oracle SGA and its associated background processes, described in 5.1.4, “Processes” on page 94, are known as an Oracle *instance*. The instance identity is called by the short name *SID*. This short name is used in all Oracle processes connected to this instance. To connect to a particular instance, set the shell variable $ORACLE_SID to the SID or specify it in the connect command at SQLPlus. The SGA memory region is allocated upon instance startup and de-allocated when the instance is shut down and is unique to each database instance. SGA is dynamically managed by Oracle, while the instance is up. The information contained in the SGA is logically separated into three to five different areas: The *database buffer cache,* the *redo log buffer,* the *shared pool,* the *Java pool* (optional) and the *large pool*.

The database buffer cache consists of Oracle database data blocks or *buffers* that have been read from disk and placed into memory. These buffers are classified as either *free, dirty,* or *pinned* and are organized in two lists: the *write list* and the *LRU list*. Free buffers are those that have not yet been modified and are available for use. Dirty buffers contain data that has been modified but has not yet been written to disk and are held in the write list. Lastly, pinned buffers are buffers that are currently being accessed.

Oracle uses a Least Recently Used (LRU) algorithm to age the dirty data blocks from memory to disk. A LRU list is used to keep track of all available buffers and their state (dirty, free, or pinned). Infrequently accessed data is moved to the end of the LRU list where it will eventually be written to disk by the Oracle DBW*n* process (see 5.1.4, “Processes” on page 94) should an additional free buffer be requested but not available.

The size of the database buffer cache is determined by a combination of some Oracle initialization parameters. It’s possible to set different block sizes for a database by specifying different cache sizes for each of these non-standard block sizes. The DB_BLOCK_SIZE parameter specifies the default or standard block size and the DB_CACHE_SIZE parameter sets the size of the cache using the blocks of DB_BLOCK_SIZE. To specify different block sizes, use the initialization parameter DB_*NK*_CACHE_SIZE, where NK ranges from 2 KB to 32 KB. Also, the DBA can change these parameters while the instance is up and running, except for the DB_BLOCK_SIZE parameter, which requires the database to be recreated.

The Java pool is used to hold Java execution code and classes information if the Java option is turned on to a specific Oracle instance.

The redo log buffer is used to store information about changes made to data in the database. This information can be used to reapply or *redo* the changes made

to the database should a database recovery become necessary. The entries in the redo log buffer are written to the online redo logs by the LGWR process (see 5.1.4, “Processes” on page 94). The size of the redo log buffer is determined by the LOG_BUFFER parameter in the Oracle initialization file.

The shared pool area stores memory structures, such as the shared SQL areas, private SQL areas, and the data dictionary cache and, if large pool is not turn on, the buffers for parallel execution messages. Shared SQL areas contain the parse tree and execution plan for SQL statements. Identical SQL statements share execution plans. One memory region can be shared for multiple identical Data Manipulation Language (DML) statements, thus saving memory. DML statements are SQL statements that are used to query and manipulate data stored in the database, such as SELECT, UPDATE, INSERT, and DELETE.

Private SQL areas contain Oracle bind information and run-time buffers. The bind information contains the actual data values of user variables contained in the SQL query.

The data dictionary cache is used to hold information pertaining to the Oracle data dictionary. The Oracle data dictionary serves as a roadmap to the structure and layout of the database. The information contained in the data dictionary is used during Oracle’s parsing of SQL statements.

The buffers for parallel execution hold information needed to synchronize all the parallel operations in the database. This is allocated from SGA just if the large pool is not configured.

The large pool area is an optional memory that can be used to address shared memory contention. It holds information such as the Oracle XA interface (the interface that Oracle uses to enable distributed transactions), I/O server processes, backup and restore operations, and if the initialization parameter PARALLEL_AUTOMATIC_TUNING is set to TRUE, the buffer for parallel execution. Large pool is enabled by setting the *LARGE_POOL_SIZE* to a number greater than 0.

In Oracle 9i, a new feature called *Dynamic SGA* allows optimized memory usage by instance. Also, it allows increasing or decreasing Oracle’s use of physical memory, with no downtime, because the database administrator may issue ALTER SYSTEM commands to change the SGA size, while the instance is running.

The Oracle PGA is a nonshared memory region that contains data and control information for a server process. This memory area is allocated by Oracle every time a server process is started, and access is allowed only to Oracle code working on it. In general, PGA contains a private SQL area (storing bind information and run-time structures that are associated with a shared SQL area)

and a session memory that holds session specific variables, such as logon information. If Oracle is using shared servers, this memory area is shared.

The run-time area of PGA may also be used as a work area for complex queries making use of memory-intensive operators like the following ones:

- Sort operations, like ORDER BY, GROUP BY, ROLLUP, and WINDOW
- HASH JOINS
- BITMAP MERGE
- BITMAP CREATE

If the session connects to a dedicated Oracle server, PGA is automatically managed. The database administrator just needs to set the PGA_AGGREGATE_TARGET initialization parameter to the maximum amount of memory he/she wants Oracle to use for client processes. Oracle will ensure that the total PGA allocated to all processes will never exceed this value.

5.1.2 Logical storage structures

An Oracle database is made up of several logical storage structures, including *data blocks*, *extents* and *segments*, *tablespaces,* and *schema objects*.

The actual physical storage space in the datafiles is logically allocated and deallocated in the form of Oracle data blocks. Data blocks are the smallest unit of I/O in an Oracle database. Oracle reserves a portion of each block for maintaining information, such as the address of all the rows contained in the block and the type of information stored in the block. This overhead is normally in the range of 84 to 107 bytes.

An extent is a collection of contiguous data blocks. A table is comprised of one or more extents. The very first extent of a table is known as the *initial extent*. When the data blocks of the initial extent become full, Oracle allocates an *incremental extent*. The incremental extent does not have to be the same size (in bytes) as the initial extent.

A segment is the collection of extents that contain all of the data for a particular logical storage structure in a tablespace, such as a table or index. There are four different types of segments, each corresponding to a specific logical storage structure type:

- Data segments
- Index segments
- Rollback segments
- Temporary segments

Data segments store all the data contained in a table, partition, or cluster. Likewise, index segments store all the data contained in an index. For backward compatibility, rollback segments are used to hold the previous contents of an Oracle data block prior to any change made by a particular transaction. If any part of the transaction should not complete successfully, the information contained in the rollback segments is used to restore the data to its previous state. In Oracle9i, this is achieved by using *automatic undo* and *undo tablespaces,* which allows better control and use of the server resources.

Rollback segments are also used to provide *read-consistency*. There are two different types of read-consistency: *statement-level* and *transaction-level*. Statement-level read consistency ensures that all of the data returned by an individual query comes from a specific point in time: the point at which the query started. This guarantees that the query does not see changes to the data made by other transactions that have committed since the query began. This is the default level of read-consistency provided by Oracle.

In addition, Oracle offers the option of enforcing transaction-level read consistency. Transaction-level read consistency ensures that all queries made within the same transaction do not see changes made by queries outside of that transaction but can see changes made within the transaction itself. These are known as *serializable* transactions.

Temporary segments are used as temporary workspaces during intermediate stages of a query's execution. They are typically used for sort operations that cannot be performed in memory. The following types of queries may require a temporary segment:

- SELECT.....ORDER BY
- SELECT.....GROUP BY
- SELECT.....UNION
- SELECT.....INTERSECT
- SELECT.....MINUS
- SELECT DISTINCT.....
- CREATE INDEX....

Tablespaces group related logical entities or objects together in order to simplify physical management of the database. Tablespaces are the primary means of allocating and distributing database data at the physical disk level. Tablespaces are used to:

- Control the physical disk space allocation for the database
- Control the availability of the data by taking the tablespaces online or off-line

- Distribute database objects across different physical storage devices to improve performance
- Regulate space for individual database users

Every Oracle database contains at least one tablespace named SYSTEM. The SYSTEM tablespace contains the data dictionary tables for the database used to describe its structure.

Schema objects are the logical structures used to refer to the database's data. A few examples of schema objects would be tables, indexes, views, and stored procedures. Schema objects, and the relationships between them, constitute the relational design of a database.

5.1.3 Physical storage structures

An Oracle database is made up of three different types of physical database files: *datafiles*, *redo logs*, and *control files*.

An Oracle database must have one or more datafiles in order to operate. Datafiles contain the actual database data logically represented in the form of tables or indexes. At the operating system level, datafiles can be implemented as either JFS files or raw devices. The data contained in the datafiles is read from disk into the memory regions, as described in 5.1.1, "Memory structures" on page 88.

An Oracle tablespace is comprised of one or more datafiles. A datafile cannot be associated with more than one tablespace, nor can it be used by more than one database. At creation time, the physical disk space associated with a datafile is pre-formatted, but does not contain any user data. As data is loaded into the system, Oracle reserves space for data or indexes in the datafile in the form of extents.

Redo logs are used by Oracle to record all changes made to the database. Every Oracle database must have at least two redo logs in order to function. The redo log files are written to in a circular fashion; when the current online log fills up, Oracle begins writing to the next available online redo log. In the event of a failure, changes to the Oracle database can be reconstructed using the information contained in the redo logs. Due to their importance, Oracle provides a facility for mirroring or *multiplexing* the redo logs so that two (or more) copies of the log are available on disk.

The control file describes the physical structure of the database. It contains information, such as the database name, date, and time the database was created, and the names and locations of all the database data files and redo

logs. Like the redo logs, Oracle can have multiple copies of the control file to protect against logical or physical corruption.

5.1.4 Processes

A process is defined as a *thread of control* used in an operating system to execute a particular task or series of tasks. Oracle utilizes three different types of processes to accomplish these tasks:

- User or client processes
- Server processes
- Background processes

User processes are created to execute the code of a client application program. The user process is responsible for managing the communication with the Oracle server process using a *session*. A session is a specific connection of a user application program to an Oracle instance. The session lasts from the time that the user or application connects to the database until the time the user disconnects from the database.

The various pieces of Oracle process architecture and its relationship with each other are shown in the Figure 5-2.

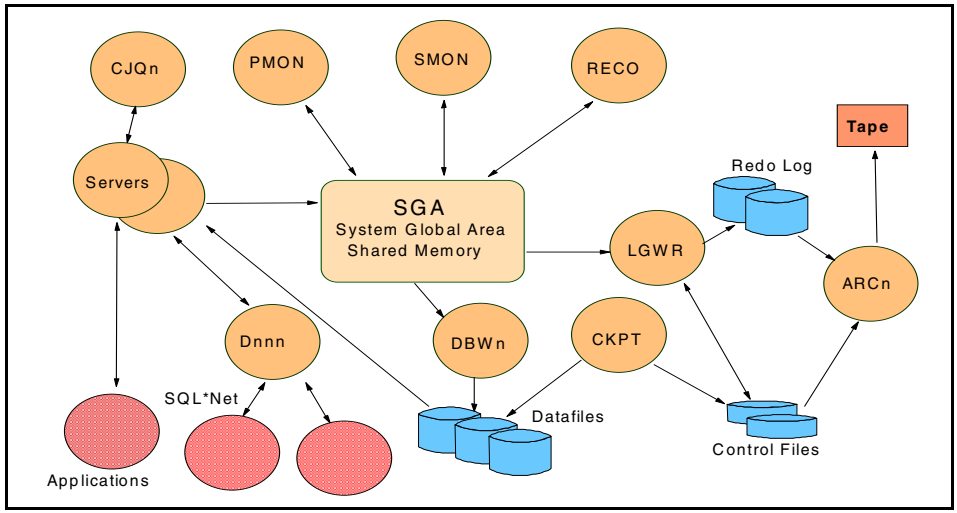

Figure 5-2 Oracle process architecture

Server processes are created by Oracle to service requests from connected user processes. They are responsible for interfacing with the database to carry out the requests of user processes. The number of user processes per server process is

dependent on the configuration of Oracle. In a *dedicated server* configuration, one server process is spawned for each connected user process. In a *multi-threaded server* configuration, user processes are distributed among a pre-defined number of server processes.

Oracle background processes are created upon database startup or initialization. Some background processes are necessary for normal operation of the system, while others are only used to perform certain database maintenance or recovery related functions. The Oracle background processes include:

- Database Writer (DBW*n*)

  The database writer process is responsible for writing modified or *dirty* database buffers from the database buffer cache to disk. It uses a least recently used (LRU) algorithm to ensure that the user processes always find free buffers in the database buffer cache. Dirty buffers are written to disk using a single multi-block write. Additional database writer processes can be configured to improve write performance if necessary. On AIX, enabling asynchronous I/O eliminates the need for multiple database writer processes and should yield better performance. Please refer to 13.3.1, “AIX asynchronous I/O” on page 325 for additional information regarding the use of asynchronous I/O.

Note: Multiple database writer processes provide no performance benefit on uniprocessor based systems.

- Log Writer (LGWR)

  The log writer process is responsible for writing modified entries from the redo log buffer to the online redo log files on disk. This occurs when one of the following conditions is met:

  – Three seconds have elapsed since the last buffer write to disk.

  – The redo log buffer is one-third full.

  – The DBW*n* process has written modified buffers to disk.

  – A transaction commits.

  A *commit record* is placed in the redo log buffer when a user issues a COMMIT statement, at which point the buffer is immediately written to disk. The commit record serves as a reminder to the LGWR process that the redo entries associated with this particular transaction have already been written to disk. The actual modified database data blocks are written to disk at a later time, a technique known as *fast commit*. The committed transaction is assigned a *system change number* (SCN), which is recorded in the redo log in order to uniquely identify the changes made within the transaction.

- Checkpoint Process (CKPT)

  The checkpoint process is responsible for notifying the DBW*n* process that the modified database blocks in the SGA need to be written to the physical datafiles. It is also responsible for updating the headers of all Oracle datafiles and the controlfile(s) to record the occurrence of the most recent checkpoint.

- Archiver (ARCn)

  The archiver process is responsible for copying the online redo log files to an alternate physical storage location once they become full. The ARCH process exists only when the database is configured for ARCHIVELOG mode, and automatic archiving is enabled.

- System Monitor (SMON)

  The system monitor process is responsible for performing recovery of the Oracle instance upon startup. It is also responsible for performing various other administrative functions, such as cleaning up temporary segments that are no longer in use and coalescing free extents in dictionary managed tablespaces.

- Process Monitor (PMON)

  The process monitor is responsible for cleaning up after failed user processes. This includes such tasks as removing entries from the process list, releasing locks, and freeing up used blocks in the database buffer cache associated with the failed process. It is also responsible for starting dispatcher or server processes that have unexpectedly finished.

- Recover (RECO)

  The recover process is responsible for recovering all in-doubt transactions that were initiated in a distributed database environment. RECO contacts all other databases involved in the transaction to remove any references associated with that particular transaction from the pending transaction table. The RECO process is not present at instance startup unless the DISTRIBUTED_TRANSACTIONS parameter is set to a value greater than zero and distributed transactions are allowed.

- Dispatcher (D*nnn)*

  Dispatcher processes are only present in a multi-threaded server configuration. They are used to allow multiple user processes to share one or more server processes. A client connection request is received by a network listener process, which, in turn, passes the request to an available dispatcher process, who then routes the request to an available server process. If no dispatcher processes are available, the listener process starts a new dedicated server process and connects the user process directly to it.

- LOCK (LCK*n*)

  The lock process is used in Oracle Parallel Server configurations to ensure inter-instance resource management. As of Oracle 8, up to ten lock processes can be started. In Oracle9i Real Application Cluster, the Lock Process is called Lock Manager Server (LMS) and there is only one.

- Job coordinator (CJQn)

  The job coordinator process is the scheduler in a Oracle instance. It is responsible for starting jobs processes that will execute batch processing. These jobs are PL/SQL statements or procedure in the instance. When a job has executed, CJQn will spawn a job queue slave process named J000 to J999. Thus, slave process then will proceed to execute job processing. If the JOB_QUEUE_PROCESSES is set to 0, the job coordinator will not start.

5.1.5 SQL extensions: Stored procedures

Oracle has extended the standard ANSI/ISO SQL specification by providing additional tools and technologies for accessing the database. These include both the procedural language extension PL/SQL and the support for embedded SQL in Java language programs using SQLJ.

PL/SQL

PL/SQL is Oracle's proprietary programming language extension to the SQL language. It allows the user to define such common programming language constructs as procedures, packages, and functions, which are used to manipulate data stored in the Oracle database. PL/SQL is a *block-structured* language, meaning that the procedures and functions that make up the program are divided into logical blocks. The PL/SQL engine is available not only in the Oracle server, but in application development tools, such as Oracle Forms and Oracle Reports. PL/SQL has the following features and advantages:

- SQL support.
- Object-oriented support.
- Portability. It will run unmodified on any platform that Oracle supports.
- Increased performance.
- Tight integration with Oracle.

The PL/SQL engine is also responsible for processing Oracle *stored procedures*. Stored procedures are commonly used procedures used by an application that has been stored in the database for easy access. Some characteristics of stored procedures are that they:

- Can take parameters and return values

- Can be called by many users
- Are stored in the Oracle data dictionary
- Execute on the database server

SQLJ

SQLJ is a Java language extension that allows application programmers to embed static and dynamic SQL statements into their Java code in order to extract and manipulate data in the database. Static SQL statements are predefined and do not change over the course of the execution of the program. Dynamic SQL statements are *not* predefined and can change while the program executes. Oracle's SQLJ implementation consists of two major components:

- Oracle SQLJ translator

  The translator is a preprocessor or precompiler that is run against SQLJ source code to produce Java file output. A Java compiler is then invoked to produce class output files from the Java source code.

- Oracle SQLJ runtime

  The SQLJ runtime is invoked when a user invokes a SQLJ compliant application. It then accesses the underlying database using the Oracle Java Database Connectivity (JDBC) driver.

5.1.6 Administration tools

Oracle provides several unique tools for managing various aspects of the database. These include tools for exporting and importing data, performance and availability monitoring, and centralized database administration. These include Server Manager, Export and Import, Oracle Enterprise Manager (OEM), and the most important one for the purposes of this redbook, Oracle Tuning Pack.

Server Manager

Important: As of Oracle9i, the server manager has been superseded by Oracle Enterprise Manager. This section is kept for backward compatibility and is intended just for working with Oracle8i or earlier.

Server Manager is an Oracle tool used to perform routine database administration tasks, such as startup and shutdown of the database, backup and recovery, and running dynamic SQL statements. There are both command-line and GUI versions of the tool available. Server Manager can be used to:

- Create a database and initialize the Oracle data dictionary
- Administer multiple databases

- Centralize database management by connecting to both local and remote databases
- Dynamically execute SQL, PL/SQL, or Server Manager commands

Export and Import utilities

Oracle provides utilities for the exporting and importing of data contained in the database. The primary tools for exporting and importing are the **exp** and **imp** commands. The **exp** command is used to extract the object definitions and table data from an Oracle database and store them in an Oracle proprietary binary format on disk or tape. Likewise, the **imp** command is used to read the object definitions and table data from the exported data file and insert them into an Oracle database.

While the **imp** command addresses the need for importing data that was exported from an existing Oracle database, it does not provide a facility for importing user defined data. The Oracle utility SQL*Loader is used to load data from external data sources into an Oracle database. SQL*Loader can be used to:

- Load data from multiple input files of different file types
- Load data from disk, tape, or named pipes
- Load data directly into Oracle datafiles, thereby bypassing the Oracle buffers and increasing the speed of data import operations
- Load fixed format, delimited format, or variable length records
- Selectively filter data based on predefined filtering rules
- Load xml data into the database.

Oracle Enterprise Manager (OEM)

Oracle Enterprise Manager (OEM) is an integrated system management tool for managing Oracle databases. It includes a graphical console, intelligent system agents, and access to common database management tools. OEM is invoked using the **oemapp <application>** command.

The graphical console serves as a central management point for the database allowing the database administrator to:

- Administer and tune multiple databases
- Perform software distribution to both client and servers
- Schedule jobs to run on different databases at different times
- Monitor and respond to predefined database events

Figure 5-3 on page 100 shows the Oracle Enterprise Manager console.

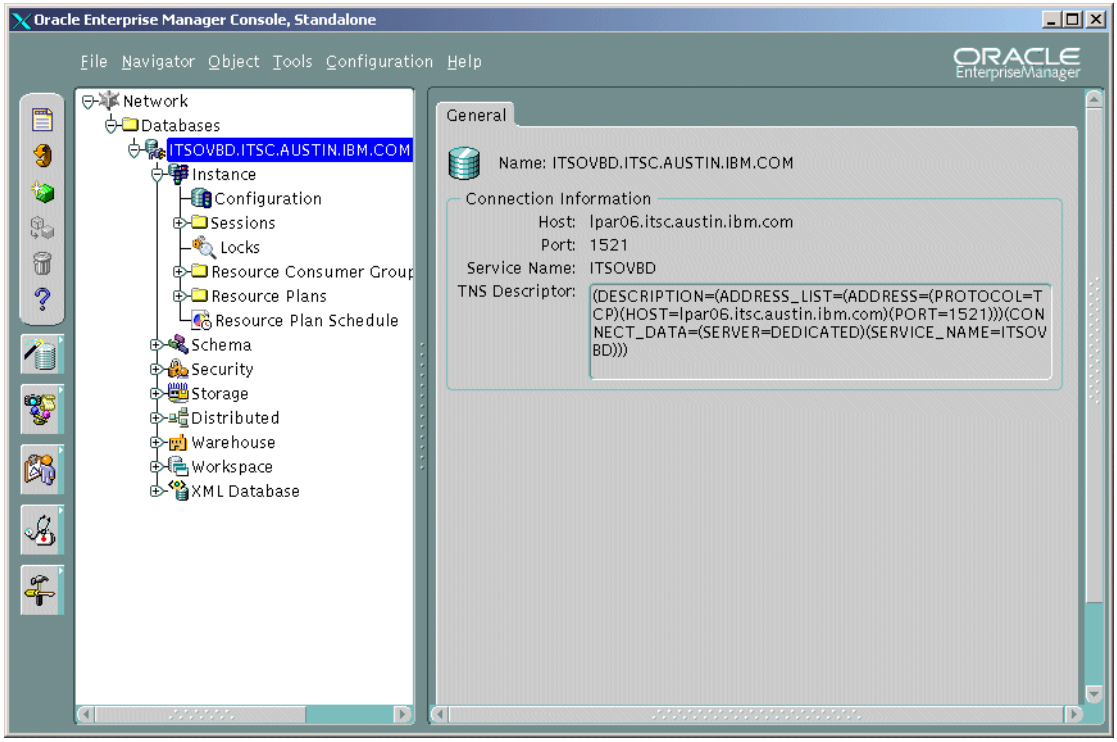

Figure 5-3 Oracle Enterprise Manager console

Oracle Tuning Pack

Oracle Tuning Pack is a set of tools that may be used to detect performance bottlenecks and tune an Oracle instance.

With these tools, database administrators are able to:

- Identify and resolve performance problems
- Identify the cause of a problem that has been reported and get advice on the best way to fix it
- Maintain existing performance
- Avoid performance problems by practicing proper maintenance operations
- Identify potential tuning problems before they occur
- Provide tools and methodologies to establish and maintain database performance

Some of the tools in the Oracle Tuning Pack are:

- Oracle Expert

  This tool is useful to see if the database configuration is optimal for performance based on its current workload. Based on this analysis, Oracle Expert will create some scripts that help to implement the tuning recommendations.

- Index Tuning Wizard

  The Index Tuning is a *must use* tool for all developers and DBAs working on tuning SQL statements and logical database design. It will help them find out if the chosen index strategy is the right one.

- SQL Analyzer

  The SQL Analyzer allows a developer or DBA to check if the SQL statement that is sent to the Oracle instance is written for performance. If not, the tool provides some hints on how to improve it. This tool also helps the DBA to identify poorly written SQL and the most resource consuming SQL.

- Tablespace Map

  Oracle Tablespace Map helps the database administrator improve I/O performance by mapping the used and free space as well as the location of the objects inside the tablespace. It also helps to determine if the tablespace needs to be reorganized.

- Reorganize Wizard

  When storage problems are detected using Tablespace Map, reorganization may be a way to solve it. Unfortunately, reorganization is not an easy task. DBAs often get into trouble when they walk through all the necessary steps to reorganize Oracle databases. They usually write shell scripts that runs SQL scripts to make this reorg. These scripts may contain errors, which can leave the database in an inconsistent status. For example, the index generation script may contain a comma instead of a semicolon, and it will not work. Oracle knows about this problem and provides DBAs with this unique tool designed to help them to reorganize the database or just a schema object.

5.2 Oracle Real Application Cluster

Oracle has renamed Oracle Parallel Server (OPS) to Oracle Real Application Cluster (RAC), which points out chief characteristics of the product, namely, the ability to perform all that is expected from a RDBMS on a cluster environment: high availability, fault tolerance, and load balancing. As this redbook is dealing mainly with Oracle9i, and since OPS and RAC share most of their architecture, all the references are made to RAC, unless otherwise specified.

Oracle has implemented its RDBMS product on the IBM @server pSeries cluster so that it can run on multiple nodes of an cluster in parallel. This implementation uses the shared disk model and is unique in this as the other parallel databases shared nothing. The parallel version of Oracle is like classic Oracle with a few additions:

- It makes use of the Oracle Parallel Query (OPQ) features that are also available on classic Oracle, but here, not only does the query get split out onto the CPUs of a single system but also split out across the nodes of the cluster. This feature is used quite often in DSS workloads where all the CPUs in all of the different nodes can work on the query for maximum parallelization and reduced response times.
- Oracle Real Application Cluster (RAC) allows different instances of Oracle to run on different nodes of the cluster having shared access to a single database. Oracle RAC uses extra subsystems to achieve this task. Some of the most important subsystems are the Virtual Shared Disk (VSD), the Global Enqueue Service (GES), and Global Cache Service (GCS).
- Many Oracle tools have been enhanced to allow extra parallelization, for example, parallel load and parallel indexes.
- To support very large databases, the partitioned tables feature is very important. It reduces DBA time for load, index, and delete operations of very large tables and can also reduce query time.

Many of these extra features are also available in the classic version of Oracle, where they are useful, but they become very important for RAC and with extremely large databases.

5.2.1 Oracle RAC architecture

Figure 5-4 on page 103 shows the various components of classic Oracle. There are two major components:

- The Instance: The processes connected and co-operating using the SGA. The *front-end* processes (also referred to as client processes and server or shadow processes) are connected to users and execute the SQL statements. The *back-end* processes (also referred to as background processes) are internal to Oracle for the redo log, database updating, and recovery. They come and go with an Oracle Instance.
- The Database: All the disks and files that make up the database.

See 5.1, “Oracle database architecture” on page 88 for more details on Oracle structure.

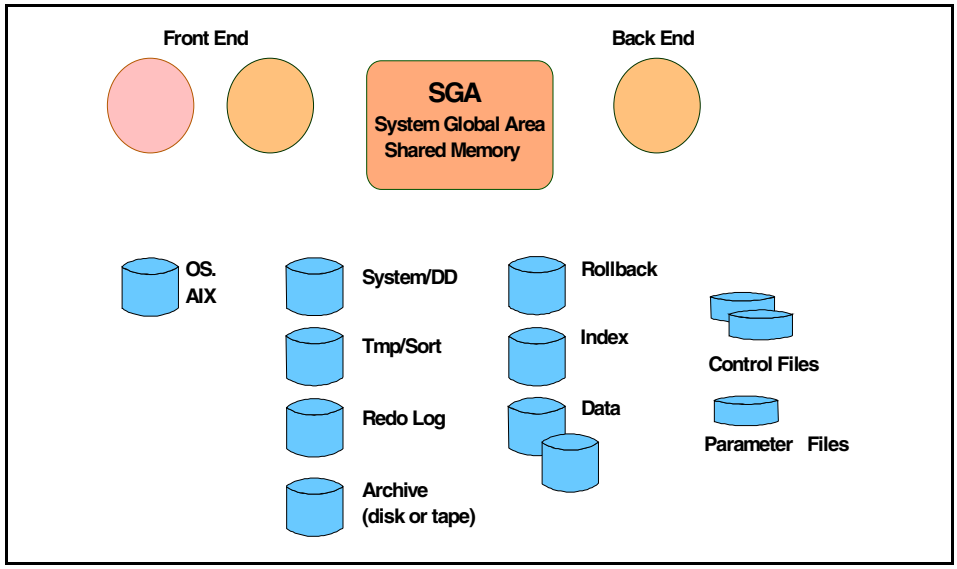

Figure 5-4 An Oracle instance

Oracle Real Application Cluster supports two types of Cluster Architecture:

- Shared disk
- Share nothing

Figure 5-5 on page 104 shows the overview level of Oracle with multiple instances and one database in what is called *shared disk* approach. The database is, of course, made up of lots of files and/or devices that are ultimately on a disk in the system. This general architecture of the RAC is then mapped to the cluster architecture where each cluster node is an IBM @server pSeries computer on its own. Each node has:

- One CPU or multiple CPUs (in an SMP node)
- Memory
- Adapters
- Disks

On the cluster, there is also the High Speed Switch network that allows fast communication (low latency) and high bandwidth (large data transfers) between the nodes of the cluster.

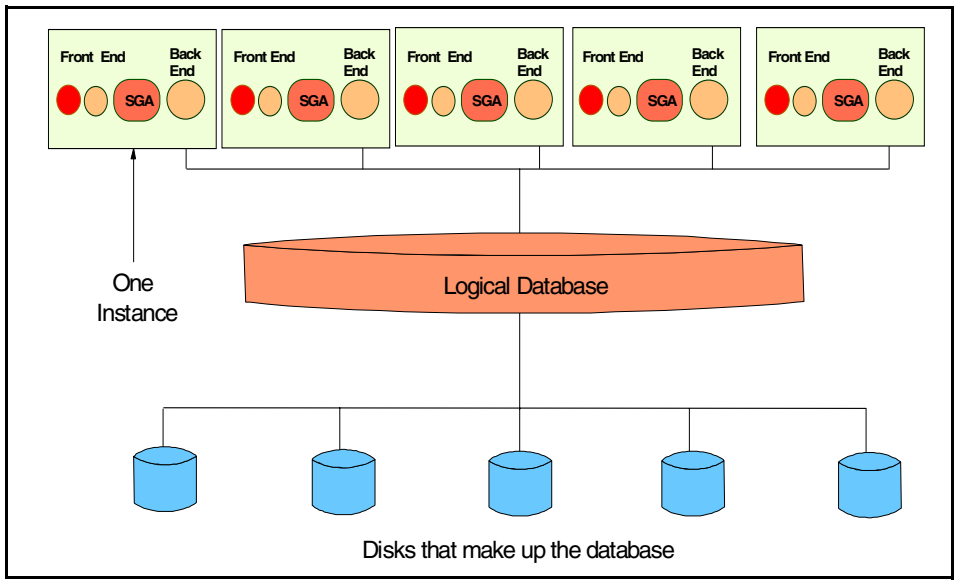

Figure 5-5 General Oracle Real Application Cluster architecture

With RAC, one instance of Oracle is run on each node of the cluster, but there are two problems with this architecture:

- An individual disk is actually attached to one of the nodes. This makes it impossible for an instance on one node to read data from disks that are attached to another node.
- All of these instances of Oracle may have local copies of data blocks, and there is a risk of two of them updating the same data and corrupting the database.

These two problems are addressed by three software systems:

- The *Virtual Shared Disk* (VSD) makes it possible for RAC to read the data from a remotely attached disk. More details are in 5.2.2, “Virtual Shared Disk (VSD)” on page 106.
- The *Global Cache Service* (GCS) makes sure data corruption does not occurs and database blocks are written in the right way. It is also the mechanism behind the cache fusion architecture, making sure all instances have access to data block as required and in a safe way. More details in 5.2.3, “Global Cache Service” on page 107.
- The *Global Enqueue Service* (GES) works hand-in-hand to GCS to ensure data corruption between instances does not happens. It is also responsible to keep local cache up to date across cluster nodes. More details are in 5.2.4, “Global Enqueue Service” on page 108.

In Oracle8i and earlier, the locking control mechanism was known as *Distributed Lock Monitor*. For more information about it, refer to 5.2.5, “Distributed Lock Manager (DLM)” on page 108.

Figure 5-6 shows the architecture of RAC when implemented on a cluster. The database is spread across disks that are attached to all the nodes of the cluster. This cluster reads the I/O requirements evenly across disks, adapters, and all of the nodes in order to reduce I/O bottlenecks.

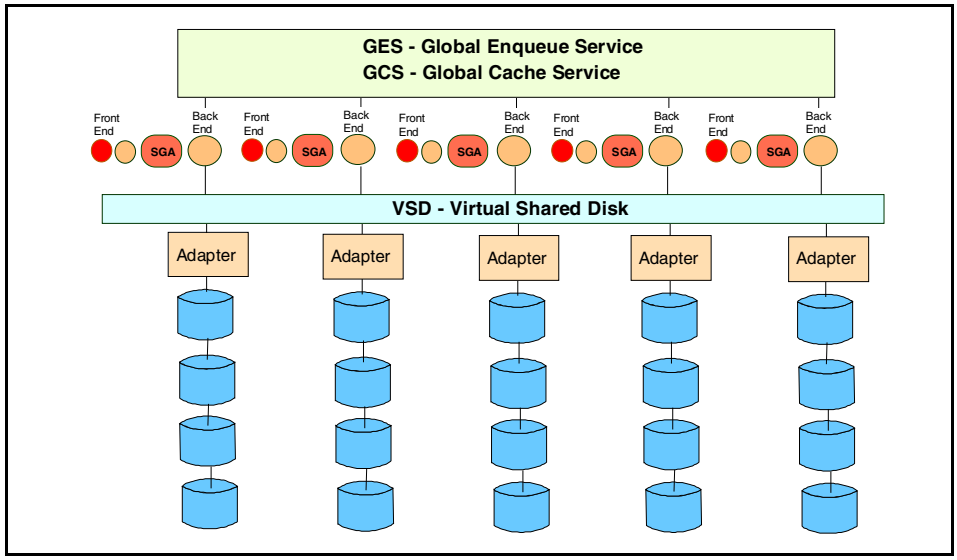

Figure 5-6 Parallel Oracle on a cluster

When an application connects to RAC, it actually connects to one of the instances. As every instance has access to the entire database, simple (OLTP type) queries are performed directly by that instance. If the query is large, Oracle is able to split the query into sub-queries. For example, a full table scan can be broken down into a number of sub-queries that each work on a range of rows, and other sub-queries can merge the results together and sort the results. On an SMP node, these sub-queries can be run on different CPUs. For very large queries, the sub-queries can also be sent to other nodes of the cluster, and the results are sent back to the original node. So, in Oracle RAC, there are two types of parallelization:

- Degree: The number of processes (and, therefore, CPUs) on an instance
- Instance: The number of instances to use

The decision on the amount of parallelization is made by the optimizer and is based on the parameters set on one of the following:

- Table level parallelization settings
- Hints in the SQL statement
- Optimal response time at a lower cost

In general, all the nodes in an RAC system on the cluster are kept identical to reduce system administration and DBA workloads. Due to the extra dimension of multiple nodes and the large size of these databases, RAC is considered complex when compared to a single SMP machine running on smaller databases with classic Oracle. However, the power and scalability of the cluster does mean that much larger databases can be implemented, and this is a requirement, particularly for DSS workloads.

5.2.2 Virtual Shared Disk (VSD)

This is an IBM supplied product that allows any of the nodes in the cluster to read and write data from disks attached to other nodes. Figure 5-6 on page 105 shows that the VSD layer is between the Oracle Instance and the device drivers and disk adapters. OPS does not have direct access to the disks but opens VSD devices instead. The VSD layer then checks if the real disk is attached to the local node, and if not, it works out which other node has it attached:

- In the case of a local disk, the read/write request is passed by the VSD directly to the regular logical volume device driver on the node.
- In the case of a remote disk, the request is sent by the VSD device driver (using the cluster Switch) to the VSD device driver on the node to which the disks is attached. The receiving VSD device driver then passes the request to the device driver of the second node, and the data is read or written on behalf of the initial node. The data is also transferred over the cluster Switch.

The difference in time between the local and remote disk I/O is small.

Figure 5-7 on page 107 shows the VSD structure in more detail. Node A thinks it has three files that make up a tablespace, but the files are actually VSDs. When Oracle reads from or writes to these files, the requests are passed over the High Speed Switch to the right node.

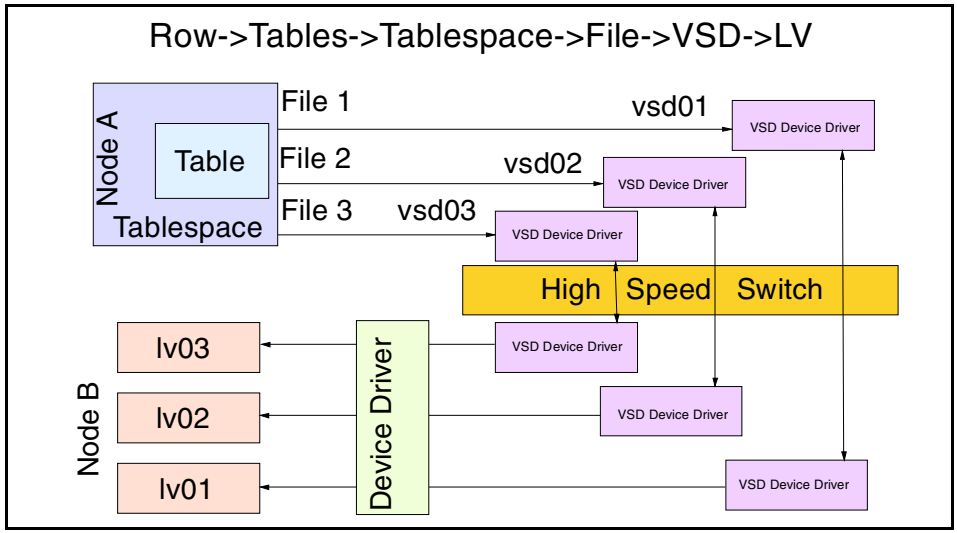

Figure 5-7 Oracle tables working with VSD operations

In OPS, all Oracle data files are raw devices; there are no file system based data files except for the init.ora parameter files. In RAC, its possible to have file system, if these are Oracle cluster-certified. In both cases, reading from and writing to, a table means I/O operations are performed to one or more of the files that make up the tablespace in which the table resides. As far as Oracle knows, these files behave like real devices, but are actually VSD devices. If necessary, the disk I/O requests are redirected to the node with the logical volumes that contain the actual data where the regular logical volume manager device driver actually does the disk I/O.

5.2.3 Global Cache Service

Oracle9i Global Cache Service is the clusterwide cache and block coordination mechanism. Its main goal is to keep data consistency between nodes. As mentioned above, the ping approach was replaced by the cache fusion approach, which provides the best performance and is less resource consuming. This is a brief discussion of the GCS mechanism:

1. Instance A requests a block for data modification; GCS checks if a pi (past image) to this block in the cache exists.
2. If a pi exists, GCS forwards a request to the instance that last modified this block.
3. This instance send the data block directly to the instance requesting it, through an IPC fast channel.

This architecture often eliminates the need for I/O operations maximizing performance. Also, it addresses concurrency problems that were quite common in the old pinging approach, based on I/O operations.

5.2.4 Global Enqueue Service

Each instance in a RAC environment has its own dictionary cache (also called *row cache*) in the SGA. Every instance also has a global enqueue that is necessary to protect its data. These locks or enqueues are managed by the *Global Enqueue Service* (GES).

The GES also protects important layers in the instance's SGA. Examples of these layers are library cache, dictionary cache, recovery and transaction codes. One of the most important features in GES is *cache synchronization*. To understand what cache synchronization is and why it is so important, think of a six-node cluster. One day, the DBA is asked to drop a table that nobody is using anymore. Well, the local dictionary is updated, but what about the other five copies? GES will synchronize all the caches through the cluster. This job may have a slight impact on performance.

5.2.5 Distributed Lock Manager (DLM)

Important: Oracle9i RAC implements a more robust lock mechanism, as described in 5.2.3, "Global Cache Service" on page 107 and 5.2.4, "Global Enqueue Service" on page 108. This section is kept for backward compatibility and for those working with Oracle8i OPS.

Figure 5-8 on page 109 shows the DLM mechanism and how it works in Oracle8i and earlier.

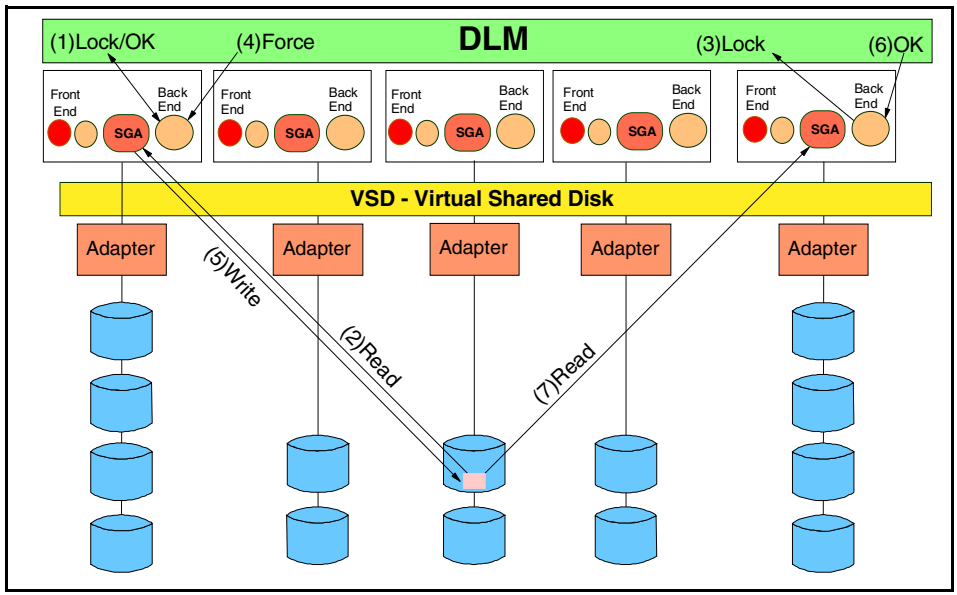

Figure 5-8 Distributed Lock Manager operation

The following is a brief description on how the DLM works by taking a simple example where the instances on the far right and far left want to update the same block in the database. The order is as follows:

1. The right instance wants the block, so it requests a lock from the DLM for that block, and the DLM grants the lock because no other instance has the lock.
2. The right instance reads the block into its local SGA buffer cache.
3. The left instance wants the block, so it requests a lock from the DLM for that block, but the DLM finds that the block is locked.
4. The DLM requests the right instance to release the lock.
5. When the right instance has finished the transaction, it writes the block to the disk using the VSD and informs the DLM that it no longer needs the lock and releases it.
6. The DLM grants the lock to the left instance.
7. The left instance reads in the block.

Note that this example is for instances needing to update a block. In the case of read access, multiple instances can have a read-only copy of a block, but if an instance wants to update the block later, they all have to release the read copy.

Improvements have been made in Oracle 8i (Version 8.1.5 and later), which improves OPS performance by eliminating the need for two disk operations when

one instance needs a read-only copy of a data block that is modified in another instances cache.

6

IBM Informix Dynamic Server

This chapter describes the different physical and logical structures for Informix Dynamic Server as well as the processes used to access and manipulate the databases. It is recommended that these basic concepts be totally comprehended since they are referenced in other chapters.

In this chapter, we discuss the following:

- 6.1, “Informix DS architecture” on page 112 describes the basic Informix structure.
- 6.2, “Informix Extended Parallel Server” on page 127 discusses the parallel edition of Informix server.

6.1 Informix DS architecture

The Informix DS databases are stored in both physical and logical structures. When the database is accessed either locally or remotely, some internal Informix processes will interact with other structures created on memory. The discussion about Informix dynamic server is as follows:

- 6.1.1, “Memory structures” on page 112 that holds the information that is necessary to process the requests generated by the applications and user connections.
- 6.1.2, “Storage structures” on page 119 shows how Informix logically divides the objects inside the database.
- 6.1.3, “Physical storage structures” on page 122 discusses where the data and all other objects that belong to a database are stored.
- 6.1.4, “Processes” on page 123 shows processes that access the memory structure, and manipulate and return data requested by the applications and user connections.
- 6.1.5, “SQL extensions: User defined routines” on page 124 describes the usage of some SQL extensions and stored procedures.
- 6.1.6, “Administration tools” on page 125 lists some tools that can be used for administering Informix.

Some of these structures are hidden from the end user, making Informix easy to install, configure, and use.

6.1.1 Memory structures

Informix uses shared memory to hold data and process information. The use of shared memory allows process high-performance interoperation. On UNIX environments, Informix shared memory is split into three main portions:

- Resident Portion (see “Resident memory” on page 113)
- Virtual Portion (see “Virtual memory” on page 114)
- IPC communication (see “IPC memory” on page 117)

The following happens on initialization:

1. The Informix engine requests an initial amount of shared memory segments from the operating system, which is divided into a number of 4 KB blocks managed by a bitmap.
2. The engine divides the acquired shared memory space into the three portions mentioned above.

3. It attaches each shared memory segment to its virtual processor and initializes databases structures. The maximum size of shared memory is configured by setting the SHMTOTAL parameter in the ONCONFIG file.

Figure 6-1 shows an overall structure of Informix memory.

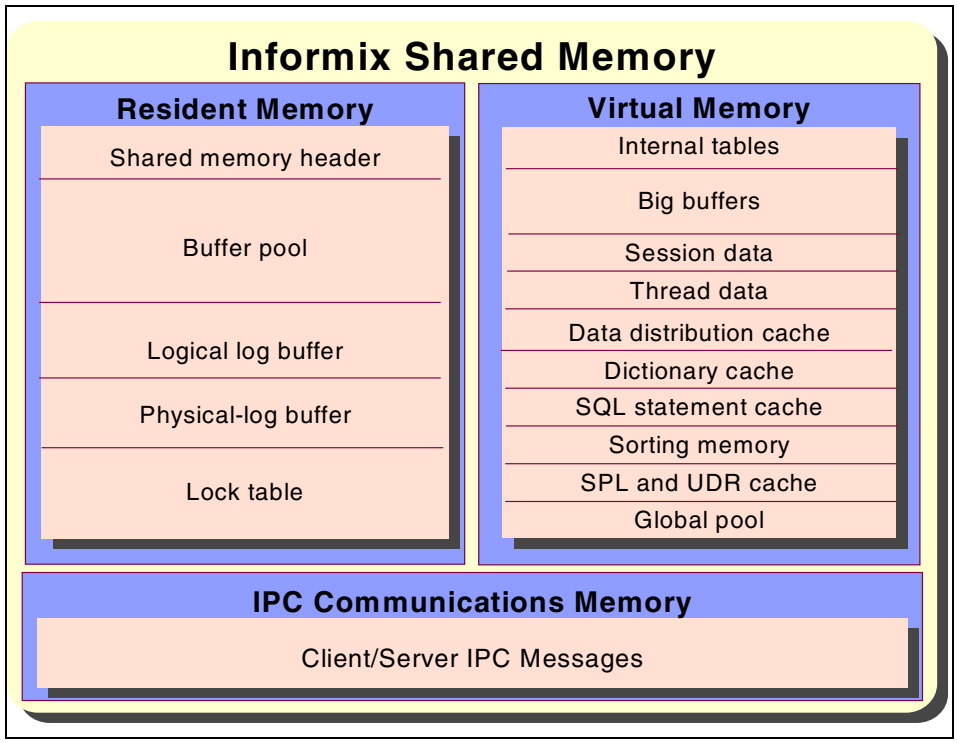

Figure 6-1 Informix shared memory

Resident memory

Resident memory holds frequently accessed data in order to improve performance. By making the memory resident, Informix prevents the operating system swapping the memory content to disk. Also, resident memory is fixed in size, because the structures it holds do not change in size while the server is running.

The following structures are in the resident portion of shared memory:

- Shared memory header

  This structure contains a description of the shared memory structures and pointers to these structures. Every time a process attaches to shared

memory, this information is read, so the process can find directions to other structures. Shared memory size is about 200 KB.

- Buffer pool

  When Informix reads a page from disk, it is stored in the buffer pool. Each time a virtual processor needs to read a page, it first searches the buffer pool to check if it is not available there. If the process can find the requested page, data is read from this buffer; if not, the page must be read from the disk and stored in the buffer pool, and its status is tracked through the buffer table. Informix organizes the buffer within the shared memory into *least recently used* (LRU) queues; for a brief description of this algorithm, see "Informix LRU" on page 118.

- Logical-log buffer

  Logical log is one of the most important pieces of the Informix RDBMS. It is used to track the changes to database data since the last backup was performed. Should the database need a recovery, logical log would be used to restore database's consistency. Informix uses only one logical log buffer at a time. If this log get full, Informix marks the next buffer as current, and flushes the former log entries to disk.

- Physical-log buffer

  Like logical log, physical log is used to achieve database consistency, in an event of a system failure. The physical log is composed by two buffers, allowing the process to write to the active buffer while the other one is flushing. To achieve database consistency, physical log keeps a before image of some of the modified pages in a dbspace.

- Lock table

  This structure keeps track of the locks requested by an user thread. It reserves 44 bytes for each lock. The table is a collection of locks available, allowing a single transaction to hold multiple locks at a time.

Virtual memory

Virtual memory is requested upon initialization and is expandable while the database server is running. It also can be paged out to disk by the operating system, so far more room is necessary from real memory for other applications.

In order to reduce fragmentation and maximize the transfer throughput, Informix uses memory pools to keep all memory of similar type and size together. All sessions have at least one memory pool. Should the database server need memory, it searches first in the specified pool. If sufficient memory is not available, Informix will add more memory from the system pool, and if memory in the system pool is insufficient to satisfy the request, the database server will allocate more segments to the virtual memory.

Virtual memory stores important data, like:

- Internal tables

  Internal tables are used to track shared memory resources. The following tables are in the virtual memory:

  - Buffer table

    The buffer table stores status information for each buffer in the buffer pool. A buffer may have an *empty*, *unmodified*, or *modified* status. Unmodified buffers hold data, but overwrite is allowed, while modified buffers must be written to disk before overwrite. A buffer table also contains the current lock level of the buffer as well as all the thread waiting for the buffer and the lock level that each one requires. These locks level may be shared or exclusive.

  - Chunk table

    The chunk table keeps information of all chunks (see 6.1.3, “Physical storage structures” on page 122) in the database. This information is used to locate the chunk on disk, and includes the number of the chunk and the number of the next chunk in a dbspace as well as the status for the chunk mirror or primary (online, offline, or recovery), and if the chunk belongs to a blobspace.

  - Dbspace table

    Dbspace table tracks storage usage by keeping information about each dbspace in the database server. It also keeps flags to indicate if the dbspace is a blobspace, and if so, where it is located: removable, magnetic, or optical media. For a dbspace, it holds internal tables that contain metadata for smart large objects and big blocks of user data pages.

  - Page-cleaner table

    The page-cleaner table contains the state and location of each of the page cleaner threads. This table always has 128 entries.

  - Tblspace table

    The tblspace table has one entry for each active table in the database server. Active tables include database tables, temp tables, and internal tables, such as system catalog tables. For each active tblspace, there is information like tblspace name and pointers to tblspace in the dbspace.

  - Transaction table

    The transaction table tracks all transactions in the database server. A maximum of 32,767 entries is allowed in this table.

- User table

  For each user or system thread, there is at least one entry in the user table. Depending on the degree of parallelism specified in the client session, several secondary threads may exist that also will have entries in this table.

- Big buffers

  Informix automatically configures a buffer made up of several pages in order to improve performance on large I/O operations. Whenever Informix has to write to or read from disk multiple pages that are physically contiguous, it will try to allocate a big buffer.

- Session data

  When a client connects to Informix, a session is initialized and the database server creates a data structure in shared memory that is named *session-control block*. This structure stores the IDs for session, user, and process of the client as well as the name of the host computer and several status flag.

- Thread data

  Upon a client connection, the database server starts a thread to serve this session and creates a *thread-control block* for it in shared memory. It also stores information about internal threads, so that, should a context switch occur, thread status is not lost.

  Each thread in the database server has a stack and a heap to hold process status, register flags, and data structures while it is running.

- Data distribution cache

  Distribution cache holds the distribution statistics that the database uses to determine the query plan at the lower cost. The first time the database accesses a column statistic in the sysdistrib system table, this statistic will be written to the data distribution cache, and is then used by query optimizer every time it needs to generate a plan that uses the same column.

- Dictionary cache

  When access to a system catalog table is required, Informix will read it and store it in shared memory. Thus, it can be accessed more efficiently. These structures are called dictionary caches.

- SQL statement cache

  In order to optimize SQL execution and response times, Informix uses a shared memory to store parsed and optimized SQL statements. This area is the SQL statement cache.

- Sorting memory

  Some operations may require large amounts of memory for sorting purposes. These are:

  - DSS queries with joins, groups, aggregations, and sorts
  - Index creation
  - Updating statistics in SQL statements

  Memory for all of these operations are allocated from sorting virtual memory, because it takes advantage of the capacity of memory to manipulate large amounts of data in a short time.

- SPL routine and UDR cache

  All stored procedure language (SPL) routines are converted to executable format and stored in the user defined routine (UDR) cache, so any session can access and execute them. If a session needs access to the SPL code or to execute a SPL routine, the databases server search the system catalog tables for the definition of this routine and stores it in the UDR cache.

- Global pool

  Structures that are global to the database server are stored in the global pool, where it can be used by any process

IPC memory

Each Informix database on an UNIX platform has IPC memory as long as the database administrator configures at least one connection to use IPC shared memory. Upon initialization, the database server allocates about 128 KB for each expected IPC connection. So, if there are 100 IPC connections, Informix will allocate about 12 MB to IPC memory.

The IPC memory stores the message buffers for local client applications using shared memory. These applications attaches to IPC through system library functions that are automatically compiled in the application.

Memory concurrency

All threads in the database server access shared memory. This may lead to lock or latch contention. Informix addresses this problem by using shared memory *mutexes* and buffer locks. Should a thread access and modify some memory resource, it acquires a mutex that will guarantee that no other thread can modify the same resource. If any other thread is modifying the resource, a mutex cannot be acquired, preventing the requesting thread from modifying the resource, so the thread must wait for the mutex to be released.

Locks are in some ways similar to mutex in that it is also used to keep database consistency. The difference is that while mutexes work on memory resources, locks work on data buffers. There are two kinds of locks: shared and exclusive. Shared locks allows multiple threads to access the data buffer for read, while exclusive lock prevents any thread from accessing a block if any other thread has already a lock on it.

Informix LRU

Informix uses a LRU algorithm to manage the buffer pool cache. The database administrator sets the LRU parameter in the ONCONFIG file to specify the number of LRU queues to be used by the database server.

Each of the LRU queues has a pair of linked lists to hold information about buffer pool pages:

- The FLRU (free LRU) list stores free or unmodified page pointers.
- The MLRU (modified LRU) list stores modified page pointers.

The use of two separated lists improves page allocation performance, since the database server does not need to search the list for a free or unmodified page.

On initialization, all page buffers are empty, and each buffer has an entry in one of the FLRU queues. When a thread needs a buffer, Informix randomly selects one of the FLRU queues and uses the least-recently used entry in that list. If the page which this entry is pointing to can be latched, the entry is removed from the FLRU list; if not, Informix goes on to search the next FLRU queue and so on. After the thread finishes working on the page, if it was modified, an entry is written to the MLRU queue; if not, the page is returned to FLRU queue.

If the number of LRU queues is low and insufficient to hold all modified pages or the LRU_MAX_DIRTY parameter limit is reached, the process of cleaning the MLRU queues starts. This process is performed by the page cleaners that are configured by the CLEANERS parameters. The cleaning processes is performed by flushing data pages in the LRU queues to disk until the low limit established by the LRU_MIN_DIRTY parameter is reached.

Logging

An important feature of RDBMS is the ability to recover from a crash. Major RDBMSs implement this feature by the way of transaction logging. It means that all database operations are fully stored in database files that can be used to bring the databases to a consistent mode should it be necessary.

Informix DS implements transaction consistency using logical and physical logs. Logical logs are sets of files used to store database history and changes since

the last storage-space backup. A physical log is a set of contiguous pages in a disk that IDS uses to store the before image of changed data.

The database administrator must implement monitoring on log files, because if it gets full, the database server may become unresponsive or even shut down.

6.1.2 Storage structures

The Informix database server has the following constructs:

- Tblspace
- Table
- Database
- Dbspace

The structure of an Informix database is shown in Figure 6-2.

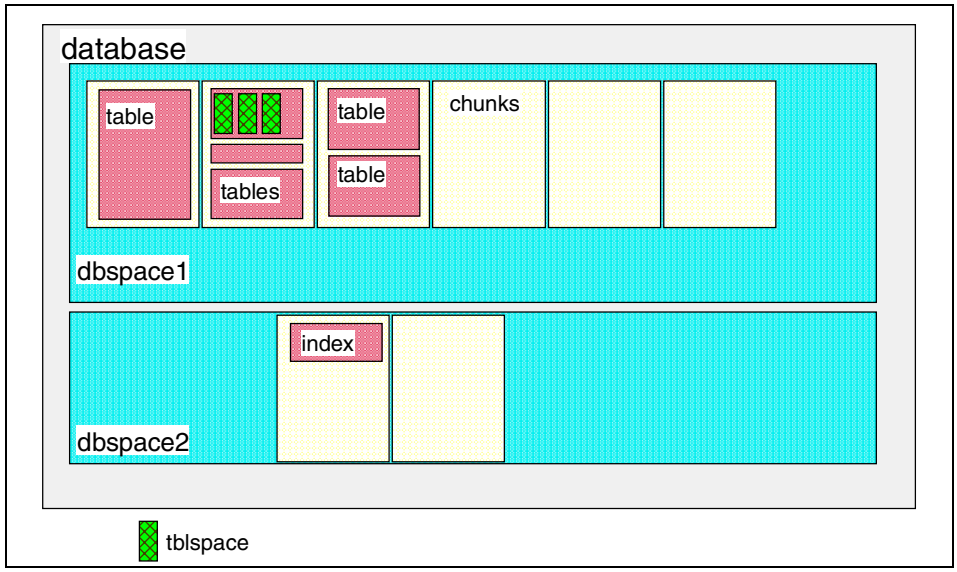

Figure 6-2 Informix logical structures

Tables are the smallest logical unit in Informix. A user accesses the data in a database by querying its tables, and updates a database by updating the rows a table contains. Informix allows the following types of tables:

- Standard

  The most basic table type, standard tables are used for day-to-day operations, because it allows data to be recovered (provided the database is

in logging mode) in the event of system failure. Also, a standard table allows the operations on it to be rolled back or rolled forward using a log backup, after a database restore was performed.

- Raw

  Raw tables are very similar to standard tables, except that they do not allow operations to be rolled back or rolled forward, because the work is not logged. The raw table is useful for performing the initial loading of data that will later be stored on the final standard tables. Because raw tables uses light append, that is, it appends all new rows to the end of the table or fragment, it is generally faster than standard tables. All common operations are allowed on raw tables except index build or relational integrity enforcing through constraints. Due to these limitations, we recommend that raw tables not be used inside transactions.

- Temporary

  Temporary tables are quite similar to standard tables, but do not allow recover, backup, or restore operations. Also, data stored in temporary tables on system failures, database shutdown, or user session close (either normally or abnormally) is lost. Like raw tables, temporary tables may be used for initial loading of data or to store temporary result for joins or complex SQL **`select`** statements.

Whenever an user creates a table, regardless of its type, Informix allocates space for it and updates its system catalog table with information about the table, so the user threads and system processes have access to it. A table may be fragmented and its fragments distributed evenly through dbspaces to maximize performance.

Tblspaces are used to get a greater control over storage of a single table or fragment. Database administrators may use tblspaces to specify disk area used by a table and its indexes. A maximum of 2^{20} (2048) tblspaces may be configured per table. Each tblspace must belong only to one table. Tblspaces may contains data pages, index pages, TEXT and BYTE pages, and bitmap pages that track page use within the tables extents.

An Informix database is a logical collection of tables and indexes. Each database holds a system catalog, used to store information of the many elements in the database. Space for the database is allocated upon creation on the dbspace specified by the **`create database`** command or in the root dbspace if none is specified.

Dbspaces are logical units of space allocated to a database. It contains all of the data for a database except for BLOB, CLOB, TEXT, and BYTE data. Each dbspace is comprised of units called chunks. Typically, a table is allocated in a dbspace on a chunk.

Whenever a database is created, a dbspace must be specified or the database will be created on the root dbspace, which is not recommended for performance and manageability. Large data, like BLOB, CLOB, TEXT, and BYTE, or external data, are stored in the following special types of dbspaces:

- Extspace

  An extspace identifies the location of external data by specifying its file name. By using external data, the user may access files in formats other than Informix native format and act on it. The steps to establish and access an extspace are:

  a. Create an *access method*, which are routines that understand the external data format.

  b. Add the extspace that defines the location to the external data to the Informix database.

  c. Access the external data using common SQL statements.

- Sbspace

  Sbspace is a special type of dbspace that is used to store smart large objects, which Informix calls CLOB and BLOB data types. In many ways, sbspace is similar to blobspace, except for the following:

  – Sbspaces have read, write, and seek properties quite similar to files in UNIX.

  – Sbspaces are recoverable, meaning that all operations on it can be committed or rolled back.

  – Sbspaces make use of the isolation levels, that is, transactions in sbspaces may be isolated from others, ensuring data read/write consistency.

  – Sbspaces allow data objects within table rows to be retrieved in pieces, as the user needs.

  Space for sbspace is allocated like standard dbspaces by mean of chunks (see page 6.1.3, “Physical storage structures” on page 122). However, for a sbspace, the first chunk always has metadata, user-data, and a reserved area used to store information about each of smart large objects in the sbspace, user specific smart large object data, and void space to be used, should one of the two others areas need to be increased.

  Like dbspace and blobspace, sbspaces are created using the **`onspaces`** command, and are allocated on raw devices for better performance and can be mirrored. Sbspace space allocation is automatically calculated by the database server based on some heuristics, like the number of bytes in I/O operations.

- Blobspace

  Blobspaces are used to store TEXT and BYTE data type in the most efficient way. Data stored on blobspaces are written directly to disk, which means that the buffer pool is not used to hold accessed data. Also, blobspace data is not written to either physical or logical logs, so it is unrecoverable. As logical log is being backed up, Informix will automatically write a blobspace object to the tape.

6.1.3 Physical storage structures

Informix allocates space to databases in small units called *pages*. The size of these pages is operating system dependent. A database administrator can check the page size used by Informix on an specific OS by looking at the final line in the **`onstat -b`** command output. Pages may contains regular data or simple large data, and in such cases they are called *blobpages*, and smart large object data, which are called *sbpage*.

A blobpage is a collection of contiguous disk space allocated to store simple large data, like TEXT. A blobpage's size must be a multiple of page size, because they are in fact an array of pages. Sbpages are very similar to blobpages, except that their size is not configurable, and it always has the same size as the data page size. Sbpages are used to store smart large objects, like multimedia data.

Pages are allocated in groups called *extents*. Extent size is configurable through the **`create table`** or **`alter table`** commands. The extent size is specified in kilobytes, and Informix will allocate the pages necessary to satisfy the request. For example, if the database server is configured to used a page of 4 KB and the user creates a table with an initial size of 32 KB and the next extent is 64 KB, Informix will allocate eight contiguous pages to the first extent and 16 contiguous pages to each of the subsequent extents. If Informix cannot find the requested amount of contiguous pages in the first chunk, it will try to find it in the next and so on. If no space is available, it will return an error.

Chunks are the largest unit of allocation in a database server. Each time a dbspace size needs to be increased, its done by means of chunks. To provide fault tolerance, chunks may be mirrored. So, if the primary chunk fails, the mirror is brought online automatically. Informix DS allows up to 2047 chunks for each dbspace (regular, blobspace, or sbspace) and up to 2047 spaces for a database.

The maximum size for a chunk is determined by the OS. On the most common platforms, this limit is 2 or 4 GB, and for better performance, Informix on UNIX only uses unbuffered disk access, which means that all data are stored on raw devices.

6.1.4 Processes

Informix Dynamic Server has some processes that work to get the database running in a consistent way and to service user requests. In the IDS naming convention, these processes are called *virtual processors* (VP), and they operates quite similarly to computer CPU. VPs are grouped in classes, like PIO, LIO, CPU, SHM, and SOC.

These classes start a number of threads to service users and to perform internal database processing. For example, should page-cleaning be necessary, an ADM VP will start a thread to request LIO, PIO, or AIO VPs to write LRU entries to disk. Then, IO classes start their own threads to perform the cleaning.

The plain advantages of using multithreaded architecture over process based architecture is performance. In process based design, one server-process services a lot of client or system process, which may cause performance degradation. Database administrators can find it difficult to set an useful number of server processes that perform well on peak load as well as on lower demand without wasting server machine resources. At the other side, multithread architecture allows the database administrators to configure a number of VPs that will start, synchronize, and control the working of threads running in the database server. If a wait condition is reached because another thread is using the VP, IDS can move the waiting thread to another VP, and move together its data to the memory of this processor. The overhead involved in this operations is minimal if compared to the performance improvement.

Also, as VPs share memory area and resources, they are able to service a number of clients without wasting server resources. For example, Informix will start a pool of threads to networking services. These threads are known as *listener threads* and will all be used to receive connection requests. The VP classes dealing with communications will manage the execution of the threads and grant access to shared memory and IDS resources as needed.

Because it allows different threads to access resources concurrently, Informix could reach deadlock or blocking conditions. These problems are elegantly solved by using some internal structures to control thread execution and grant or deny access to a specific resource. These structures are the following:

- Control structures

  Whenever a client connects to IDS, the server creates a session control block that holds information about this section. After the server creates a thread control block, it starts one sqlexec thread to service this session. Using this structure, the server is able to determine the status for any user thread running on the server.

- Context switch

  Should the server move a thread from a VP to another, or yield a thread to allow other thread to execute, all information needed to resume the original thread is saved in the thread control block, and the context is switched by load information about the new running thread from this structure. This approach prevents data and status loss, which could be dangerous to database consistency and availability.

- Stacks

  All non-shared data is stored in the stack, where it is protected from being overwritten by other threads performing similar functions.

- Queue

  Threads not running must wait for the current thread to finish. These threads, according to their status, are held in one of the three queues implemented by Informix: ready queue, sleep queue, and wait queue.

  The ready queue is a FIFO list that holds threads that are ready to execute as soon as the current thread ends. The sleep queue holds threads that have no work to do. The wait queue holds threads that are waiting for a specific condition or for another thread to finish work that it depends on.

- Mutexes

  In addition to what was mentioned in “Memory concurrency” on page 117, mutexes allow the database to synchronize thread access to shared resources. As long as a mutex is acquired on a specified resource, no other thread can modify it.

6.1.5 SQL extensions: User defined routines

User defined routines (UDR) are programs that reside on the server machine and that can be called by the client machine through a regular **`execute`** command within a transaction. Informix UDR are either classified as stored procedures or stored functions. Stored procedures do not return values while stored functions do return values.

The usage of UDR can improve the overall database performance by reducing the number of the transmissions on the network. Also, UDR runs faster than *ad hoc* queries, inasmuch they are pre-compiled.

Informix UDR can be written in different languages: JAVA, proprietary Stored Procedure Language (SPL), and C.

The choice of which language should be used will depend on how familiar the application designers are with the language. In the other cases, it is recommended that SPL or JAVA are used due to their easy written code.

6.1.6 Administration tools

Informix DS has a number of tools that allow you to perform administrative tasks, the most important being the *Informix Server Administrator* (ISA). With this Web browser enabled tool, you can perform all the administration tasks on the IDS or XPS, as well as run SQL statements and Informix commands, manage VP, remotely monitor the database, and a lot of other functions. Figure 6-3 on page 126 shows the ISA main screen.

Figure 6-3 Informix Server Administrator main screen

Informix also provides other database tools like the following ones:

- The **`oninit`** command is used to bring the database server online.

- The **onstat** command may be used to monitor the database operation and status.
- The **oncheck** command performs data and index disk structure checking and may be also used to check the physical location of a page.
- The **onmonitor** command is useful for monitoring and changing database parameters and status. It also provides a friendly interface to other command line utilities.
- The **onspaces** command is used to add chunks to a dbspace.
- The **onmode** command is used to end the database server operation or to bring it to a quiescent mode. Also, **onmode** may be used to finish a user session, a user transaction, and more functions.
- The **ontape** and **onbar** commands make log and full backup or archive and restore.
- The **dbexport** command provides a easy-to-use way to export data and data definition to a logical backup.
- The **dbimport** command enables you to import data from a external data source, like files generated either by the **dbexport** and **onunload** commands or the UNLOAD SQL statement.
- The **onperf** command is useful for monitoring database performance, just as the **onstat** command does, but with the advantage that it allows you to scroll and analyze trends and choose the metric you want to monitor.

6.2 Informix Extended Parallel Server

Informix high-availability server is called Informix Extended Parallel Server (XPS). It allows databases to be split over multiples computers in the data-layer that are called *coservers*.

6.2.1 Concepts and functionality

Informix XPS is a flexible, high-availability server. It may be configured to run in one of the following ways:

- One coserver on a single node

  This configuration is suitable if you have a SMP server with more than 10 CPUs, a lot of memory, and your data doesn't allows fragmentation.

- Multiple coservers on a single node

  This configuration is useful to balance load and resource consumption, but requires a SMP system with 8-24 CPU and a large amount of memory to be

partitioned between coservers. Also, it requires large amount of disk, because data is on the same physical machine.

- One coserver on multiple nodes

  This is the most common XPS configuration, because it provides optimum scalability, high performance, and less resource consumption. This is the configuration we recommend for better performance.

- Multiple coservers on multiple nodes

  This configuration is suitable for SMP systems with more than 10 CPUs and a large amount of memory and disk space to hold each data fragment and temporary and sort space as well.

The recommended Informix XPS design is based on shared nothing architecture. This architecture allows data to be horizontally partitioned between a number of servers communicating over a high speed network system. Each server has its own disks, memory, processes, and a fragment of data.

6.2.2 Fragmentation of data

On each coserver, one database server is responsible for a fragment of the database data and index. The fact that data is fragmented across coservers is transparent to users and applications. Each coserver contains the data dictionary for the data fragment it owns and is aware of the location of other fragments, because it writes the configuration of all coservers to an area in the root dbspace called *safewrite*. The user interaction with the database is handled from the node the user is connected to. This coserver is known as the *connection coserver*. The other servers in the cogroup are called *participating servers*

Data and indexes are stored in dbspaces. To manage many dbspaces over multiple coservers, Informix XPS uses dbslices. A dbslice holds information about each dbspace participating in a parallel server. Informix XPS uses cogroups to define to which nodes every dbspace is fragmented. A cogroup is a group of coservers.

Informix XPS makes massive use of parallel database query (PDQ). All database functions, such as SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE, and DELETE, are performed in parallel on all coservers. Both database activities, such as data scan, index scan, joins, sorts, index creation, and Informix utilities, such as **`dbexport`**, **`dbimport`**, backup, and restore are executed simultaneously on all coservers. Particularly, the loading of very large amounts of data can be performed much faster in this parallel database environment than on a serial database system.

Informix XPS provides excellent scalability. If the number of concurrent connected users grows over time, or the amount of data reaches the system

resource capacity, a parallel database system can be extended by adding additional coservers to the system and defining new data fragments. If hash fragmentation was used, Informix will redistribute data fragment over the coservers.

The writers of this redbook strongly recommend the use of a hashing strategy to fragment the data through the coservers. As dbslices are configured and cogroups are created, XPS will evenly distribute the data. First, you create dbspaces and dbslices and assign it to cogroups. Then you fragment tables specifying a *fragmentation key* with the hash option, and start to insert or load data. Informix will decide to which coserver each record must be sent.

The fragmentation key consists of one or more columns of the table. Briefly, the partitioning process starts when a new row must be inserted: Informix XPS applies its internal hashing function, taking the value(s) of the column(s) defined as partitioning key argument(s), and produces a *hash-value* for this row. Then, XPS scans the sysfragments table to find information on where this new row should reside. Finally, the row is sent to the coserver according to the definition of the sysfragments table and is stored in the chunk specified in the dbspace.

6.2.3 Hardware implementation

Informix implements high-availability by means of coservers, working together as one database server. To achieve maximum performance, all components on each coserver should have the same characteristics and the same speed rate. So, memory, internal disks, and several adapters for communication, external disks, and devices should not be different. One key part of the cluster is the switch, which is responsible for high performance data transfer. The communication protocol used by the coservers to communicate through the switch is TCP/IP, with the advantage of easy implementation and configuration associated with this protocol. The administration of this system is done from a single point of control in coserver 1.

XPS has been fully tested on the IBM @server p690 Regatta server running AIX 5L. The XPS architecture can take full advantage of the latest hardware and AIX improvements.

Figure 6-4 on page 130 shows the overall structure hardware implementation for Informix XPS.

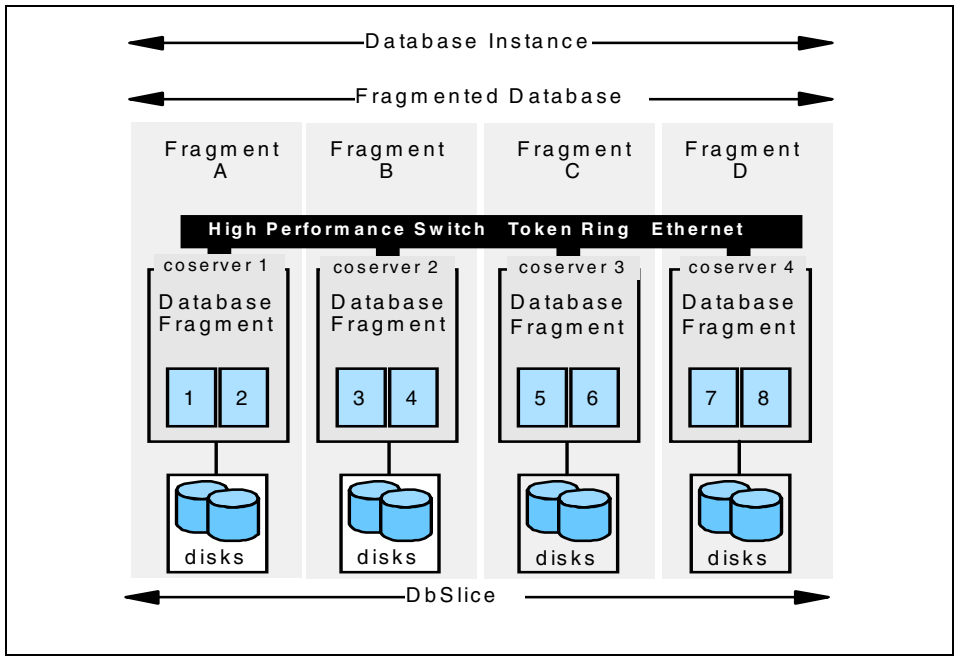

Figure 6-4 Informix XPS overall structure

Part 2

System design and sizing

This part discusses some design and planning issues that can affect the run-time performance of RDBMS systems. The discussion covers:

- Chapter 7, “Sizing a database system” on page 133 discusses some sizing methods and their comparisons.
- Chapter 8, “Designing RDBMS servers” on page 153 discusses server selection and consideration.
- Chapter 9, “Designing a disk subsystem” on page 187 discusses various disk technology and their impact on database systems.

7

Sizing a database system

This chapter provides an overview of concepts and rules of thumb for sizing a database system based on the IBM @server pSeries. The sections in this chapter are:

- 7.1, “Introduction to sizing” on page 134 discusses some basic sizing concepts and constraints.
- 7.2, “Sizing techniques” on page 136 explains some options on how sizing can be performed.
- 7.3, “CPU goals and sizing” on page 139 discusses sizing based on CPU target measurement.
- 7.4, “Memory goals and sizing” on page 141 discusses sizing based on memory targets.
- 7.5, “Disk goals and sizing” on page 144 discusses sizing based on disk targets.
- 7.6, “Balancing a system using the component costs” on page 151 describes some rules of thumb for getting a balanced systems based on other components’ cost.

7.1 Introduction to sizing

This section explores the concept and constraints for sizing a RDBMS system.

7.1.1 Sizing concepts

Sizing is the estimation of the type and size of the components in a balanced system that supports a defined application workload while meeting a set of performance requirements.

System components can be, for example, CPU, memory, disks, and network connections. Application workload is determined by the type of application, the amount of data, the number of users, and the type and number of transactions and/or batch jobs the users initiate on the system. Performance requirements are usually stated in terms of expected throughput and response time.

The objective of sizing a system for RDBMS should be a balanced system. A balanced system is a system that has a sensible set of CPU, memory, disks, and network connections. There should be no bottleneck, which would make the other components ineffective. All parts of a balanced system are used appropriately during normal business operation workloads.

Accurate sizing requires detailed quantitative requirements, which are rarely available; therefore, a practical approach is needed.

The final aspect is that the recommended system configuration is reflected in the costs of the machine. Successful system sizing requires choosing the right components from the alternatives to maximize the price performance and to meet the growth requirements.

Note: Sizing always assumes the system is installed properly and well tuned. A poorly tuned system will not reach the performance requirements.

7.1.2 Sizing constraints

Sizing a system is a difficult undertaking. The result of the sizing process will give you the system configuration in terms of CPU, memory, adapters, and disks. In addition, there are other factors that also affect the recommendation. These include:

- Growth: Most systems are expected to grow from 30% to 100% a year. This is often built into the sizing, and the recommended system must demonstrate the ability to be upgraded.

- Availability: All systems are regarded as important. But some are vital for the commercial success of the company and can justify the expense of disk protection and products to ensure minimum down time, such as High Availability Clustered Multi-Processors (HACMP) from IBM.
- Cost limits: Often, a sizing is made to a budget. In this case, the sizing determines the best configuration for the requirement at the price or that it simply cannot be done (and requires further negotiating).

We recommend you use the following:

- For growth, it is best to simplify the work by only considering one size at a time. Once all the configuration details are decided, then the alternative sizes are considered one by one. It does not matter if you start with the initial or final configuration. It can be the initial system followed by how to upgrade to the final size. Alternatively, you can size the full configuration and then decide what parts can be removed to make the initial system. In either case, develop a growth plan for minimum disruption of the system during the upgrade. SMP machines make this relatively simple. Also, sometimes the initial machine can be assigned a different task as part of the upgrade. For example, it may become the test or development machine once the larger production machine is available.
- For availability, first size the system without disk protection. Once a good configuration can be recommended, the disk protection should be considered. For disk protection, the common solutions are mirroring (doubling the cost) and RAID 5. Then the additions required for HACMP should be priced. Most customers prefer to understand the extra costs and benefits as a separate issue.

Note: Size the basic system first and then add extra complexities of growth and availability to the configuration.

When planning a database system on a new IBM @server pSeries or migrating an existing database system to a new one, several factors need to be considered. These are mainly:

- The type of workload and the CPU power required for the various transactions
- The expected size of the database data and the largest table in it
- The other database objects, such as indexes and temporary space
- The type of data you will be using
- The maximum number of concurrently connected users
- The maximum number of concurrent jobs
- The number of transactions within a certain period of time

These factors are used to determine which hardware system is needed, particularly if a single CPU system or an SMP system is required.

Unfortunately, most database sizing tasks do not have sufficient information to allow an accurate sizing. The computer saying of *Garbage In = Garbage Out* applies especially to sizing when not enough accurate details are available. However, even with very limited information, sizing does have to take place for sales and budgeting, but the unavoidable result is high error margins.

7.2 Sizing techniques

Sizing a system is a difficult task. However, it is not difficult when you are given precise details of the requirements to precisely work out every detail of the system and the exact configuration. The problem is the level of details available from which to size. You should have the following details:

- Disk size
- Disk I/O
- The numbers of users
- The various transactions and batch processes in terms of CPU requirements
- The transaction rates
- The memory for the system (database cache and per user)
- Availability requirement (to decide the needs for disk protection and HACMP)
- The network latency and bandwidth
- The backup requirements

Given all of the above, a spreadsheet could quickly determine an ideal system.

But, in practice, people are asked to size based on one, two, or three of the factors above, which means a lot of guesswork and assumptions are required.

Given the lack of information, the error margin of the sizing is going to be large, but customers need some indication of the size and type of machine they should consider.

7.2.1 Sizing from the data size

Data size is often the only clear fact from which to size.

First, you have to decide if this size is the data or disk size. This has to be checked and confirmed, or the system could be wrong by a factor of three. If no

other details are available, then the 1:3 ratio of raw data size to disk size is used. For example, 50 GB of raw data will require 150 GB of disk space. The minimum number of disks for a database is six disks, and you should always use the smallest disks available, as the more disks you have, the higher the I/O rate.

Then, you can use the balanced systems rules of thumb to work out the CPU and memory sizes. See 7.6, “Balancing a system using the component costs” on page 151 for more information.

Be aware that the information that follows contains very rough rules of thumb and should be considered to have a plus or minus 50% error margin.

- Memory can be very roughly sized as 5% of the raw data size plus 64 MB for AIX and RDBMS processes.
- CPU can very roughly be sized using the formula 125 GB of total data (raw data plus indexes plus temporary workspace) per rPerf. For example, the p690 model B80 2 way 375 MHz has a rPerf value of 1.92; so, using the formula, this system should roughly be able to support 240 GB of raw data.

7.2.2 Sizing from transaction rates

Some sizing is done from the customer knowing the transaction rates that are required on the system. This is often based on previous sales and marketing estimates.

There is a serious problem when taking a years worth of transactions and working out a transactions per minute rate from this. For example, it might be known that last year 1,000,000 items were sold and each required two transactions on the system (one for ordering and one for shipment). This gives us 2,000,000 transactions. If we allow five days a week, 52 weeks a year, and eight hours a day, we can work out that 2,000,000/5/52/8/60 = 16 transactions per minute. But people do not order or work like this. First, there are seasonal buying patterns. Second, people do not work eight hours a day at a constant rate. So, we might guess 30% of sales are in one month, and 60% of the orders are taken between 10 am and 12 mid-day. If you check the math, you get 150 transactions per minute. You can see 150 is a large difference from 16 transaction per minute. If the workload is generated from Web users, the peaks in demand can be extreme and totally unpredictable.

Once we have a transaction rate we can then compare this to some standard benchmark numbers. But be careful when comparing to standard benchmarks, such as TPC-C, TPC-H, or TPC-R. These benchmarks are run on very highly tuned systems. In TPC-C, the application is very small, and the transactions are very small. If the application (and its transactions) you are going to use are not

exactly like the benchmark you are comparing with, you will introduce a very large margin of error.

Internally to IBM, and for IBM Business Partners, there are tools that contain typical transactions from benchmarks and are based on real production workloads. These tools are called the pSeries Sizer and the RDBMS Sizer and are available from http://w3.aixncc.uk.ibm.com or the ParterInfo system for Business Partners. These tools have the CPU, disk read/write, and memory requirements for various transactions. This is multiplied with the number of users and the transactions rates to estimate the CPU, disk, and memory. This is then matched against the machines in the IBM @server pSeries range to find suitable machines and configurations.

Because transaction complexity can differ by three orders of magnitude, we cannot offer any rules of thumb. If you can find examples of the transactions running on a system and know the transaction rates, then you can work out the CPU power required per transaction and work from there.

7.2.3 Sizing from user numbers

If the number of users on the system is known, then the first question that needs clarification is what kind of users they are:

- Users just known by the system as defined users
- Users logged on to the system but might not be using it at the moment
- Users actually busy using the system in the peak period

Once this is worked out, it is best to classify the users into different types, such as those only looking up data, those inputting information, those doing complex transactions, and those starting large report generation type tasks. Each of these users is likely to have different response time requirements.

We suggest that you do not think in terms of all transaction must take less than three seconds because there will be some large transactions that are never going to be that short. A wildcard search of a large number of records takes time and so do reports that need to summarize a lot of data. A better way to specify the required response time would be: 90% of the transactions will take less than two seconds, or something similar.

Given the above information, the transaction per second or minute can be estimated, and then you can try sizing based on the transaction rate (see 6.2.2, “Fragmentation of data” on page 128). The tools mentioned there can help estimate system sizes from the number of users too, but assumptions on the transaction types and rates introduce large margins of error.

7.2.4 Sizing for a particular application

There are many applications available on AIX and some very popular ones in the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) arena, for example, SAP, Peoplesoft, BAAN, and Siebel. If you are sizing a system for an application, the first place to call is the application vendor. They, after all, understand:

- The application and the workload it generates
- The database structure and size
- Typical user and transaction rates
- How the system operates in installed production systems

Many software application vendors perform benchmarks and capacity planning tests with IBM to establish the best method of sizing and which parameters are best to estimate the machine requirements.

Many times IBM or IBM Business Partners can add experience and product knowledge once the vendor has provided the initial sizing estimates.

7.3 CPU goals and sizing

It is imperative to first determine the CPU requirements when selecting an IBM @server pSeries model. The recommended configuration of the system should be less than full capacity to allow for future upgrades. This is valid for all components of the system (CPU, memory, and disks).

The IBM @server pSeries family provides a wide range of systems starting from single CPU systems up to Symmetric Multiprocessor (SMP) systems with 32 processors. The selection of the system should correlate with the anticipated workload.

7.3.1 Uniprocessor (UP) Systems

A Uniprocessor System is sufficient to serve the needs of a department where the data is managed by a single database system. Memory or disks can be added, if necessary, but the number of CPUs cannot be increased. The amount of data that can be handled by a single processor is limited. As workload increases, a single CPU may become insufficient to process user requests regardless of other additional components, such as memory or disks that may be added.

7.3.2 Symmetric Multiprocessor (SMP) Systems

Symmetric Multiprocessor Systems are made up of multiple, isometric processors within the same machine. Resources, such as disk space and memory, are shared. SMP systems generally allow more disks and memory to be added than UP systems and are as easy to manage. With multiple processors, different database operations can be completed significantly faster than with a single processor.

The problem with SMP machines is that, for efficient use, each CPU needs to have something to do. This depends on the workload involved:

- An online Transaction Processing (OLTP) workload involves many users and naturally uses either a lot of processes or a lot of process threads. AIX is fully multi-threaded; thus, OLTP workloads can make use of SMP machines to their full extent.
- Batch workloads usually have limited parallelization. If the batch task is implemented as a single process, this can be a significant performance bottleneck, as only one CPU would be used. Batch implementers should endeavor to make multiple batch tasks able to run into multiple streams by splitting the task into many parts for concurrent running.
- Decision Support Systems run a limited number of very large queries at the same time. If the number of queries is larger than the number of CPUs, then it will simply make good use of the SMP machine. If the number of queries is less than the number of CPUs, the database's parallel query option must be used to split the query into many parts so that it can be distributed among the CPUs.
- Many DBA tasks, for example, index creation, creating summary tables, and data loads, need to be parallelized. Most RDBMSs support parallel DBA tasks, and DB2 UDB, Oracle, and Informix support them.

7.3.3 CPU utilization

The CPU utilization goal should be about 70 to 80% of the total CPU time. CPU utilization is determined by adding the usr and sys columns from **vmstat** (see "Virtual memory management statistics: vmstat" on page 456).

Lower utilization means that the CPU can cope even better with peak workloads. CPU workloads between 85% to 90% result in queuing delays for CPU resources, which affect the response time of the application. CPU utilization above 90%, even for a short period, results in unacceptable response times.

While running batch jobs, backups, or loading large amounts of data, the CPU utilization can be driven to high percentages, such as to 80 to 100%, to maximize

the throughput. This level is only achieved if the rest of the system is well tuned for these tasks too.

RDBMSs serving Web information, on the other hand, have very unpredictable workloads due to the nature of the Web and are working 24 hours a day. Having a Web site with poor performance is going to encourage customers to go elsewhere. To avoid this, we recommend sizing a Web server database to have 50% CPU utilization to allow for peaks in workload.

As the functionality of the CPU makes it an expensive component of a computer system, care should be taken when selecting the type and number of processors for the anticipated workload.

7.4 Memory goals and sizing

Memory is used to run programs (the code and data), for interprocess communication, and for caching disk blocks to avoid disk I/O. For memory, there are two sizing questions:

- How much memory?
- How to divide this memory among the various uses of memory for maximum performance?

The best approach is to decide the space requirements for each memory use and add up the total. Skimping on memory can have large performance limitation consequences. Memory is used for:

- The operating system (AIX)
- The file system cache (in AIX, this will use up any unused memory)
- The RDBMS programs
- The RDBMS working structures
- The RDBMS disk cache
- The application programs
- The users connected to the database

7.4.1 AIX operating system

The AIX operating system is a program and requires memory. AIX is dynamic and only brings in some features when they are actually used and will grow data structures on demand. When physical memory is completely allocated, and more is demanded by programs, AIX will page out memory that has not been accessed recently to the paging space on disk. Excessive paging will hurt any

UNIX system performance and must be avoided by having sufficient memory or reducing the other memory requirements.

As an usable figure, allocate 64 MB for AIX. If a graphics screen is attached to the RDBMS machine, and it is using X Windows, then add an additional 16 MB of memory.

7.4.2 AIX file system cache (AIX buffer cache)

Memory is also used by the operating system to save copies of recently used journaled file system (JFS) disk blocks. This avoids disk I/O and is, therefore, beneficial for performance. Even if the database files use raw devices, the programs will still need to use the file system cache. When the database uses the AIX file system cache, it needs a significant amount of memory.

For databases based on raw devices, allow 16 to 32 MB.

For databases based on JFS, allow 25% of the RDBMS cache (see 7.4.3, “RDBMS cache and structures” on page 142). DB2 UDB users should note that LOB data is cached only in the file system cache and not in the bufferpools.

7.4.3 RDBMS cache and structures

The most important memory space used by the database is the area where the data will be read and modified, such as changing data or inserting new rows. This memory area is called the RDBMS cache. Each RDBMS product implements this cache in a different way. DB2 UDB calls it bufferpool; Oracle calls it buffer cache; Informix is a slightly different from DB2, as it calls this cache buffer pool. Adjusting its size greatly affects the database performance. Therefore, this memory size should be as large as possible.

Memory space is also used by the RDBMS for the locking, control structures, internally used tables, areas used to control parallel queries, and saving data that reduces work, such as the SQL query plans. Making this memory space too small will drastically decrease performance.

Additional memory is necessary for database utilities, such as backup, restore, or load utilities. To achieve good performance while backing up a database, this memory size must be large enough to accommodate all the buffers that you want to allocate for this backup and for other concurrent utilities.

The effect of caching is very difficult to determine before running the system and monitoring the effect of smaller and larger cache sizes. Generally, the more memory the better, up to 4 GB (for 32-bit RDBMS engines); from there on, tests are required to justify that the extra memory will improve performance.

A minimum size of 64 MB should be used.

We suggest sizing initially at 5% of the raw database data size up to 2 GB in size (for 32-bit RDBMS engines).

7.4.4 User applications and database connections

This is the code and data of the application that each user needs to run. Because AIX uses paging space, it does not need to have the entire program in memory to run, and usually only a part of the application is required.

Only the parts of the user processed code that have actually been executed are brought into memory in the first place. If not used regularly, the code or data will be paged out to make room for other processes. As a result of this, only the parts of a process that are frequently used are held in memory. This code and data is called the process' *working set* or *resident set*. When calculating the memory requirements for RDBMS processes and applications, you need to understand that it is the resident set that is used for the calculation and not the total process size.

For example, the program on disk might be 10 MB when investigated with the **`size`** command. But, the resident size might be 6 MB. Also, note the resident set is made up of the code and data. The code is usually shared, so there will only be one copy of the code in memory for all processes running this program, but the data will be unique to each process. In our 6 MB resident size example, it might be 4 MB of code and 2 MB of data. So for 100 processes running this 10 MB program, the memory used is *not*:

10 * 100 MB = 1000 MB <- wrong

but should be calculated as

1 * 4 MB + 100 * 2 MB = 204 MB <- correct

Note: The **`ps`** command can output the resident set in the RSS, TSS, and DSS columns.

Usually for applications coded in C, the amount of memory per user should be calculated at 2 to 3 MB. For more complex applications, 6 MB is a good value. If there is more than one application binary, then each must be taken into account. For a discussion on what is really meant by a user, see 7.2.3, "Sizing from user numbers" on page 138.

Sizing application programs is not simple because each of them is different. The important factors are:

- The language or environment used to implement it.
- The number of screens, features, and functions of the application.
- If the application is for general (larger) or very specific (more compact) purposes.
- If the application is written for a specific RDBMS or written to work with any database (and not able to use specific features for higher performance).
- If the application is ported from an alternative OS or non-RDBMS system. Generally, these applications are large and slow.

We offer the following as very approximate starting points:

- Simple C language program: 2 to 3 MB
- Large C language program: 5 MB
- 4 GL or forms: 4 to 8 MB
- Programs generated from a high-level application design tool or created within a sophisticated graphical and object oriented development environment: 6 to 15 MB

It is relatively simple to find out the memory requirements of a program from the vendor or actually measure the size of a program by running it on a test, proto-type, or any other system.

If the application is running on a machine other than the RDBMS server or the user's PC, then it does not count towards the memory requirement of the RDBMS machine. However, the application will still have to communicate with the RDBMS machine using the RDBMS server process. These are large programs themselves, but as explained above, they share the code. Allow between 4 and 8 MB per user. If the Oracle Multi Threaded Server is used, then decide how many servers you are to run instead. Each of these will be 8 MBs in size.

7.5 Disk goals and sizing

All database objects are ultimately stored on disks. These objects are the data itself, indexes, catalog/data dictionary and temporary tables. In addition, the database needs log files and rollback segments for transaction and crash recovery.

There are two levels at which to size the disks for a database:

- General, high-level, whole databases sizing
- Specific, detailed-level table by table sizing

7.5.1 General database sizing: High-level

This has to be used when only the total size of the database is known. It has to be carefully qualified whether the size is the raw data or the disk size.

Raw data size

First, add an overhead to the raw size of the data for the placement of the data in the disk blocks of the database. Some waste is inevitable, as one or more rows have to fit within one block, so the last few bytes of a block are most often wasted. Databases compact the data of each row. If the column is specified with 100 bytes but only contains 25 bytes, then the database only uses 25 bytes of the block. This means more rows are stored per block. But if an item is updated, it can get bigger and not fit within the same block anymore. In this case, the database uses a *chained block* to store the larger data item. This results in lower performance, as both blocks will need to be read to find the row. The database allows you to specify that each block allocates some free space to cover for rows getting larger.

As a rule of thumb, most DBAs use a ratio of raw data to disk size between 1:1.1 to 1:1.3, in other words, 10 to 30% more than the size of the data itself.

Raw data size to database size

After calculating the raw data as shown above, a scaling up calculation has to be made to cover the other parts of the database, such as indexes and working space. If there is no information available, then use the following standard raw data to disk ratios as a rule of thumb:

- OLTP ratio: 1:3
- DSS ratio: 1:4
- Data warehouse ratio: 1:5

If you are new to databases, these values will seem high, but are typical in production systems. Many people do not understand or expect the data-to-disk ratios to be so large. For example, if they use a 1:2 ratio without careful calculation, then this is unlikely to be practical, and the database will not perform well. Indeed, the data might not even be able to be loaded and indexed, or the first large query will hopelessly run out of space.

Many times, people also think the index size will only be a small fraction of the raw data, for example, only allowing an extra 10 to 20% instead of allowing an extra 100% of space for the indexes (see also “Indexes” on page 146).

Total disk size

In order to make sure that the disk size includes everything, double check if disk space for AIX, the paging space, and the database log has been included.
If in doubt, add a dedicated disk for each of the following:

- The AIX system
- Paging, if you have more then 1 GB of memory
- Database log

7.5.2 Specific table by table sizing: Detailed level

The alternative is the detailed level sizing of the database. Typically, this is worked out with a simple spreadsheet.

Tables

For each table, the number of rows, and then the size of one row, is estimated. By far the best way to determine this is to actually create the table in a small test database and load it with some data. A few hundred or a thousand rows will do. Then, the database can calculate the average row sizes accurately.

For DB2 UDB, use the **`runstats`** command. For Oracle, use the **`analyze table`** command or the dbms_stats.get_table_stats PL/SQL program. For Informix use the **`update statistics`** command.

If the table sizes can only be estimated, refer to the database manuals for explanations on how to do this.

Indexes

Indexes can be hard to determine if this is early in the design cycle. However, the indexes might be well known from previous experience. If in doubt, guess two to three indexes per table with over a thousand rows. If the table is smaller, the indexes might not help performance and are insignificant in size anyway.

There is a minimum size of the index items for the *B tree* structure and an overhead for index structures. Most RDBMS indexes use a variant of the B tree structure to organize the index. To find a particular row, the RDBMS starts at the top of the tree and works its way down each node or branch of the tree, choosing the route based on the details of the column it is looking for until it finds the reference to the row required. This final index reference is called a leaf node. For

example, in Oracle, this is 22 to 25 bytes. Again, this is best worked out using a test table and index or using the explanations from the database's manuals.

The default recommendation is to assume the index size is the same as the data size. For example, if the table is 100 GB in size, then allow a further 100 GB for the index. This is based on two observations. If the table only contains a few columns (called a thin or narrow table), and only one column is indexed, then the index overhead will result in an index of roughly the same number of bytes as a row, so the data and indexes will be roughly the same size. Alternatively, if the table has many columns (called a fat or wide table), then it is likely that many indexes will be used for the table. Each index will be smaller (as each index will only cover one column), but the multiple indexes means the indexes will be roughly the same size as the table.

Temporary space (sort space)

This is used for DBA activities, such as creating indexes, creating summary tables, loading data, and for very large SQL query results to be stored and sorted before being returned to the application and user.

To index a large table requires a large amount of temporary space. It is not precise, but the space to allow for a full table sort on disk can be up to 1.3 times the size of the table. If the table is indexed in parallel, this can take up to two times the table size. Most databases have one dominant table. If this table is 30% of the data size, then the temporary space needs to be 60% of the data size. This assumes that nothing else is using temporary space while indexing.

For DSS databases, there is a large need for temporary space due to the large numbers of rows being sorted and the summary table creation.

Most systems use the rule of thumb of having the same amount of temporary space as data space. Running out of temporary space results in a complete failure to create indexes, which makes performance impossible for SQL statements failing with errors. Both must be avoided at all costs.

7.5.3 Which disk size to choose

There are several trends in disk technology:

- They get bigger every year, roughly following Moore's law, which states that computer power doubles every 18 months.
- The cost per GB is lower each year.
- The cost difference of the two smallest drives diminishes until there is little point in continuing with the smaller drive.
- The disk drives improve a little each year in seek time.

- The disk drives get smaller in physical size.

All this means is that the databases use disk drives that are bigger in space size and smaller in physical size. The speed improvements are, however, small in comparison.

This means that a database that would have taken 36 * 1 GB drives four years ago can now be placed on one disk. This highlights the database I/O problems. For example, if each 1 GB can do 80 I/O operations a second, this means the system can do a combined 36 * 80 = 2880 I/O operations per second. But a single 36 GB drive with a seek time of 7 ms can do 140 I/O operations per second. Clearly, the new disk drive capacity is good news, but lower numbers of disks cannot deliver the same I/O throughput.

The only way to work out the I/O throughput requirements is to:

- Use some test or proto-type system from which to measure the I/O for a given workload.
- Determine the transaction rate and read and write operations per transaction for OLTP systems. Remember reading data will involve reading indexes, and inserts and updates require data, index, and logs to be written.
- Estimate the number of rows and tables that will be scanned for typical query types for DSS systems.

The writers of this redbook recommend using the smallest drive possible purely on the basis of increasing the number of disks for I/O throughput. The alternative (when the two smallest drives are nearly the same price) is to buy the next largest drive and only use half the disk space. The middle area of the disk is the fastest; so, it would make sense to use this. This leaves the other half of the disk available for other things, such as:

- Disk to disk backup
- Archiving data
- Test databases for out-of-hour testing
- Extra copy of the database for upgrade testing

Note: Traditionally, we decide the number of disks by dividing the disk space requirement by the current disk size, but as disk drives increase in capacity, it will become more important to decide the number of disks using the disk I/O requirements.

7.5.4 Disk protection

Disks crash. We have to live with this fact and build a system that can tolerate this problem. The system can (given sufficient funds) be built to carry on running with zero interruption or to be recovered in a few hours, despite a crash.

The database log needs disk protection to allow database recovery of recent transactions. The other disks can optionally be protected. If they are protected, downtime while data is recovered can be eliminated.

In practice, there are two options:

- RAID 5
- Mirrored disks with PP striping or fine striping from AIX 4.3.3 onwards

See Chapter 9, “Designing a disk subsystem” on page 187 for more information on disk options and performance. In terms of sizing, both options mean more disks and suitable adapters.

- RAID 5: We recommend using a seven data to one parity disk ratio, so add one seventh to the number of disks.
- Mirror: Simply double the disk requirements, but do not forget you may need additional adapters for the disks.
- You may choose to implement a mixture like mirrored log disks and RAID 5 for data, index, and temporary space (but note temporary space is 50% read and 50% write).

Do not forget the AIX and paging space disks. A failure on these disks can bring down your system. If a paging space disk fails, the system will restart without it, but if the AIX disk fails, it can take extra long to correct it. The AIX **`mksysb`** backup method will minimize this down time. The alternative is mirroring these disks; RAID 5 is not recommended.

Also, do not forget to include a spare disk or two for speeding up recovery and the risks while running after a disk failure.

Minimum disk requirements for small databases

Table 7-1 on page 150 highlights that, with small database and small numbers of disks, you have to be very careful with the 1:3 rule of thumb, as it only applies to larger databases and higher numbers of disks.

Table 7-1 on page 150 gives some example database sizes (assuming 4.5 GB disks).

Table 7-1 Example database sizes

Use number of disks	Absolute minimum disks	Small RDBMS	Small and safe RDBMS	Large RDBMS
AIX	1	1	1 + mirror	1
Paging and RDBMS code	Use above	1	1 + mirror	2
RDBMS data	1	1	1 + mirror	8
RDBMS indexes	1	1	1 + mirror	8
RDBMS temp	Use above	1	1 + mirror	8
RDBMS logs	1 + mirror	1 + mirror	1 + mirror	1
Database data	2 GB	4 GB	4 GB	36 GB
Total disk size	22 GB	31 GB	58 GB	128 GB
Number of disks	5	7	13	28
Data to Disk Ratio	1:11	1:7	1:14 or 1:7 with mirror	1:3.5

In the *Absolute minimum disks* column, we have allocated the index and temp space onto one disk. This is not ideal, but might work in practice because databases tend to use indexes for transactions or temp space for index creation and sorting full table scan large queries, but not both at one time. This column highlights the minimum number of disks for an RDBMS. This is not a recommended minimum disk subsystem for a database but does have the lowest cost.

The *Small RDBMS* column is a recommended minimum disk subsystem although there may be limits in I/O rates due to the data being placed on only one disk. Striping the data, indexes, and temp across these three disks might help reduce this. This does not include disk protection for the database or other disks (apart from the mandatory log disk protection for transaction recovery).

The *Small and safe RDBMS* column adds full disk protection and would survive any disk crash with zero down time.

The *Large RDBMS column* highlights a normal sized database and approaches the 1:3 ratio rule of thumb. We could add disk protection to this configuration too.

Tip: Use the simple 1:3 ratio rule with a minimum number of disks to decide the database size and number of disks and then add disk protection.

7.6 Balancing a system using the component costs

Once a machine size has been determined, it is worth making a few checks to make sure that the system is sensible and will work in practice. The teams that size database systems regularly have found that the majority of configurations have a constant ratio between the power of the CPU, the memory, and the number and size of disks. This is based on the idea that a certain CPU power running an RDBMS will generate a certain level of disk I/O to supply new data for processing. The memory is then related to the database size and reduces the disk I/O by caching data. If you find that you have configured a machine with 16 CPUs and 100 GB of disk but only 256 MB RAM, you should recheck your calculations or initial assumptions!

Do not forget that, in addition, you will probably need:

- Network adapters
- Tape drive(s) for system and database backups
- Software

Other things to notice are:

- CPU: On SMP machines with less than the full number of CPUs, it is a very simple and inexpensive task to upgrade. But, machines with the full number of CPUs are less expensive in cost per CPU in power terms.
- On smaller machines, the memory is relatively inexpensive, but the disks are not, because you need a minimum set of disks to run a database.
- The upgrade from machines with one CPU or the maximum SMP CPUs is often not simple. The next machine up in the range might be quite different and require the CPU, motherboard, complete cabinet, memory, and adapters changed. This means the upgrade will take much longer in downtime and will be more complex. Also, larger machines cost more. A requirement for a 10% improvement in CPU terms might mean actually having to install a machine that is 50% faster and much more costly.
- Memory: Most machines are not initially configured or installed with the maximum memory in the system. This means extra memory can simply be added to the machine if the initial size proves to be too small.
- Disks: Compared to the cost of the machine, the cost of a single disk drive is very small. Adding external disks does not have to involve the main system cabinet. SSA disks in particular can be very simply added to the system with

zero downtime. Even adding a disk adapter is a simple process. Disk space is also the first part of the system that is likely to outgrow the initial size.

Tip: Sizing is often choosing the IBM @server pSeries model based on the CPU power rating and then balancing memory and disks so that full use of the CPU(s) can be achieved.

For more sizing information, refer to the redbook *Understanding IBM @server pSeries Performance and Sizing*, SG24-4810.

8

Designing RDBMS servers

When designing a system for implementing an RDBMS, you should be aware that the deeper you comprehend all the basic design concepts necessary to build a system, the better the design and the more stable the system will be. Most of the design considerations discussed in this chapter can not only affect the AIX and RDBMS performance but also the availability of your whole system. The sections are:

- 8.1, “Production, development, and testing” on page 154 discusses systems types.
- 8.2, “Working space” on page 156 gives a brief consideration on working space and how to estimate it.
- 8.3, “Sizing consideration” on page 164 discusses some considerations that apply to the RDBMSs.
- 8.4, “Database back up and restore strategy” on page 171 discusses some backup and restore strategies.
- 8.5, “Coping with growth” on page 175 discusses growth consideration on sizing a system.
- 8.6, “Performance versus availability” on page 182 discusses sizing for availability compared to performance.
- 8.7, “AIX and RDBMS upgrades” on page 183 discusses systems or database upgrade.

8.1 Production, development, and testing

We can classify machines in four different groups according to their functionality:

- Production
- Development
- Testing
- Hybrid

Each type has an unique and essential role as well as a different system configuration.

8.1.1 Production

This is the machine that holds the company's vital data. The production databases, where all the applications and final users connect to, is usually required to be available 100% of the time with an impressive response time.

The production machine must be the most reliable and stable among all the others. Not only must the database and the operating system be monitored, but also the hardware.

Even the worst possible situation that could lead the database to an unexpected stop must have a pre-defined emergency plan already set in order to minimize the downtime. This can be achieved with good and tested backups, as well as with disk protection implementations, such as RAID 5 or mirroring. Also, the High Availability Cluster Multi-Processing (HACMP), an IBM software solution, provides a machine's high-availability through redundancy and shared resource access.

The administrator must focus the performance and tuning efforts onto this machine. The monitoring and performance tasks must be implemented in order to achieve the best database response time through the efficient use of the operating system and hardware resources. This is the main reason why you should not have any other testing or development load interfering with your production machine.

The production concept implies that this machine holds the fundamental data for the department, or even for the whole company. A severe database downtime on this machine can be the bottleneck for the company's business success. The production machine must have enough, and well consumed, resources as well as administrators committed to the monitoring and performance goals in order to support these characteristics.

Note: In order to reduce the production machine downtime caused by an unexpected problem, it is recommended that the database and system administrators handle this machine with extreme care and always have a tested backup set of the operating system and database available.

8.1.2 Development

This must be a separate small system used exclusively by the development personnel.

Although some basic security recommendations can be taken into account, this is the machine where symptoms, such as running out of disk space and system outages, will occur. This basically happens because the developers are running untested code, and all of the load generated by these tests can directly interfere with CPU, disk, and memory utilization. A lot of times these experiments can easily cause a system havoc, and that is exactly what this machine is about: to show the developers, through the output and effect of their applications, what must be changed in their code and eliminate any possible failure when going into production.

Usually a machine with few CPUs, disk, and memory resources is used as the development machine due to the following facts:

- Very uneven machine resource demand
- Expected instability
- Disconnected from the production environment

8.1.3 Testing

The test system must be a separate, medium sized system where new products, fixes to products, and final user code can be tested before placing these items into the production system. The system can also be used for training purposes.

It should contain a reasonable amount of production data in order to simulate how the code would run with real production mass data. Due to these characteristics, the test machine can be smaller than the production machine but must have enough resources available for running at a reasonable speed.

The test system should never run on the production machine due to the unpredictable behavior of its untried changes.

8.1.4 Hybrid machines

Based on the different characteristics, it is primarily recommended that each scenario be put onto separate machines so that they do not interfere with each other.

However, there are some special situations where the system and database administrators are asked to share the same machine for different scenarios. In this particular case, it is recommend that only development and testing are put together. Once the production machine plays a vital role for the company, this machine should not be exposed to possibly hazardous testing and development failures.

8.2 Working space

When you are designing a server for RDBMS, you have to keep in mind that there are basically three vital concerns for a well-designed system:

- Basic and future AIX resources
- Basic and future application resources
- Basic and future RDBMS resources

8.2.1 Basic and future AIX resources

The first point to be considered is how much space the AIX operating system will consume when installed on an IBM @server pSeries. The current AIX Version 5L needs approximately 400 MB of disk space for basic installation and graphical tools. Besides this basic disk space allocation, the system administrator will have to increase the AIX paging space size using the value suggested by the AIX Installation Assistant tool. The real indicator as to whether the paging space might be increased is the database's resource consumption as requested by users and applications. Once the system is implemented and the number of user and application requests increase, it is possible to monitor the paging space consumption in order to determine if it is necessary to define more space for it. As a rule of thumb, it is recommended that the minimum size for the paging space area is set to the same size as real memory. Sometimes this value has to be increased to two times the size of the machine's real memory. If more than 1 GB will be used for paging space, and if more than one disk exists in the machine, it is recommended to split the paging space across the disks usually using 1 GB per disk drive. You should be aware that whenever you use the paging space area, the overall performance automatically decreases. Refer to Chapter 11, "Monitoring an RDBMS system for performance" on page 251 for further information about monitoring tools and techniques.

Keep in mind that new AIX features and fixes can eventually consume more space than what was initially designed to be available for AIX. Although these changes do usually not consume a substantial amount of disk space, they still must be considered as part of the future AIX resource allocation.

At the time AIX is installed, it is recommended to load most of the frequently used features, such as the online manuals, in order to avoid future space consumption and unnecessary workload. Consider 2 GB of disk space for all the AIX Journaled File Systems, such as /tmp, /home, and /var.

8.2.2 Basic and future application resources

Production tools, third-party tools, and applications used on a system must be considered when planning for disk space. These kinds of products are subject to be replaced and/or added constantly, especially due to the constant application development cycle. The initial needed space and long-term growth must be planned in the system. Refer to the application vendors in order to find out about the space requirements for their particular products.

8.2.3 Basic RDBMS resources

This is the core area of an RDBMS system, and errors in the design can result in major performance problems. Therefore, special care should be taken when designing the resources for the RDBMS.

Basic DB2 UDB resources

When designing a system for a DB2 UDB RDBMS, the following physical files have to be taken into consideration.

Log files

The log files contain all the information regarding the database changes caused by an INSERT, UPDATE, DELETE, CREATE, ALTER, or DROP command. They are used in a database failure situation or even in a system crash for restoring the database to its consistent state. This action ensures the integrity of the database.

When the *circular logging* is being used, the only thing to be aware of is the possible secondary log file's disk space allocation. When the *archival logging* is being used, a user-exit must be coded for moving the archived log files to a tape device, thus freeing the disk space. Refer to 4.2.3, "Physical storage structures" on page 69 for further information about the different types of logging.

Data files

Data files are the main area to be considered when designing an RDBMS system. This is the place where the database stores its data, and space consumption is usually quite high, independent of whether SMS or DMS tablespaces are used. Because this is such a dynamic area, system and database administrators need to monitor the growth of the data files very closely. For information about the different types of tablespaces, refer to “Data files, index files, and temporary space” on page 71.

Index files

Indexes will be defined for a table, and they will be responsible for speeding up some queries. Since they consume some disk space, it is necessary to estimate the disk space consumption size. Refer to Chapter 5, “Physical Database Design” in the manual *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Planning*, SC09-4822, for a complete equation description.

DB2 UDB control files

Each DB2 UDB database has its own set of control files used for managing the database’s internal functionality. These files should not be deleted, renamed, or moved from their original location. The RDBMS will be responsible for saving them to a file or a tape device when a database backup is taken. These files do not represent more than 1 MB of disk space.

Sort space

Some SQL statements require that the RDBMS creates some temporary tables in order to process them. This is the case where an ORDER BY statement is used on a large amount of data, therefore causing a sort operation to occur. If the amount of data is bigger than the size of the available memory, a temporary table will be created on disk in order to execute the order operation. DB2 UDB will create these temporary tables on the physical space that was defined for the temporary tablespace.

Two rules of thumb can be used for sizing the sort space:

- Make the temporary tablespace size 1.5 times larger than the largest table of the database. This can be used when the database has very few big tables and a lot of small tables.
- Make the temporary tablespace size equal to the sum size of all tables on the database. This can be used when all the tables have approximately the same size.

Since the amount of required space will be totally dependent on the queries and the amount of data returned for the sort operation, the only way to figure out the ideal size for the temporary tablespace will be through the monitoring process once the database is operational.

Reorganization space

Reorganization is necessary to remove the wasted space caused by deleted rows. Whenever you need to reorganize a table or the indexes that are defined on it, you will need some staging area to be allocated.

DB2 UDB can either use free space in the same tablespace where the data table resides (if it is a DMS tablespace) or it can use the temporary tablespace. The temporary tablespace will have to be increased in size to accommodate this change, or maybe another staging tablespace can be created for the reorganization step.

Refer to 8.5, “Coping with growth” on page 175 for more information about table and index reorganization.

Basic Oracle resources

Oracle RDBMS needs disk space for the following physical files.

Redo log files

The redo log file records all changes made to the user or system objects.

They are also used for error recovery in case of media failure or a system crash. Each Oracle instance requires at least two redo log files, but this number can be expanded for availability or security reasons. The copies should also reside on different disks if there are disks available on the system.

The more INSERTS, UPDATES, DELETES, CREATES, ALTERS, and DROPS you have in your database, the more physical space for the log files should be planned. Once the database determines that all the transactions recorded in the log file were committed, that is, when the database puts the log files in a state called *archived*, the log files are ready to be moved out from disk to a tape device, thus freeing the disk space. Due to this very frequent update characteristic, the redo log files should be put on dedicated disks when possible. As a rule of thumb, consider 4.5 GB to 9 GB of disk space for the redo log file.

Data files

This is the main area that both system and database administrators should be concentrating on because it is usually a source of never-ending space consumption, and the database must have this space available for storing the newly added rows.

Index files

Whenever you want to avoid sorts, speed up frequently executed queries, and provide some organization in the table, index usage should be considered. However, as with the data files, the index files sometimes consume large portions of disk space depending on the number of indexes defined for each table and the

size of the table that you want to index. For an estimated amount of disk space consumed by an index, refer to Appendix A, “Space Estimation for Schema Objects”, in the *Oracle 9i Database Administrator’s Guide*.

Control files

The control files include information about the database itself. They are small in size, with initial size of about 1 MB, but crucial for starting the database. Without them, the database cannot operate properly.

Initialization file

The initialization file is usually named init.ora. This file is read at the database startup time, and it can contain more than two hundred parameters that can influence the performance and functionality of the Oracle RDBMS. This is a text file, and its size is usually less than 20 KB.

Rollback segments or undo tablespace

Rollback segments are used only in Oracle Version 8 or in Version 9 if you do not configure automatic undo management. If automatic undo is specified, then you have to estimate space only for your undo tablespace: Oracle will automatically create the undo segments inside it, with an appropriate size. We strongly recommend that if you are using Oracle 9, undo tablespaces and automatic undo management are used. See 15.5.20, “Automatic undo” on page 407 for more details.

A rollback segment is responsible for recording the old values of data that were changed by each transaction and is used to provide read consistency to roll back transactions and to recover the database. Compared to the size of the data files, a small amount of space should be assigned to the rollback segments. Refer to *Oracle 9i Database Administrator’s Guide* for more information about the size of the rollback segments.

Reorganization space

If the reorganization takes place on Oracle, another staging table, with the same size of the table to be reorganized, must be created in order to allow the data to be transferred in and out of the table. Another option is to export the table to a file on a disk, drop the contents of the table, and import the data again.

Basic Informix resources

For Informix DS 9.30, the following information is applicable.

Dbspace

All data in Informix is stored in dbspaces, so space must be carefully calculated for each dbspace in a database. Also, as IDS uses raw devices, you should care that this raw partition uses the 1:3 ratio and that you have some pre-allocated

raw devices available. If your database server uses LOB or BYTE data types and similar types, space should be allocated in a special dbspace called blobspace or sbspace (see 6.1.2, “Storage structures” on page 119).

Logical and physical log files

Log files are in fact dbspaces storing log information. IDS defaults it to root dbspace. As a performance advice, always move it to different dbspaces. Also, reserve space to physical log dbspace and to logical log dbspace.

Temporary dbspace

IDS makes huge use of temporary disk areas, so correct space allocation is essential. Keep in mind that this special dbspace must be allocated on a different set of disks.

Mirror

For maximum data protection and fault tolerance, IDS implements mirroring of all dbspaces. If you choose mirror, then double the space initially allocated on a different set of disks.

Initialization file

The Informix onconfig.servername initialization file is a plain text file and is very small. But it has important information needed to start the database server.

Indexes

If you want to create detached indexes, then allocate space to new dbspaces to store the index. Informix uses traditional B-tree indexes, and allows a maximum of 390 bytes per index key.

Diagnostics files

Every time a assertion failure occurs, IDS generates a dump information file that is useful for checking the root cause for that assertion failure. The location of this file is specified by a server variable. IDS also creates a message file to keep track of activity in the database, in a directory specified by the MSGPATH variable.

Administration tools

Informix has a number of tools to perform administration tasks. These tools are installed in the Informix home directory. An important tool is the Informix Server Administrator, which allows the database server to administrated by WEB. If you want to install this tool, then you will need 40 MB more, but the benefits of ISA overwhelm this space loss.

Backup space

A backup copy is necessary for the whole machine, in AIX by using the **mksysb** command) and for each existing database. However, the backup strategy will depend on the size of the database and also on the free disk space available.

For small and medium size databases, allocating disk space for the database backup copy might be a reasonable strategy. However, for large databases, this concept tends to be impractical due to the huge amount of disk space you should have available for each different database backup copy and for each different daily, weekly, or monthly backup strategy. For this scenario, it is recommended that you back up your database directly to an external unit, such as a tape device.

If you chose to generate and store database backup copies on disk, you should use separate disks for the database files and the backup copies. This can avoid hardware problems destroying the database and all the backup copies at the same time.

Refer to 2.5, “Ensuring data availability” on page 33 for a general description of backup strategies.

8.2.4 Future RDBMS resources

When designing a system, it is important to first consider the space needed for an immediate start. Then, you must have a clear idea of how much disk space is needed for:

- The start point
- The database growth for the near future
- An estimated database growth for the remote future

The discussion of what can be considered near future and remote future will depend on the database growth rate. For a read-only database, the near future can be estimated to be six months, and maybe one year for the remote future. However, on a OLTP environment, one month can be usually considered the near future, and three months can be considered to be the remote future. These are only suggested values, since each company will have its own growth rate, thus changing the time frames for what is considered near and remote future.

Some space should be planned for future RDBMS upgrades and additions of new features. Refer to 8.5, “Coping with growth” on page 175 for more information about the most commonly changing RDBMS areas.

The disk space has to be planned for all areas, such as initial and future needs, in order to avoid possible lack of space situations. Some areas, however, will demand special attention due to their expected growth rate.

Each customer's disk space consumption areas will vary depending on the workload characteristics. Table 8-1 describes the different disk space consumption areas and reports what is commonly expected for DB2 UDB, Informix, and Oracle.

Table 8-1 Growth rates for planning disk space

Disk space consumption area	Expected growth
AIX (updates and upgrades)	Small
Application (languages, production, and third-party tools)	Medium
Oracle archived REDO log files	High
Oracle data files	High
Oracle index files *	High
Oracle control files	Medium
Oracle initialization files	Small
DB2 UDB log files	High
DB2 UDB data files	High
DB2 UDB index files *	High
DB2 UDB internal control files	Small
Informix logs	High
Informix data dbspaces	High
Informix index dbspaces *	High
Informix diagnostics files	Medium
Temporary tablespace for sort operation	Medium
Backup space	Medium
* The growth of the index files will depend on how many indexes are defined for a table and the table's growth, and for Informix if the indexes are detached or not.	

8.3 Sizing consideration

There are several considerations that you must take into account in sizing an RDBMS. Those are:

- 8.3.1, “Workload and network considerations” on page 164
- 8.3.2, “System resource considerations” on page 165
- 8.3.3, “Additional considerations” on page 169

8.3.1 Workload and network considerations

Before you start, it is necessary to have a clear idea of how the database will be accessed. In other words, you need to know the database’s workload characteristics. For example, a database that is used to store patients’ personal information in an emergency room is completely different from a database holding historical data in a museum. The first one has a unique characteristic of inserting data, while the data stored for a museum is basically queried during the whole day. Refer to Chapter 3, “Types of workload” on page 49 for a better understanding of workload characteristics.

One thing to be considered when designing the system is how the network can influence your overall performance.

Usually, there are very few local connections to the server machine. In the majority of the cases, the user applications run on client workstations that send and receive requests through the network. Even if the database is able to process the requests immediately after they arrive, a serious performance issue will exist if there is a network delay in the following situations:

- The time between when a client machine sends a request to the server and the server receives this request
- The time between when the server machine sends data back to the client machine and the client machine receives the data

Once a system is implemented, the network should be monitored in order to assure that its bandwidth is not being consumed more than 50%.

There are two application techniques that improve overall performance and avoid high-network consumption:

- Transmit a block of rows to the client machine in a single operation. When using DB2 UDB, this can be accomplished by using the BLOCKING option in the pre-compile or bind procedures. Refer to the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-4821, for further information about row blocking. When using Oracle, this can be achieved by a

process called extracting data using arrays. For Informix, it is possible to increase the FET_BUF_SIZE parameter.

- Use stored procedures to minimize the number of accesses to the database. Stored procedures are programs that reside on the RDBMS server and can be executed as part of a transaction by the client applications. This way, several pre-programmed SQL statements can be executed by using only one CALL command from the client machine. The stored procedures can be coded in different languages depending on the RDBMS. For Oracle, the PL/SQL or JAVA extensions can be used. For DB2 UDB, there is a choice of Java, C, Cobol, or SQL procedures. For Informix, the choices are SPL, Java, or C extensions.

Besides the application enhancements that can be provided by DB2 UDB, Informix, and Oracle, it is recommended that medium and large databases are connected to the client machines using FDDI or 100 MB Ethernet LANs. A 10 MB Ethernet LAN usually only provides an acceptable bandwidth for small databases.

8.3.2 System resource considerations

The database administrator will be responsible for balancing the database's memory usage, while the system administrator will balance the overall memory usage. One of the most ordinary cases, where both areas should work together, is where an RDBMS and an application, such as SAP, have to share the same machine. A practical example is that both of them have their own bufferpool for treating the data, and the memory space dedicated to each application should be carefully chosen.

The RDBMSs use memory to manipulate their own data in order to satisfy the customer's requests. The amount of memory to be planned for an RDBMS is proportional to the number of users and applications that will be connecting to the database. The memory space needs are different for Oracle, DB2 UDB, and Informix.

DB2 UDB memory requirements

Table 8-2 on page 166 suggests the amount of memory that is required to run DB2 UDB based on the total number of possible connections. The real memory needs will vary depending on the functions that the users and applications are using.

Table 8-2 Memory requirements for DB2 Universal Database

Number of clients connecting to a server	Memory space needed
10 concurrent connections	80 MB
25 concurrent connections	96 MB
50 concurrent connections	186 MB
DB2 UDB Administration Tools	30 MB

For example, if the system will have the DB2 UDB administration tools and 65 users connected to it, it is necessary to provide 30 MB for the administration tools, 186 MB for 50 users, and 96 MB for 25 users. The total suggested memory is 312 MB.

Whenever there is an increase in the number of users and applications connected, the memory size should be recalculated.

DB2 UDB has several parameters that affect memory consumption, either on the server side, client side, or on both. Refer to 14.2, “Areas of interest” on page 346 for further explanation about the different types of memory allocated by DB2 UDB.

Oracle memory requirements

The first thing to be calculated for an Oracle RDBMS is the size of the Shared Global Area (SGA). This area contains all the space necessary for the Database Buffer Cache, Redo Log Buffer, and Shared Pool. Refer to 2.4.1, “RDBMS terms” on page 26 for further information about the SGA.

The following initialization parameters control the size of the Oracle Shared Global Area:

- DB_CACHE_SIZE and DB_CACHE_nK_SIZE for Oracle 9 and DB_BLOCK_BUFFERS for Oracle 8
- DB_BLOCK_SIZE
- SORT_AREA_SIZE
- SHARED_POOL_SIZE
- LARGE_POOL_SIZE
- SGA_MAX_SIZE: Oracle 9

These parameters should be set with caution, since a too high value for them could lead to exhaustive memory usage and paging. The sum of all instances’ SGA sizes should not exceed more than 70% of the total memory.

The approximate size of an instance's SGA for Oracle 8 can be calculated with the formula shown in Example 8-1.

Example 8-1 SGA estimation

```
(DB_BLOCK_BUFFERS * DB_BLOCK_SIZE)
+ SORT_AREA_SIZE
+ SHARED_POOL_SIZE
+ LARGE_POOL_SIZE
+ 1 MB
```

For Oracle 9, which allows dynamic allocation of SGA up to the limit specified in SGA_MAX_SIZE, set the cache size for each block size you want and the size of SHARED_POOL_SIZE and LARGE_POOL_SIZE. In fact, these two parameters are dynamic and if you don't specify it, Oracle will select an appropriate value, based on the total amount of memory available to Oracle.

After you have defined the SGA size, and prior to starting Oracle RDBMS, the formula in Example 8-2 can be used to estimate the total memory requirement for the server.

Example 8-2 Total memory estimation

```
Size of the Oracle executables
+ size of the SGA
+ number of background processes * size of tool executable's private data
section
+ size of the Oracle executable's un-initialized data section
+ 8192 bytes for the stack
+ size of PGA
```

The **size -f -X32_64** command can be used to retrieve an executable's text size, private data section size, and uninitialized data section size.

Oracle also calculates memory space allocation based on the number of users and applications that will connect to the database.

For each client connection, the formula in Example 8-3 can be used for estimating the memory consumption.

Example 8-3 Memory consumption estimation

```
Size of the Oracle executable's data section
+ size of the Oracle executable's un-initialized data section
+ 8192 bytes for the stack
+ 2048 bytes for processes user area
+ cursor area needed for the application
```

For Oracle 9i, as a rule of thumb, allow at least 2 MB to 4 MB memory size per user. Some DBAs use 10 MB for users in critical servers.

Whenever there is an increase in the number of users and applications connected, the memory size should be recalculated.

Refer to the *Oracle 9i Database Performance Tuning Guide and Reference* for more information about the Oracle memory tuning.

Informix memory requirements

To achieve optimal performance in Informix DS, correct memory sizing is essential. There are a number of parameters that control the memory size and utilization in Informix:

- BUFFERS
- LOGBUFF
- PHYSBUFF
- SHMTOTAL
- SHMBASE
- SHMADD
- RESIDENT
- DS_TOTAL_MEMORY
- LOCKS

Follow the following formulas to calculate the size of the various portions of Informix memory and then for Informix instance itself:

- Resident portion

  Example 8-4 shows how to calculate this portion size in kilobytes, with a little overhead. First, use **`onstat -b`** to get the page size and then follow the formula in the example.

Example 8-4 Resident memory calculation

```
buffer_size = (BUFFERS * pagesize) * (BUFFERS * 254)
lock_size= LOCKS*44
log_size= LOGBUFF*1024*3
phy_size= PHYSBUFFER * 1024 * 2
resident_size = (buffer_size + lock_size + log_size + phys_size + 51,200)/1024
```

- Virtual portion

  The virtual portion of IDS memory is dynamic and will grow or shrink as necessary. You control its size by specifying the SHMTOTAL parameter as the maximum limit and SHSVIRTSIZE as the initial size. The formula to estimate the initial Virtual size is shown in Example 8-5.

Example 8-5 Virtual memory calculation

```
Virt_size = fixed overhead
+ shared structures
+ (maximum concurrent connections * private structures)
+ other buffers
```

  These values may be obtained with the **onstat** command. Check the *Performance Guide for Informix Dynamic Server 2000, Version 9.2*, G251-0340 for more information about calculating the virtual size of shared memory.

- Message area

  The message area is used to store the messages buffer the server uses to interprocess communications. You can calculate its size by using the formula shown in the Example 8-6.

Example 8-6 Message memory calculation

```
Msg_size = (10,531+ipc_conn+50,000) / 1024
```

To get the initial memory size you need, sum up all the memory portion sizes and allow some overhead.

Informix recommends that the total memory available to a Dynamic Server should be the maximum allowed by your operating system. This may be achieved by setting the SHMTOTAL to 0. But if you run out of swap space, set the SHMTOTAL to a size that is few megabytes less than the swap space available.

8.3.3 Additional considerations

An RDBMS should run on a machine that fulfills all the system resource demands, from the operating system needs through the connected applications asking for a row from the database. Prior to choosing the most appropriate machine type and model, it is essential that some basic points are clearly defined, such as the amount of users and applications that will access the database, how much CPU, memory, and disk the RDBMS needs for handling its own tasks, and the system workload characteristics.

Once the total amount of resources are defined, it is possible to build the databases and monitor and tune them in order to achieve the machine's maximum planned capacity usage.

The CPU, memory, and disk resources must be well planned in order to speed up the system through the use of their maximum capacity but always avoid overcommitting them.

The expected CPU consumption will depend on which system workload is running on the machine as follows:

OLTP	70 - 80%
Web	50%
DSS	80 - 90%
Batch	90 - 100%

On an SMP or SP machine, this workload must be split evenly all over the CPUs. If the CPU utilization is higher than the recommended values over an extended period of time, this might be an indicator for a possible CPU bottleneck.

The operating system and RDBMS will allocate memory in order to perform the operations requested by users and applications. The available memory resources should be completely used most of the time, but care should be taken that no paging occurs on the system due to a bad memory consumption plan.

The disk subsystem design should allow the database's data to be evenly distributed among the disks. The data placement step must be very well designed, thus avoiding data skew. A bad data placement can easily lead to a bad I/O request distribution, that is, some of the disks can be continuously used, while others can be available and without any task to perform. The more even the distribution is, the more performance gains can be achieved. When all the disks are being accessed evenly, the disk utilization rate for each disk should be around 40 to 50%.

These three resource consumptions should always be monitored and under control, therefore assuring that the RDBMS is able to completely and evenly explore all the available resources. For more information about the monitoring process, refer to Chapter 11, “Monitoring an RDBMS system for performance” on page 251.

8.4 Database back up and restore strategy

Maintaining a backup and restore strategy is not only a good practice but a real necessity.

Backing up the database allows recovery of the database either partially or totally in case of an operating system, RDBMS software, or hardware failure. These can damage or make the database inoperative and the data inaccessible.

Each company has a different need and a different approach for the backup strategy. Some read-only environments, such as a DSS, will keep two or three backup images but will not be interested in taking frequent backups as an OLTP environment should do.

The backup and recovery type, either totally or partially, will depend on how the logging mode (for DB2 UDB and Informix DS) and archive mode (for Oracle) are set. All RDBMSs, although using different terms, have the same ability to configure the two possible database restore scenarios:

- Partially

  After the database is restored from a backup image, it will only allow users to access the data available at the time the backup image was taken. All the database changes made from that point on are lost.

- Totally

  After the database is restored from a backup image, all the transactions made to the database will be reapplied, thus allowing users to access the last committed transaction prior to the crash. No database change is lost.

8.4.1 DB2 UDB backup restore scenario

In order to make a backup copy of a database, the **`db2 backup`** command is issued. This command can be issued with two different options: offline and online.

The offline backup is mandatory when the database parameter LOGRETAIN is set to NO, which is also known as circular logging. It indicates that no connections to the database can exist at the time the backup is taken.

If the LOGRETAIN parameter is set to RECOVERY, also known as *log retention logging*, the backup can be taken with all users and applications connected. It can be taken for either the whole database or only for some tablespaces. When this backup is taken, the database administrator should always be aware that the future *archived logs* (logs that contain all units of work that have been committed) must also be copied to a safe unit, since they store the data needed to update

the database to the last committed transaction in case a crash occurs. This is the most recommended backup strategy for a 24x7 non-stop system.

Now suppose that your database became inconsistent due to an external factor, such as a power failure, media problem, or application failure. When a new connection is made, or when the **restart** command is issued, it initiates an activity called *crash recovery.* Crash recovery consists of rolling back incomplete units of work from the time a failure took place, thus allowing the database to be operational again. The RDBMS uses the database log files for the database crash recovery process.

If the database cannot be put into a consistent state again, for example, in cases where the log files are also damaged, one of the two recovery methods should be used: *version recovery* or *roll forward recovery.*

- Version recovery uses offline backups for recovering the database to a consistent point again. The database can only be restored offline, and it is restored to the same state it was in when the offline backup operation took place.
- Roll-forward recovery uses either offline or online backups for recovering the database to a consistent point again. Apart from that, roll forward recovery has the possibility to apply all the changes made to the database from the last time the backup was taken to the last committed transaction. This is done by reading and applying all the database changes stored on the active and archived log files. This process is called *roll forward*.

8.4.2 Oracle backup restore scenario

When the database is abruptly interrupted by an external factor and must be set into an operational state in order to allow connections again, an *instance recovery* will take place. The online redo logs are used to roll back transactions that were not committed at the time the database had the problem.

If the online redo logs are also damaged, Oracle will provide two different ways of restoring the database depending on which archive mode is in use: ARCHIVELOG or NOARCHIVELOG.

When the NOARCHIVELOG mode, also called *Media Recovery Disabled*, is used, the archiving of the online redo log is disabled, and a recovery will only be possible up to the point the last offline backup was taken. This mode does not protect the database from a possible media failure, since it only allows the database administrator to take offline backups.

If the ARCHIVELOG mode is used, archiving of the online redo log is enabled, allowing the database to be restored to the last committed transaction. This is

done through a process called *roll forward*, which consists of applying the redo logs to datafiles and control files. This mode also allows the database administrator to take offline or online backups from both the whole database as well as from certain tablespaces only.

8.4.3 Informix backup restore scenario

Informix backup is performed by the **onbar** or **ontape** commands. The recoverability of a crashed database depends on its logging mode: BUFFERED/UNBUFFERED LOGGING or NOLOGGING.

If your database is in LOGGING mode, all transactions on that database generate a log record that is written to log buffer, and may be backed up to a tape, and used to restore a database to the point of the last logical log backup. This point may be almost the point of failure, provided you have enabled continuous logical backup.

When in the NOLOGGING mode, some transactions are not recorded in the logical log. So the database is not completely recoverable until the point-of-failure. But, even in the NOLOGGING mode, some operations needed to keep the database structural consistency are fully logged. For example, a chunk drop operation always generates a logical record, regardless the logging mode. So, logical log backup *must* be performed even if your database is in NOLOGGING mode.

8.4.4 General backup considerations

For security reasons, the backup/restore routines must be treated as a two-step procedure. Only backing up a database and never testing the restore might have the same catastrophic results as having no backups at all. Although the backup utility for both RDBMSs are very functional and stable, the restoring procedure is as important as the backup on a controlled system.

The restoring test should not be done after each backup but should happen periodically on a scheduled day, preferably on another machine. This can help to determine the amount of time required for recovering the database.

Depending on your business requirements and on the size of the database being backed up, different backup/restore approaches should be considered. The next two examples can show practical approaches for the different possible backup methods:

- Example 1: Using tablespace/dbspace backup

  In a database where only some specific tables are being updated, and they represent a small percentage of the whole database, it is desirable to

distribute them among separate tablespaces and back up only these tablespaces. Besides being faster, it might also save some disk space.

- Example 2: Using backup online

  For a 24x7 system, the best option is the use of online backups, which allow users and applications to be connected while the backup is running. Although it might cause a little overall performance decrease, it is the best way for assuring a secure database backup without closing the transactions or disconnecting users and applications.

These are the recommended backup procedures for the different database scenarios:

- The database can be stopped daily and the following backup schedule can be used:
  - Daily: Take an offline backup.
  - Monthly: Use one of the daily backups as a permanent monthly archive.
  - Yearly: Test the integrity of the backup archives.
- The database can be stopped once a week and the following backup schedule can be used:
  - Daily: Back up the log files, back up the most important tables, and make an online backup.
  - Weekly: Take an offline backup.
  - Three month: Choose one of the weekly backups as a three month archive.
  - Six month: Test the integrity of the backup archives.
- The database cannot be stopped and the following backup schedule can be used:
  - Daily backup. Choose one of the two following options:
    - Full online backup of the database, including the log files.
    - If the database is large, then make an online backup of the log files, the important volatile tables (that have a lot of inserts and updates but are not too large), and 20% of the database. This means that over five days, the entire database is backed up and the backup data volume is reduced.
  - Three month: Choose one of the backup sets (possibly five days worth) as a three month archive.
  - Six month: Test the integrity of the backup archives set (five days worth).

Note: Always store the backup media off-site! Consider, however, that backups stored on tape are often in plain ASCII. Therefore, sensitive data should be encrypted, which might increase backup time but will protect the data when it goes off-site.

Since the backup and restore processes represent a very demanding task, it is recommended that some external tools are used in conjunction with the RDBMSs. These tools must be able to ease the data security management by automating the backup and restore processes. A recommended storage management solution that can be used with all RDBMSs is the IBM Tivoli Storage Manager for AIX.

Many customers, usually when working in some big environments, tend to have the backup functionality residing on another machine, usually called a *backup server machine*. When this is the scenario, where the backup will take place, it is recommended that another dedicated physical network be used for data transmission between the RDBMS production server and the backup server. This can avoid users and applications being impacted by an overall network performance degradation caused by the huge amount of data transmitted between the servers when the backup is started.

8.5 Coping with growth

Coping with database growth is a task that demands close and planned monitoring; this is essential for having a clear idea on how the database is growing day by day. The database growth involves the following areas:

- Increasing number of tables
- Increasing number of indexes in each table
- Increasing physical space for the table data
- Increasing physical space for the index data
- Increasing number of connected users for each database
- Increasing number of applications accessing each database

The total sum of all these factors could lead to an increase usage of CPU, memory, disk, and network resources. Among all of these factors, the most delicate area is the lack of disk resources.

When you do not have a clear idea of the disk allocation for immediate and future needs, you could find yourself dealing with a data fragmentation problem in the future, especially when data is split among several files on the same disk. When

the data is not stored on raw devices, it is recommended that the data be split evenly across all disks, thus increasing the performance by making the data parallel accessible. Data is stored on tablespaces, and tablespaces map to physical files or disks. It is recommended that each tablespace file is created on a separate disk in order to spread out disk I/O.

Whichever RDBMS you are working with, data and index reorganization represents an important task. Extra temporary space will possibly be needed. The frequency of the reorganization, however, will depend on how the tables and indexes were created, the frequency with which the tables are updated, and how long users can remain without accessing the tables during the reorganization phase. This only applies to Oracle and Informix, since DB2 UDB is able to reorganize the table with users connected to the database.

8.5.1 DB2 UDB reorganization method

When coping with DB2 UDB RDBMS growth, you should keep in mind that the tables and indexes might need to be reorganized and that the system catalog tables are always up-to-date to reflect database growth. An easy way to determine if a table or an index (or maybe both) must be reorganized is to run the **reorgchk** command.

When checking the table data organization, the **reorgchk** command will display an entry called CLUSTERRATIO, which indicates the percentage of table data that is organized according to an index. If this value is less than 80, the table needs to be reorganized according to the most used index. When a table has multiple indexes, some of them will always be in a different sequence than the table, but this is expected. However, you have to specify the most important index for reorganizing the data.

For checking the organization of the indexes, the **reorgchk** command will display an entry called 100*NPAGES/FPAGES, which indicates how organized an internal index page is. If this value is less than 80, the indexes must be dropped and re-created.

DB2 UDB provides the facility to perform an automatic index reorganization online without the need to force the connected users and applications off the database. Special attention must be paid to the size of the temporary tablespace since this is the space that is used for the reorganization procedure by the database.

In Version 8, DB2 UDB introduced two new features, multi-dimensional clustering (MDC) and online table reorganization. If it is appropriate for your data and queries, MDC can reduce the need for reorganization (needed to maintain clustering) while increasing query performance. Online reorganization can

increase data availability while possibly decreasing overall system performance and logging requirements. Refer to the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-2840 for more information on both features and their impact on system performance.

8.5.2 Oracle reorganization method

When coping with Oracle RDBMS growth, the simple method is using the export and import routines frequently in order to keep the data organized.

To check the table data organization, the ANALYZE TABLE table_name COMPUTE STATISTICS or the preferred **dbms_stats.get_table_stats** command must be used. This command collects storage statistics that can be queried through the following statement:

```
SELECT NUM_ROWS, BLOCKS, EMPTY_BLOCKS, AVG_SPACE, CHAIN_CNT, AVG_ROW_LEN
FROM ALL_TABLES
WHERE TABLE_NAME = 'table_name'
```

If you have many empty blocks (column EMPTY_BLOCKS) or many migrated rows (column CHAIN_CNT), it is recommended that you reorganize the table data. This can be accomplished by exporting the data to a file or to another table, therefore dropping the original table and inserting all the rows again.

In order to check the organization of the indexes, the ANALYZE INDEX index_name COMPUTE STATISTCS or **dbms_stats.get_index_stats** command must be used. This command collects statistics from all the indexes dictionary views and stores them in the BLEVEL column. Once the statistics are collected, the following command can be run in order to analyze the reorganization need:

```
select index_name, blevel from all_indexes where index_name='index_name'
```

If the value of the BLEVEL column is greater than four, the index must be rebuilt or coalesced. This can be done by issuing the ALTER INDEX index_name REBUILD ONLINE or the ALTER INDEX index_name COALESCE command.

If you are reorganizing or coalescing an index, the operation can be done online. In order to reorganize the data on a table, the users will not be able to access that specific table while the reorganization is taking place. Besides, it is important to allocate a staging space, either on a table or on a disk, for holding the data of the table that is being reorganized. This alternative can be accomplished by creating a new table using the Oracle command **create new_table as select * from old_table**, dropping the old table, and renaming the new table to the name of the old table. Although possible, this is an alternative that demands available disk space. DBAs in general perform reorganization by export data and structures definition, drop the old tables, recreate it, import the data, and build the indexes.

8.5.3 Informix reorganization method

You can check the level of disorganization of an Informix table or index by checking the number of extents it has. If the number is high, then your table or index needs reorganization. To find the number of extents that a table is using, use the following command:

```
select tabname, count(*) from sysextents where dbsname = 'DATABASE' group by 1
```

You should establish a threshold for the number of extents in your database. As a rule of thumb for VLDB, mainly in ERP environments, this threshold should be between 10 and 15 extents. If the number of extents is higher than these values, reorganization is necessary.

The Informix reorganization process is quite similar to the Oracle reorganization process. Both are offline operations, meaning that no user other than the DBA can have access to database. A full backup must be taken, and, for performance reasons, the database must be set to NOLOGGING mode. Then you must export your data and schema definition using the **dbexport** tool, drop all the old objects, recreate it (except the indexes), import your data, and rebuild the indexes. An alternative is to use the **insert into new_table select from old_table** approach, then remove the old table, rename the new and rebuild the indexes. For both methods, you should run the UPDATE STATISTICS command on the table.

8.5.4 When and how to avoid database reorganization

Although the reorganization procedure usually provides a good performance increase, it is also an expensive task. Databases residing on a 24x7 system usually cannot afford to have inaccessible tables during reorganization (as in Oracle or Informix), or they might be affected by the performance decrease caused by an online reorganization (as in DB2 UDB).

For this situation, DB2 UDB suggest the use of a parameter called PCTFREE, which indicates the percentage of data page/index pages to be reserved as free space for future updates and inserts. Oracle can makes use of the same parameter in the storage clause, if the database is not configured as the *locally managed tablespace* (LMT) with the auto space management enabled. Informix recommends the use of the FILLFACTOR parameter on index creation to leave space for future inserts in the data page. The following sections offer suggestions on avoiding reorganization.

Avoiding DB2 UDB reorganization

Since DB2 UDB implements PCTFREE parameters for both data and index pages, the following method can be used, after creating the table structure, in order to avoid reorganization:

1. Alter table to add PCTFREE.
2. Create clustering index with PCTFREE on index.
3. Sort the table data externally.
4. Load the data.

The recommended value for PCTFREE will depend on how frequently data is updated or inserted into the table. The PCTFREE value for indexes is set to 10 by default, and it is a good initial value. For tables, it is a good practice to define the same value and use the **reorgchk** command to monitor how long this PCTFREE value helped to keep the data organized. Depending on the output, this value can be increased or decreased. In order to reduce the frequency of dropping and re-creating the indexes for reorganization, the MINPCTUSED parameter can also be defined when creating an index. This parameter specifies the threshold for the minimum amount of used space on the indexes leaf page. This space is automatically reclaimed after a DELETE operation if this threshold is reached. The default value for MINPCTUSED is zero, which means that online reorganization is disabled. The recommended value should be less than 50% in order to merge two neighboring index leaf pages.

Avoiding Oracle reorganization

Oracle 8 introduced the locally managed tablespaces. With this type of tablespace, space is managed by a bitmap in the datafile header. Benchmarks have shown improvements up to 15% in performance of LMT. If your database is not using LMT, IBM and Oracle strongly recommend that you migrate the dictionary managed tablespaces (DMT) to LMTs, which also provides automatic segment space management. The following section is applicable only to those sites using manual space management.

Oracle implements PCTFREE only for the data blocks. This value is used in conjunction with PCTUSED. PCTUSED sets the minimum percentage of a block that can be used for storing raw data before new rows are added to that block. This means that after the free space in a data block reaches the PCTFREE value, no new rows are inserted into the block until the percentage of space used falls below PCTUSED.

The default value for PCTFREE is 10 and for PCTUSED it is 40. Both values are related and should be set in conjunction for the different scenarios.

Usually, the less volatile the data is, the lower the PCTFREE parameter can be set, so data blocks will be completely filled. The higher the PCTUSED value is set, the quicker the page will be reused.

Avoiding Informix extent disorganization

The term *fragmentation* is reserved in Informix for the partitioning of data and index across different dbspaces or database servers in the Extended Parallel Server. So we will use the term disorganization to refer to the same concept of fragmentation in DB2 and Oracle.

As normal database work is carried out, index pages need more room to store the new or updated rows. If no room is available, then pages need to be split and new pages created. This page creation operation can leave pages that are half full, wasting space and impacting performance. Informix uses the FILLFACTOR parameter; the FILLFACTOR storage clause allows you to specify the maximum percentage a page should fill when it is initially created. Well tuned values can help avoid index fragmentation, and, if the index is clustered, data fragmentation as well.

For data pages that are not part of an clustered index, you cannot use the FILLFACTOR. You must closely monitor the extent allocation using **`oncheck -pt`**, the Informix Server Administrator interface, or the **`select`** command we gave above.

8.5.5 Coping with large, unexpected growth

When the database begins to increase in size more than originally planned, some special actions need to be taken.

First, consider partitioning the tables and indexes. This approach can result in some important operational advantages and performance benefits:

- Reduced possibility of data and index corruption
- Balanced I/O
- Easier backup/restore control

Oracle is able to implement this scenario through the creation of *partitioned tables*, that is, tables or indexes are divided into a number of partitions according to the same logical attribute.

All RDBMSs are able to split ordinary data, indexes, and large objects of one single table into three different tablespaces.

Depending on how large your database is and what kind of workload runs on that machine, just increasing the number of disks, memory, and processors might not

be enough in order to survive the growth. Especially for very large DSS systems, you should consider a parallel version of the RDBMS. DB2 UDB's parallel version is called DB2 UDB Enterprise Server Edition with Database Partitioning Feature, Oracle's parallel version is named Oracle Parallel Server in Oracle 8 and Real Cluster Application in Oracle 9 and Informix parallel version is the Extended Parallel Server. Refer to the respective sections for more information.

8.5.6 Expected growth areas

All RDBMSs have their own characteristics, concepts, and monitoring methods, but mainly the same growth areas. Table 8-3 describes the meaning of each area, its consumption, and its equivalence between RDBMSs.

Table 8-3 Equivalence table for expected growth areas

Description	DB2 UDB	Informix	ORACLE	Affected area
Records database changes	Log Files	Logical and Physical Log	Redo Log Files	Physical
Records system catalog and user data	Data Files	Data Files	Data Files	Physical
Records index data	Data Files	Data Files	Data Files	Physical
Holds temporary data for RDBMS engine	Temporary Tablespace	Temporary dbspace	Temporary Sort Tablespace	Physical
Stored packages	Package Cache	UDR Cache	Library Cache	Logical
Database object's definitions	Catalog Cache	Dictionary Cache	Data dictionary	Logical
Application's allocated resources	Agent Private Memory	Virtual Memory	Process Global Area	Logical
Data block copies	Bufferpool	Buffer Pool	Database Buffer Cache	Logical
Last/Current data value	Log Buffer	Logical Log	Redo Log Buffer	Logical
Last data value	Log Buffer	Physical Log	Rollback Segments	Logical

The database growth will really depend on how users and applications are consuming the resources. The monitoring task will indicate which area needs better tuning.

8.5.7 Loading large amounts of data

Loading large amounts of data can turn into a problem when indexes are defined over a table. Although the three RDBMSs have special programs designed to speed up the loading process for large amounts of data, the re-creation of the indexes can still turn into a bottleneck.

Since DB2 UDB Version 6.1, the Load utility loads data into the table and then creates the index pages for the loaded rows only. This does not influence performance.

Informix's preferred way to load data into a database is by using the High Performance Loader (HPL). This tool is very flexible and allows fast data loading and access to the table that is being loaded. For more information on the HPL, see the *Guide to the High Performance Loader, Version 7.21*, G251-0528.

Oracle works with a tool called SQL*Loader. It works in two different ways: *conventional path* (use SQL INSERTS) and *direct path* (directly writes the external data into database blocks). For both the conventional path and the direct path, SQL*Loader loads data into the table and rebuilds the index for the whole table. When the number of rows being loaded is large compared to the size of the table, this is an acceptable behavior. However, if the number of loaded rows is relatively small, the time required to rebuild the indexes may be excessive. This index rebuild can be avoided through the use of one of the following options:

- Drop or disable the indexes before loading the data.
- Mark the indexes as `Index Unusable` before loading the data and use DB2 UDB's SKIP_UNUSABLE_INDEXES option.
- Use the DB2 UDB SKIP_INDEX_MAINTENANCE option (only applies to the direct path method).

Another way to avoid full re-indexing is to use Oracle partitioned tables.

8.6 Performance versus availability

The ideal RDBMS scenario is that the database is serving all the connected applications and users in less time than is expected, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. However, some undesirable and unpredictable factors could cause system downtime, thus invalidating the ideal scenario. Especially on a machine that holds all the company's important information, the database availability should be one of the main concerns. However, the more security you implement for better availability purposes, the more the overall system performance will usually be impacted.

The administrators should be looking for the perfect balance point between performance and database availability.

For every RDBMS, there are some areas where availability can be improved but with an expected overall performance decrease. For example:

- Disk protection

  The performance will be directly affected by how the disks are set for data storage. Usually, the two most often implemented solutions are data mirroring and RAID 5. Refer to Chapter 9, “Designing a disk subsystem” on page 187 for further information about disks.

- Online backup

  This is the only possible way of taking backup copies while users and applications are connected to the database. It might cause a little overall performance decrease, but it is the only choice for a non-stop system. Refer to “Online and off-line backup” on page 40.

- High Availability Cluster Multiprocessing (HACMP)

  HACMP is an application that can link up to 32 IBM @server pSeries servers or SP nodes in a cluster. Clustering servers enables parallel access to the data and provides redundancy and fault resilience. HACMP also allows administrators to perform hardware, software, and other maintenance activity while the applications continue to run on other machines. The HACMP implementation is highly recommended for 24x7 environments. This chapter will not cover the implementation and use of HACMP.

On the other hand, when performance is increased, availability sometimes suffers. An example is mirrored write consistency, as shown in Chapter 9, “Designing a disk subsystem” on page 187.

All these areas can represent a success factor or a performance constraint, depending on how they are designed, monitored, and tuned.

Note: Each company will have different performance and availability needs. However, be aware that several availability methods also bring a decrease of performance.

8.7 AIX and RDBMS upgrades

It is always a good practice to have the system on the most up-to-date state. Usually, an update is different from an upgrade depending whether the product version, release, or modification level is altered. Upgrades alter one of the three product identifiers. In this section, we will reference any change made to the

product, no matter if it changed the version, the release, or the modification level, as an upgrade.

Each new upgrade introduces new and useful improvements as well as fixes for occasionally reported problems.

An upgrade could be recommended in one of three cases:

- Instructed by the IBM supporting team in order to fix a known defect.
- A new desired feature is available through the upgrade.
- Prevent problems by keeping all the products always up-to-date.

It is important to be aware that each system has a different reaction when you upgrade the products.

It is always a good and recommended practice to upgrade AIX and RDBMSs following this sequence:

1. Run the AIX utility perfpmr (Refer to Appendix C, “Reporting performance problems” on page 473).
2. Back up your database twice.
3. Back up the rest of the system twice.
4. Choose one of the products for upgrading (do not upgrade multiple products at the same time).
5. Upgrade the product.
6. Test the upgrade with your own pre-defined proof of concept test programs.
7. Back up the rest of the system twice again.
8. Run the AIX **perfpmr** command again.

It is also highly recommended to upgrade the testing environment first and, only when the proof of concept programs indicate that the environment is stable, upgrade the production environment. However, on systems where there is no other machine to test the upgrade but the production system, extra care should be taken, especially with the integrity of the backup image. For this kind of machine configuration, it is suggested that a High Availability Cluster Multi-Processing (HACMP) is implemented. HACMP is an IBM software solution that provides a machine’s high availability through redundancy and shared resource access.

Usually, the AIX operating system is upgraded by the system administrator, while the RDBMSs are upgraded by the database administrator.

In order to upgrade AIX and DB2 UDB or Informix, contact your local IBM Support Team. DB2 UDB upgrades can also be downloaded from the following Web-site:

ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/products/db2/fixes/english-us/

In order to request upgrades for Oracle RDBMS, contact your local Oracle Support Team.

9

Designing a disk subsystem

When designing a disk subsystem for performance, many different factors must be taken into consideration. This chapter includes some of the more important of those issues.

- 9.1, “Disk subsystem design approach” on page 188 discusses some approaches in designing the disk subsystems.
- 9.2, “Logical Volume Manager (LVM) concepts” on page 191 describes various concepts pertaining to LVM.
- 9.3, “RAID levels overview and considerations” on page 198 describes various RAID levels and their comparison.
- 9.4, “AIX disk performance topics” on page 204 provides some topics that relates to the performance of the storage subsystems.
- 9.5, “Direct access storage” on page 210 discusses various direct access storage options that are available.
- 9.6, “Integrated storage subsystems” on page 215 discusses various storage subsystems.
- 9.7, “Network storage” on page 227 discusses various network based storage.

9.1 Disk subsystem design approach

For many systems, the overall performance of an application is bound by the speed at which data can be accessed from disk. Designing and configuring a disk storage subsystem for performance is a complex task that must be carefully thought out before the first disk is purchased. Some of the factors that must be considered include:

- Performance versus availability

  A decision must be made early on as to which is more important: I/O performance of the application or application integrity and availability. Increased data availability often comes at the cost of decreased system performance and vice versa.

- Application workload type

  The I/O workload characteristics of the application should be fairly well understood prior to implementing the disk subsystem. Different workload types most often require differently configured disk subsystems in order to provide acceptable I/O performance. Further descriptions of database workload types can be found in Chapter 3, “Types of Workload” on page 31.

- Required disk subsystem throughput

  The I/O performance requirements of the application should be defined up front, as they will play a large part in dictating both the physical and logical configuration of the disk subsystem. In database environments, this is typically expressed in transactions per second or minute (tps/tpm).

- Required disk space

  Prior to designing the disk subsystem, the disk space requirements of the application should be well understood. Guidelines for estimating the amount of disk space that will be required can be found in 7.5, “Disk goals and sizing” on page 144.

- Cost

  While not a performance related concern, overall cost of the disk subsystem most often plays a large part in dictating the design of the system. Just as with performance and availability, cost and performance are inversely related: you must sacrifice one in order to achieve gains in the other.

9.1.1 Bandwidth related performance considerations

The bandwidth of a communication link, such as a disk adapter or bus, determines the maximum speed at which data can be transmitted over the link. When describing the capabilities of a particular disk subsystem component, performance numbers are typically expressed in maximum or peak throughput,

which often do not realistically describe the true performance that will be realized in a real world setting. In addition, each component will most likely have different bandwidths, which can create bottlenecks in the overall design of the system.

The bandwidth of each of the following components must be taken into consideration when designing the disk subsystem:

- Disk devices

  The latest Ultra 160 SCSI drives have sustained data transfer rates of over 30 MB per second (spec) versus older drives, which were rated as 20 MB per second, but were able to sustain only up to 5 or 6 MB/sec (spec). The actual rate customers experience will usually be lower than the spec rates, depending on the data location and the I/O workload characteristics of the application. Applications that perform a large amount of sequential disk reads or writes normally achieve higher data transfer rates than those that perform primarily random I/O operations.

- Disk adapters

  The disk adapter can become a bottleneck, depending on the number of disk devices that are attached and their use. While the SCSI-2 specification allows for a maximum data transfer rate of 20 MB/sec, adapters based on the Ultra SCSI specification are capable of providing theoretical bandwidth of up to 160 MB/sec. The SCSI bus used for data transfer is an arbitrated bus. In other words, only one initiator or device can be sending data at any one time. This means the theoretical maximum transfer rate is unlikely to be sustained. The IBM SSA adapters use a non-arbitrated loop protocol, which also supports multiple concurrent peer-to-peer data transfers on the loop. The current SSA SerialRAID adapters are capable of supporting maximum theoretical data transfer rates of 160 MB/sec for each of two attached loops.

- System bus

  The system bus architecture used can further limit the overall bandwidth of the disk subsystem. Just as the bandwidth of the disk devices is limited by the bandwidth of the disk adapter to which they are attached, the speed of the disk adapter is limited by the bandwidth of the system bus. The industry standard PCI bus is limited to a theoretical maximum of either 132 MB/sec (32-bit) or 528 MB/sec (64-bit).

9.1.2 Physical database layout considerations

Deciding on the physical layout of the database is one of the most important decisions to be made when designing a system for optimal performance. The physical location of the database's data files is critical to ensuring that no single disk, or group of disks, becomes a bottleneck in the I/O performance of the application. In order to minimize their impact on disk performance, heavily

accessed tables and their corresponding datafiles should be placed on separate disks, ideally under different disk adapters.

There are several ways to ensure even data distribution among disks and adapters, including operating system level data striping, hardware data striping (RAID), and manually distributing the database data files among the available disks. This section is concerned with the manual method of distributing the data. Operating system level data striping techniques are covered in 9.2.1, “Physical partition striping versus LVM fine striping” on page 192, while hardware level data striping using RAID is addressed in 9.3, “RAID levels overview and considerations” on page 198.

Manual distribution of the database data files is one the most widely used methods for attempting to evenly distribute the I/O workload of an application. This can be attributed to the fact that, unlike OS level and hardware data striping techniques, manually distributing the database datafiles across multiple disks does not require any additional hardware or operating system capabilities.

One major drawback to this approach is that as the database data access patterns become skewed due to data growth, more and more manual effort is required to manually distribute the I/O among the disks. In contrast to OS level and hardware data striping techniques, manual dataflow distribution often requires significant downtime in order to move tables and indexes to different disks, as the database (or at least the affected tables and indexes) must be made unavailable while the work is being performed.

When using the manual method for distributing data, the following I/O intensive database datafiles should be placed on separate disks for optimal performance:

- Data dictionary tablespace: SYSTEM (ORACLE) or SYSCATSPACE (DB2 UDB) used to maintain internal database operation information, such as database structure and performance statistics.
- Temporary tablespace used for performing sort operations that cannot be done in memory.
- Rollback segments tablespace holds the prior value of the data in order to guarantee read consistency.
- Redo log files record every change made to the database. This has heavy sequential I/O activity.
- Database datafiles with heavily accessed tables.
- Database datafiles with heavily accessed indexes.

The database data tables and indexes should be placed on separate disks attached to separate disk adapters in order to avoid I/O contention, especially for those tables that are frequently joined (JOIN) in SQL queries. The database redo

logs are the most I/O intensive datafiles in the entire system due to the fact that they record every change made to the database. Due to their importance in ensuring the integrity of the system, they are often mirrored using the RDBMS software. Since the updates to the redo logs are performed sequentially, both the redo logs and their mirrors should be placed on dedicated disks, each attached to a separate disk adapter. This will ensure that there is no other disk activity taking place that would interfere with their update.

9.2 Logical Volume Manager (LVM) concepts

Many modern UNIX operating systems implement the concept of a Logical Volume Manager (LVM), which can be used to logically manage the distribution of data on physical disk devices. The AIX LVM is a set of operating system commands, library subroutines, and other tools used to control physical disk resources by providing a simplified logical view of the available storage space. Unlike some competitor's LVM offerings, the AIX LVM is an integral part of the base AIX operating system, provided at no additional cost.

Within the LVM, each disk or physical volume (PV) belongs to a volume group (VG). A volume group is a collection of 1 to 32 physical volumes (1 to 128 in the case of a big volume group), which can vary in capacity and performance. A physical volume can belong to only one volume group at a time. A maximum of 255 volume groups can be defined per system.

When a volume group is created, the physical volumes within the volume group are partitioned into contiguous, equal-sized units of disk space known as physical partitions (PP). Physical partitions are the smallest unit of allocatable storage space in a volume group. The physical partition size is determined at volume group creation, and all physical volumes that are placed in the volume group inherit this size. The physical partition size can range from 1 to 1024 MB, but must be a power of 2. If not specified, the default physical partition size in AIX is 4 MB for disks up to 4 GB, but must be larger for disks greater than 4 GB due to the fact that the LVM, by default, will only track up to 1016 physical partitions per disk (unless you use the -t option with **mkvg**, which, however, reduces the maximum number of physical volumes in the volume group). Table 9-1 lists typical physical partition sizes for 2.2, 4.5, 9.1, 18.2, and 36.4 GB physical disks.

Table 9-1 Typical physical partition sizes for varying physical disk sizes

Physical disk size	Physical partition size
2.2 GB	4 MB
4.5 GB	8 MB

Physical disk size	Physical partition size
9.1 GB	16 MB
18.2 GB	32 MB
36.4 GB	64 MB

After adding a physical disk to a volume group, in order to use the storage space, you must create logical volumes (LV). Logical volumes define disk space allocation at the physical partition level. They can reside on many different non-contiguous physical partitions, thereby allowing them to span physical disks. At the operating system level, logical volumes appear to applications as one single, contiguous disk.

When creating logical volumes, you must specify the number of logical partitions to allocate. Each logical partition maps to one, two, or three physical partitions, depending on how many copies of the data you want to maintain. This allows for mirroring of the data either on the same physical disk or different disks in the same volume group.

9.2.1 Physical partition striping versus LVM fine striping

Most disk I/O performance bottlenecks in a database environment are the result of a few hot tables or datafiles receiving a disproportionate amount of the I/O activity in the system. While manually distributing the database datafiles among physical disk devices can alleviate some of these bottlenecks, this is typically not a good solution for large, heavily accessed databases for the reasons documented in 9.1.2, “Physical database layout considerations” on page 189.

For databases that generate a large amount of I/O activity, no amount of system memory, database buffers, or external cache can shield the application from performance problems associated with skewed data access patterns. For these types of databases, the most viable solution may be to consider distributing the I/O load across a number of physical disk drives through the use of data striping techniques. Since the data is located on more than one physical device, data striping allows a single disk I/O request to be divided into multiple parallel I/O operations.

The AIX LVM provides two different techniques for striping data: physical partition (PP) striping and LVM striping. In Figure 17 on page 118, the numbers represent the sequence of data blocks for a given file using both PP and LVM striping.

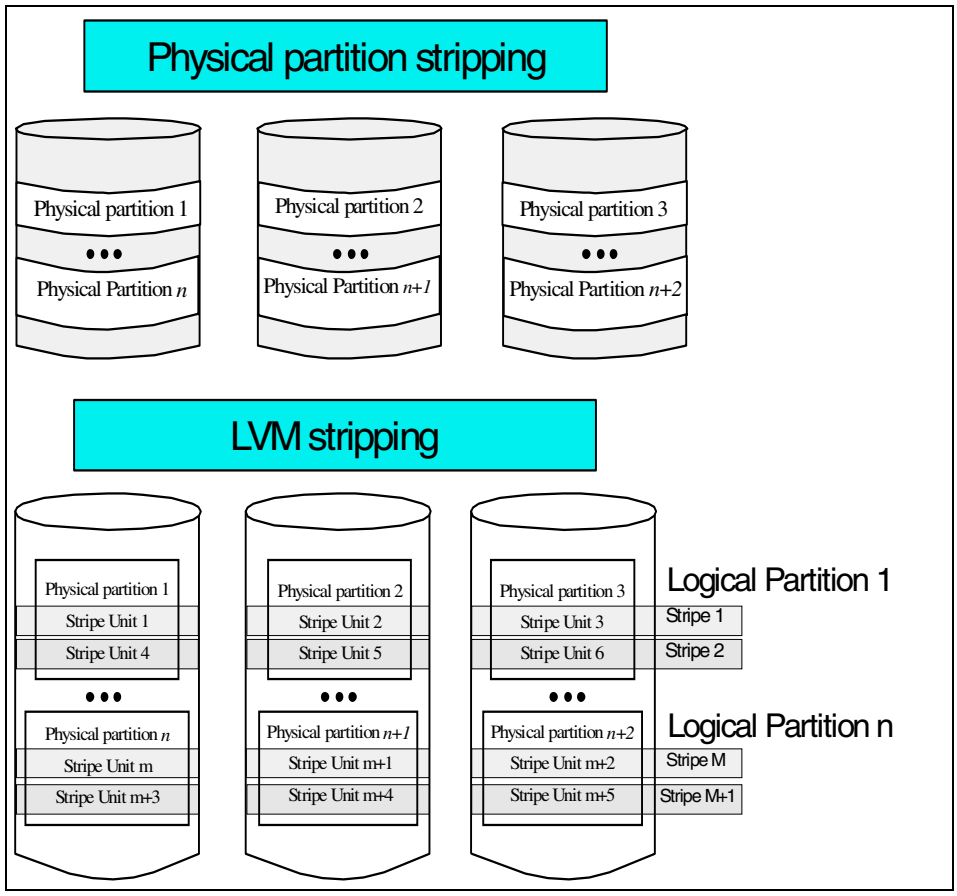

Figure 9-1 Physical partition and LVM striping example

Physical partition striping refers to the technique of spreading the physical partitions of a logical volume across two or more physical disk drives. With PP striping, the size of the data stripe is the size of the physical partition, which is typically 4, 8, or 16 MB in size. This technique works well in environments that are characterized by a large amount of primarily random I/O operations, such as OLTP applications.

LVM striping, also known as *fine striping*, likewise attempts to distribute the I/O load by placing data stripes on multiple physical disks. However, LVM striping differs from PP striping in its use of a more granular or fine data stripe. With LVM striping, each logical partition of a logical volume is broken up into multiple stripe units and distributed among all of the physical devices that contain part of the logical volume. The stripe unit size must be a power of two in the range 4 KB to 128 KB, and is specified when the logical volume is created.

LVM striping works best in environments that perform many sequential read and write operations against large datafiles due to the performance benefits of *sequential read ahead*. Sequential read ahead occurs when either the RDBMS or the AIX Virtual Memory Manager (VMM) detects that the file is being accessed sequentially. In this case, additional disk reads are scheduled against the file in order to pre-fetch data into memory. This makes the data available to the program much faster than if it had to explicitly request the data as part of another I/O operation. Sequential read ahead is only available for files residing on JFS file systems and has no meaning for raw devices (raw logical volumes). DSS and batch workloads are good candidates for LVM striping.

Note: Prior to AIX Version 4.3.3, logical volumes could not be mirrored and striped at the same time. Logical volume mirroring and striping combines the data availability of RAID 1 with the performance of RAID 0 entirely through software. Volume groups that contain striped and mirrored logical volumes cannot be imported into AIX Version 4.3.2 and earlier.

9.2.2 Use of LVM policies

The AIX LVM provides a number of facilities or policies for managing both the performance and availability characteristics of logical volumes. The policies that have the greatest impact on performance are intra-disk allocation, inter-disk allocation, write scheduling, and write-verify policies.

Intra-disk allocation policy

The intra-disk allocation policy determines the actual physical location of the physical partitions on disk. The disk is logically divided into the following five concentric areas: outer edge, outer middle, center, inner middle, and inner edge.

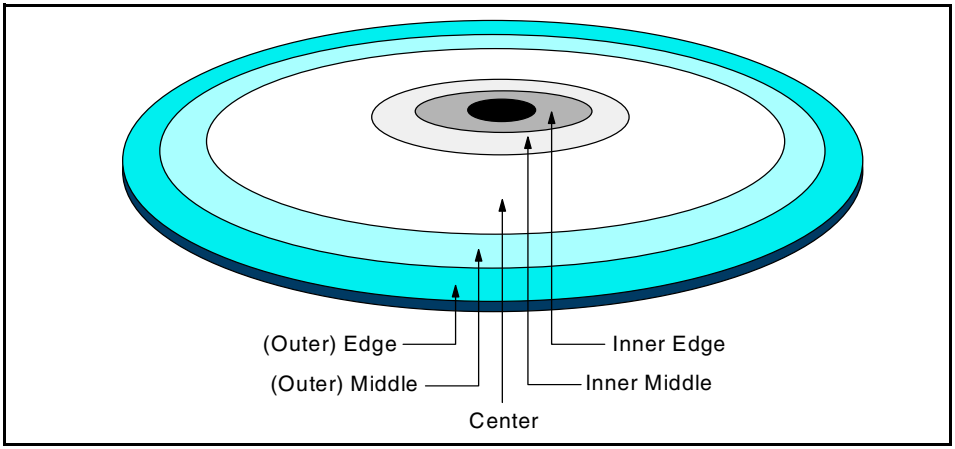

Figure 9-2 Physical partition mapping

Due to the physical movement of the disk actuator, the outer and inner edges typically have the largest average seek times and are a poor choice for application data that is frequently accessed. The center region provides the fastest average seek times and is the best choice for applications that generate a significant amount of I/O activity. The outer and inner middle regions provide better average seek times than the outer and inner edges but worse seek times than the center region.

As a general rule, when designing a logical volume strategy for performance, the most performance critical data should be placed as close to the center of the disk as possible. There are, however, two notable exceptions:

- Applications that perform a large amount of sequential reads or writes experience higher throughput when the data is located on the outer edge of the disk due to the fact that there are more data blocks per track on the outer edge of the disk than the other disk regions.
- Logical volumes with Mirrored Write Consistency (MWC) enabled should also be located at the outer edge of the disk, as this is where the MWC cache record is located. Refer to 9.4.3, “Use of Mirror Write Consistency” on page 206 for further information concerning the effect of MWC on logical volume performance.

Inter-disk allocation policy

The inter-disk allocation policy is used to specify the number of disks that contain the physical partitions of a logical volume. The physical partitions for a given logical volume can reside on one or several disks in the same volume group depending on the setting of the Range option:

- The maximum range setting attempts to spread the physical partitions of a logical volume across as many physical volumes as possible in order to decrease the average access time for the logical volume.
- The minimum range setting attempts to place all of the physical partitions of a logical volume on the same physical disk. If this cannot be done, it will attempt to place the physical partitions on as few disks as possible. The minimum setting is used for increased availability only and should not be used for frequently accessed logical volumes. If a non-mirrored logical volume is spread across more than one drive, the loss of any of the physical drives will result in data loss. In other words, a non-mirrored logical volume spread across two drives will be twice as likely to experience a loss of data as one that resides on only one drive.

The physical partitions of a given logical volume can be mirrored to increase data availability. The location of the physical partition copies is determined by the setting of the Strict option. When `Strict = y`, each physical partition copy is placed on a different physical volume. When `Strict = n`, the copies can be on the same physical volume or different volumes. When using striped and mirrored logical volumes in AIX 4.3.3 and above, there is an additional partition allocation policy known as Super Strict. When `Strict = s`, partitions of one mirror cannot share the same disk as partitions from a second or third mirror, thus further reducing the possibility of data loss due to a single disk failure.

In order to determine the data placement strategy for a mirrored logical volume, the settings for both the Range and Strict options must be carefully considered. As an example, consider a mirrored logical volume with range setting of `minimum` and a strict setting of `yes`. The LVM would attempt to place all of the physical partitions associated with the primary copy on one physical disk, with the mirrors residing on either one or two additional disks, depending on the number of copies of the logical volume (2 or 3). If the strict setting were changed to `no`, all of the physical partitions corresponding to both the primary and mirrors would be located on the same physical disk.

Write-scheduling policy

When mirrored copies of the data are maintained by the LVM, the setting of the mirrored write-scheduling policy determines the sequence of the write operations to the logical volume. Mirrored writes can be either parallel or sequential.

The sequential write-scheduling policy writes the physical partitions for a mirrored logical volume in the sequence primary, secondary, and tertiary, where primary represents the first copy of the logical volume, secondary the second, and tertiary the third. A write request for a given copy must complete prior to updating the next copy in the sequence. Read requests are first directed to the primary copy. If that copy cannot be accessed due to a drive failure or physical corruption, the request is redirected to the secondary copy and so forth. While the redirected read request is being processed, the LVM automatically attempts to correct the copies on which the read failed through a process known as *bad block relocation*.

The parallel write-scheduling policy schedules the write operation to each of the copies at the same time. The write request is satisfied when the copy that takes the longest to update is finished. The parallel write-scheduling option provides the best performance, as the duration of the write request is limited only by the speed of the slowest disk and not the number of copies that must be updated. Read requests are directed to the copy that can be accessed in the shortest amount of time, thereby realizing the same performance gains as write requests. Just as with the sequential-write policy, failed read requests will automatically initiate bad block relocation.

Write-verify policy

When the write-verify policy is enabled, all write operations are validated by immediately performing a follow-up read operation of the previously written data. An error message will be returned if the read operation is not successful. The use of write-verify enhances the integrity of the data but can drastically degrade the performance of disk writes.

9.2.3 Recommendations for performance optimization

As with any other area of system design, when deciding on the LVM policies to be used, a decision must be made as to which is more important: performance or availability. The following LVM policy guidelines should be followed when designing a disk subsystem for performance:

- When using LVM mirroring:
  - Use a parallel write-scheduling policy.
  - Allocate each logical partition copy on a separate physical disk by using the Strict option of the inter-disk allocation policy.
- Consider disabling write-verify
- Allocate heavily accessed logical volumes near the center of the disk, with the exceptions noted in “Intra-disk allocation policy” on page 194.

- Use an intra-disk allocation policy of maximum in order to spread the physical partitions of the logical volume across as many physical disks as possible.

9.3 RAID levels overview and considerations

Redundant Array of Independent Disks (RAID) is a term used to describe the technique of improving data availability through the use of arrays of disks and various data striping methodologies. A disk array is a group of physical disk drives used simultaneously to achieve higher data transfer and I/O rates than those available through the use of one single drive. IBM was responsible for much of the initial research and development into the use of RAID, with the first patent being issued in 1978.

The initial focus of RAID research was to improve performance while at the same time reducing the overall cost per unit of storage. Further research emphasized the improved data reliability and fault tolerance that characterizes modern RAID systems.

The alternative to RAID disks is a set of disks connected to the system in which logical volumes are placed, and any one logical volume is entirely on one disk. This is often called JBOD, meaning Just a Bunch of Disks.

Within the RAID architecture, there are varying degrees of data reliability and performance, known as RAID Levels. Depending on the RAID Level, data can be either mirrored or striped. Data redundancy is provided through data mirroring, which maintains two copies of the data on separate physical disks. Data striping involves distributing the data among several disks by splitting it into multiple sequential data blocks and writing them to each of the drives in the array in parallel. In addition, most of the RAID Levels create parity information that can be used to reconstruct data on a particular drive in the event of a failure. The standard RAID specification provides for Levels 0-6, although some vendor specific implementations exist, such as EMC's RAID-S.

9.3.1 RAID 0

RAID 0, referred to as data striping, differs from the other RAID implementations in that it does not offer any form of data redundancy. RAID 0 splits data into chunks and then writes or *stripes* the data sequentially across all of the disks in the array. This implementation offers the following performance advantages:

- Parallel I/O streams to multiple drives allow for higher data transfer rates for sequential read/write operations
- Increased throughput of random disk accesses due to the distribution of data onto multiple disks

The primary disadvantage of a RAID 0 configuration is that, should a single disk in the array fail, all of the data in the array will become unusable due to the fact the data cannot be reconstructed from the remaining drives. RAID 0 should therefore be used for applications that require a high level of performance but which do not have very stringent data availability requirements.

9.3.2 RAID 1

RAID 1, also known as disk mirroring, uses data mirroring to achieve a high level of redundancy. In a RAID 1 configuration, two copies of the data are kept on separate disks, each mirroring the other. In the event of a single disk failure, all read/write operations will be redirected to the mirrored copy of the data. RAID 1 configurations are the most expensive of any of the other solutions due to the fact that twice as many disks are required in order to mirror the data.

Read performance of a RAID 1 configuration implemented using the AIX LVM is enhanced due to the fact that, should the primary copy be busy, read requests are directed to the mirror copy. Write performance can be slower than in non-RAID implementations, depending on the write scheduling policy selected through the LVM: parallel or sequential.

Using the parallel scheduling policy, the writes to all copies of the data are initiated at the same time or in parallel. The write operation is considered complete when the copy that takes the longest time to update is finished. This is the fastest but less reliable option, as a failure to write to one of the copies may go undetected for a period of time.

Under the sequential scheduling policy, the update of the mirror is not started until the write to the primary copy has successfully completed. This is the more reliable, but slower, of the two methods.

In addition, the use of mirror write consistency can have an impact on the performance, since potentially four disk write operations are performed for each LVM write operation. See 9.4.3, “Use of Mirror Write Consistency” on page 206 for more details.

9.3.3 RAID 2 and 3

RAID 2 and 3 both break data into multiple chunks or segments and evenly distribute it across several physical disks. Striping in RAID 2 and RAID 3 occurs at the bit or multi-byte level. During a read operation, multiple simultaneous requests are sent to each disk, causing all of the disk actuators (the arm that holds the read/write head for the disk) to move in parallel. This limits the number of concurrent I/O operations in the array to one.

In order to provide data redundancy, RAID 2 and 3 configurations require parity information to be written for each write operation performed. While RAID 2 can distribute the parity information across multiple drives through the use of an encoding technique known as the Hamming method, RAID 3 uses only one drive for the parity. If one drive in the array fails, the data can still be accessed and updated using the parity information. However, the system will operate in a degraded mode until the drive is fixed due to the time required to dynamically reconstruct the data located on the failed drive using the parity information.

Note: The AIX LVM does not directly support RAID 2 or 3.

9.3.4 RAID 4

RAID 4 is very similar to RAID 3 in that it stripes the data across multiple physical disks in the array. The primary difference is that the striping increment is a block or record instead of the bit or byte method used by RAID 3 configurations. By virtue of the larger data increment used to create the stripe, reads can be matched to the one physical disk that contains the requested data. This allows both simultaneous and independent reads to be processed.

As in RAID 3, a single parity disk is used for data redundancy. This can create a performance bottleneck for write operations, as requests to update the sole parity disk cannot be processed in parallel. Due to the performance problems associated with the single parity disk and RAID 4's similarity to RAID 5, RAID 4 is not a commonly used or recommended configuration.

Note: The AIX LVM does not directly support RAID 4.

9.3.5 RAID 5

Instead of having a dedicated parity disk, RAID 5 interleaves both data and parity on all disks. In a 4+P RAID 5 array, five disks are used for data and parity combined. Four-fifths of the space on those disks is used for data and one-fifth of the space is used for parity. In RAID 5, the disks can be accessed independently of one another, and it is possible to use a large stripe size, so most data transfers involve only one data disk. This enables multiple concurrent accesses, thereby giving higher throughput for OLTP or other random workloads.

Due to the way in which parity data is typically generated for RAID 5, there is a write penalty associated with write access. Random write I/Os usually result in four actual I/O operations:

1. Read the old data.
2. Read the old parity.
3. Write the new data.
4. Write the new parity.

Some IBM RAID 5 implementations, such as the SSA RAID adapters, incorporate full or partial stripe write algorithms for sequential writes. This reduces the number of I/O operations required. Also, the use of read/write cache in the adapter can mask the write penalty for many workloads either by getting a cache hit during the data read operation or by caching the writes. It is important to note that there is some form of write penalty associated with any redundant RAID architecture, including RAID 1. This is due to the fact that some amount of redundant information must be written in addition to the base data.

The IBM PCI SSA RAID adapters can be configured with an optional fast write cache, which dramatically reduces the impact of the write penalty associated with RAID 5 implementations.

9.3.6 RAID 0+1 or RAID 10

RAID 0+1, also known as IBM RAID-1 Enhanced or RAID 10, is a combination of RAID 0 (data striping) and RAID 1 (data mirroring). RAID 0+1 provides the performance advantages of RAID 0 while maintaining the data availability of RAID 1. In RAID 0+1 configurations, both the data and its mirror are striped across all the disks in the array. The first stripe is the data stripe, and the second stripe is the mirror, with the mirror being placed on a different physical drive than the data. RAID 0+1 implementations provide excellent write performance, as they do not have to calculate or write parity data. RAID 0+1 can be implemented solely in software (AIX), solely in hardware, or in a combination of hardware and software. Which is the appropriate solution for each implementation depends on overall requirements, such as high availability. Logical volumes configured with the AIX mirroring and striping option perform well and are an option for databases.

9.3.7 Comparison of RAID Levels

Table 9-2 on page 202 summarizes the performance and availability characteristics of the different RAID Levels.

Table 9-2 Comparison of RAID Levels

RAID Level	Capacity	Data protection	Performance			Cost
			Sequential	Random read	Random write	
RAID 0	Very High	None	High	High	High	Low
RAID 1	Moderate	Very Good	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium	High (can be twice RAID 0)
RAID 3	High	Good	High	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Medium
RAID 5	High	Good	High	High	Medium	Medium
RAID 0+1	High	Very Good	High	High	High	High

9.3.8 RAID 5 versus AIX LVM mirroring

When deciding on a data protection strategy, most customers narrow their choices down to the two most widely implemented solutions: RAID 5 or LVM mirroring. Both solutions provide a highly robust and reliable data protection mechanism with varying degrees of performance and cost.

When evaluating the performance of a RAID 5 configuration, two important factors should be considered: the number of disks in the array and the read/write ratio of the application that will be using the array. In RAID 5 configurations, transaction performance (especially for reads) is directly related to the number of disks used in the array. As the number of disks in the array increases, so do the number of I/O operations processed/second, up to the limits of the RAID adapter. This is due to the fact that read operations can be processed in parallel across the disks in the array

Note: The number of I/O operations processed/second will decrease if the size of the logical volume that is striped across the array increases. This is due to the fact that the each disk in the array will be required to seek over a larger area of the disk in order to read or write data.

The read/write ratio of the application is the other factor that should be considered when assessing the performance of a RAID 5 configuration. The write penalty associated with RAID 5 configurations that do not utilize a fast write cache can result in severe performance degradation for applications that are write intensive. If the application is characterized by a large number of read operations and relatively few writes, RAID 5 solutions can provide roughly

equivalent performance to their mirrored counterparts, provided they use sufficiently large disk arrays.

Figure 9-3 is a graphical example of showing some of the decisions in the design process.

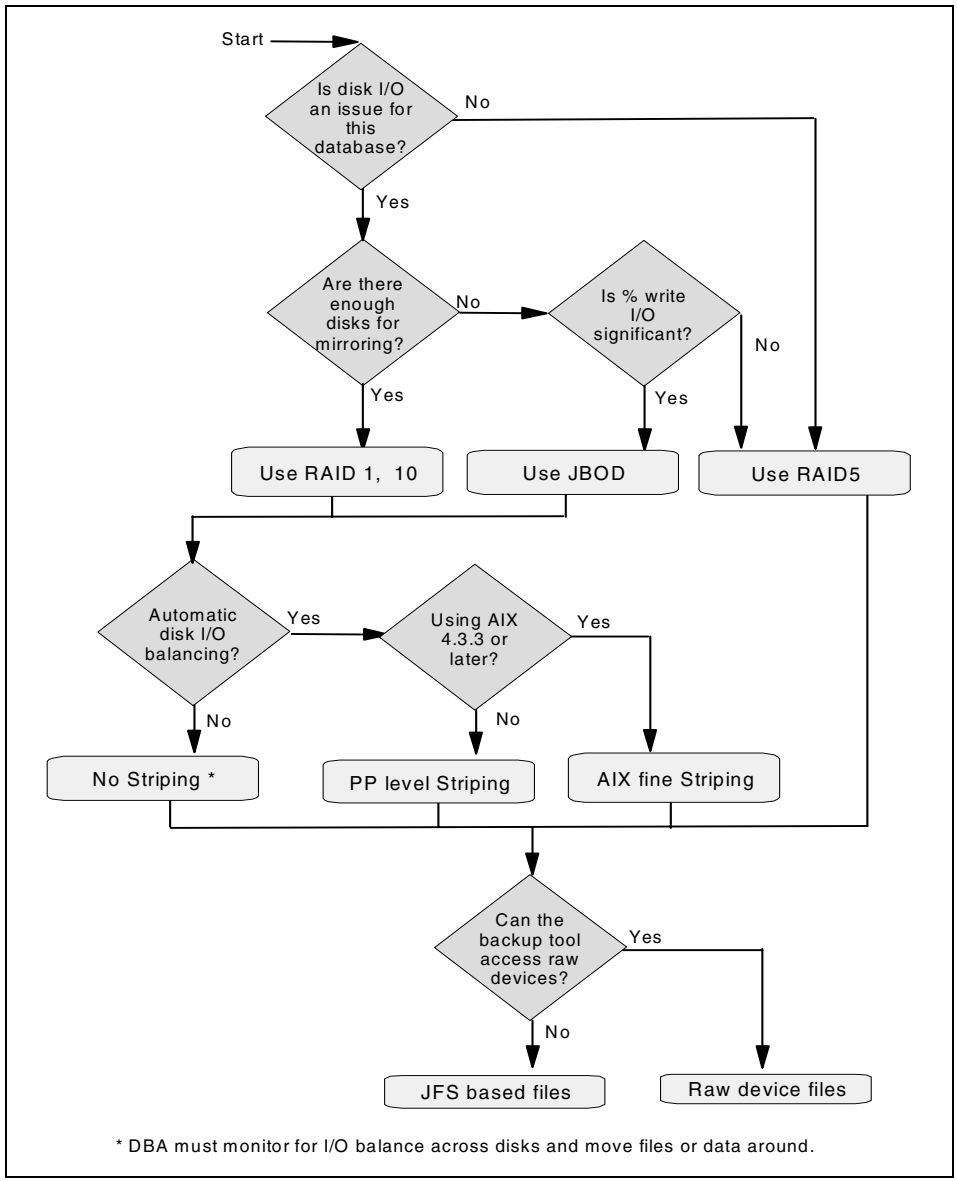

Figure 9-3 Choosing a disk subsystem

In Figure 9-3 on page 203:

- For low I/O rate databases where the requirement is for low maintenance effort, low cost but with data protection, RAID 5 with JFS may be an option.
- Alternatively, for high performance databases with high throughput and data protection requirements, mirrored and fine striped AIX raw devices should be considered.

Note: The fast-write cache enhancements on the latest SSA SerialRAID adapters significantly improve write I/O performance.

For applications that are not particularly I/O intensive, RAID 5 can provide reasonable performance at significant cost savings when compared to mirrored solutions. As an example, in a RAID 5 environment, eight disks would be required for seven disks worth of storage: seven for the data and one for the distributed parity. By comparison, a mirrored environment would require 14 disks: seven for the data and seven for mirrors.

Other factors to consider are:

- The performance characteristics of the application: Does the application process many random I/O operations, or does it perform primarily sequential reads and writes?
- The I/O response times required for the application: How critical is I/O performance to the operation of the application?
- Which solution provides the best performance at the lowest cost?

9.4 AIX disk performance topics

This section discusses various AIX disk performance related topics that may affect the performance of your RDBMS, such as:

- 9.4.1, “Raw logical volumes versus Journaled File System” on page 204
- 9.4.2, “Synchronous and asynchronous I/O” on page 206
- 9.4.3, “Use of Mirror Write Consistency” on page 206

9.4.1 Raw logical volumes versus Journaled File System

There has been a long standing debate surrounding the use of raw logical volumes (raw devices) versus Journaled File Systems (JFS), especially in database environments. Advocates of raw logical volumes stress the performance gains that can be realized through their use, while JFS supporters

emphasize the ease of use and manageability features of file systems. As with many other aspects of system design, a decision must be made as to which is more important: performance or manageability.

In order to better understand the performance advantages associated with raw logical volumes, it is helpful to have an understanding of the impact of the JFS file system cache. Most UNIX file systems set aside an area of memory to hold recently accessed file data, thereby allowing a physical I/O request to be satisfied from memory instead of from disk. In AIX, this area of memory is known as the *buffer cache*. If an application requests data that is not already in memory, AIX will read the data from disk into the buffer cache and then copy the data to a user buffer so that it can be used by the application. Therefore, each read request translates into a disk read followed by a copy of the data from the buffer cache to the user buffer.

Because the data is read from memory, I/O requests can be satisfied in nanoseconds instead of the milliseconds that would be required in order to fetch the data from disk. In addition, AIX JFS file systems employ the use of a sequential read-ahead mechanism to pre-fetch data into memory when it is determined that a file is being accessed sequentially.

In non-database environments, the AIX buffer cache can significantly reduce I/O wait time for heavily accessed files. However, the performance benefits of file system caching in database environments are not so clear. This is due to the fact that most modern RDBMS systems also allocate a region of memory for caching frequently accessed data. The end result when using JFS file systems is that the data is double-buffered: once in the file system buffer cache and once in the RDBMS cache. In most cases, the extra memory used by the file system buffer cache could be better utilized by the database buffers.

The primary benefit of raw logical volumes is that they bypass the AIX file system buffer cache entirely by directly accessing the underlying logical device. The extra memory saved by eliminating the file system cache can then be allocated to the database to increase the data buffers. In addition, overall CPU utilization is decreased due to the fact that the system no longer has to copy the data from the file system cache to the user buffers. Another benefit of raw logical volumes is that there is no inode management overhead, as opposed to JFS, where the inode is locked when the file is accessed.

The main drawback of using raw logical volumes lies in the increased administration costs associated with their use. Since raw logical volumes do not exist as files at the UNIX level, many of the traditional tools and utilities for managing data will not work. Backup and recovery operations can be especially difficult when using raw logical volumes. Many third party vendor backup applications (such as the IBM ADSM) cannot directly read raw logical volumes and must rely on the UNIX **dd** command to copy the raw data to a UNIX file

system prior to backing up the data. Restores are equally complicated, as the data must first be restored to a UNIX file system and then copied to the raw logical volume. If this approach is used, additional disk space will be required for the JFS file systems used to temporarily hold the data contained in the raw logical volume. However, if the raw logical volumes can be backed up directly to a locally attached tape drive using the **dd** command, this will not be an issue.

Raw logical volume benchmarks point to a significant disk I/O throughput gain when compared to JFS file systems. For DSS, where there is increased sequential read activity, raw logical volumes could be as much as 35% (in an AIX Version 4 environment) and up to 15% for OLTP. Although direct I/O may improve the performance for JFS file systems, any benefit, in AIX Version 4 at least, would be small compared to the performance implications of inode locking (locking requirements when using a file system to access disk blocks).

9.4.2 Synchronous and asynchronous I/O

When an application waits for the completion of an I/O request before continuing with its processing, the I/O is described as *synchronous I/O*. In this case, application processing and I/O processing can be said to be serialized. On the other hand an *asynchronous I/O* (async I/O) request returns control to the application immediately and then proceeds with the I/O request. This means that both the I/O processing and application processing take place in parallel, which has a positive impact on the performance of the application.

Generally speaking, database applications and file servers are able to take advantage of this ability to overlap processing and I/O. In order to use async I/O, it has to be configured “available” in AIX and then be enabled for use by the database (DB2 Version 8 and Oracle requires async I/O to be configured). The configuration of async I/O in AIX can be done by using the **smit aio** command.

Note: For more information about asynchronous I/O, refer to the AIX product documentation that deals with performance management.

9.4.3 Use of Mirror Write Consistency

Mirror Write Consistency (MWC) is a technique used by the LVM to ensure data consistency between mirrored logical volume copies when a volume group is not varied off-line cleanly. If all LV copies are not kept in sync, a read request will return two different versions of the data, depending on which copy was chosen by the LVM.

Note: Mirror Write Consistency is enabled, by default, for mirrored logical volumes. To disable MWC, you must use the **mklv -w n** command when creating the logical volume. To disable MWC on previously created logical volumes, use the **chlv -w n** command. Please refer to the *AIX Commands Reference* for your particular operating system version for a full description of the **mklv** and **chlv** commands

A Mirror Write Consistency (MWC) log (sometimes referred to as the Mirror Write Consistency Cache or MWCC) identifies those Logical Track Group copies that may be inconsistent when a volume group is not varied off-line cleanly. A Logical Track Group (LTG) is a group of 32 4 KB blocks (128 KB total) within a logical volume (LV). When a volume group is varied back on-line, LVM uses the MWC log to make LTG copies consistent again in all mirrored logical volumes for which MWC is enabled.

An MWC log for each active volume group is maintained in kernel memory. There is a copy of the log in a single 512-byte disk block near the outer edge (prior to the first physical partition) of every physical volume in the volume group. Since the MWC log is written to different disks at different times, the disk copies are not usually identical.

An MWC log has 62 entries. Each entry contains a logical volume minor number and the index of a Logical Track Group within the logical volume. When a write request is received for a mirrored logical volume with MWC enabled, the MWC log in kernel memory is checked for the LTG that will be affected by the write. If an entry for the LTG is found in the MWC log in memory, then the corresponding write requests are allowed to proceed. If there is no entry for the LTG, one is added and the updated MWC log is written to the physical volumes on which the affected LTG copies reside. Meanwhile, the LTG write request is held within the scheduling layer. When the MWC log write requests are complete, the LTG write request is released and allowed to proceed.

Entries are never removed from the MWC login memory. Instead, a count of the number of writes active to the specified LTG is kept for each entry. When the count is zero, the entry is eligible for reuse. When a new write request arrives for an LTG that is not yet in the log, it replaces the least recently used entry that has a write count of zero. If all 62 entries have non-zero write counts, the LTG write request is queued until the write count of some entry goes to zero.

AIX does not return `iodone` to an application until writes have completed to all mirror copies (or until one or more copies have been marked stale). To synchronize a logical volume after a crash, an RDBMS must reissue all write requests for which `iodone` had not been received at the time of the crash. Mirrored logical volumes containing JFS logs or file systems must be

synchronized after a crash either by forcing a sync (see below) or by enabling MWC prior to the crash.

When a logical volume closes, all MWC log entries referring to the logical volume are cleared, and the MWC log is written to every disk in the volume group.

When a volume group is varied back online, AIX reads the MWC log record from every disk in the volume group and processes each MWC entry in each log. For each unique MWC entry (which contains a logical volume minor number and the index of a Logical Track Group within the logical volume), AIX reads the LTG from the logical volume and writes it back. Duplicate MWC entries that have already been processed are ignored.

The LTG copy that is read depends upon the logical volume's scheduling policy. If the scheduling policy is parallel, AIX directs the read request to the available copy that is least busy. If neither copy is busy, the first is used. If the scheduling policy is sequential, AIX tries each copy in turn, starting with the first, until it finds one that is available.

Since the LTG copy read and write does not necessarily contain the latest data, there is no guarantee that the latest data will be propagated. An RDBMS must, therefore, determine the validity of data in question after a crash (the data for which a write had been issued but for which no `iodone` had been received at the time of the crash) even if MWC is used to guarantee consistency.

In other words, enabling MWC insures the consistency of logical volume copies but does not protect the integrity of logical volume data. Even when a logical volume is mirrored to improve availability, an RDBMS must still take steps to provide for data integrity.

If MWC must be used, and write throughput is important (to optimize RDBMS update performance, for example), it is unwise to implement volume groups with anything close to the maximum number of physical volumes (128) currently allowed. When every logical volume in a volume group is double-mirrored with MWC enabled, write I/O can be in progress to, at most, 62 LTGs at any given instant. Since each LTG has two copies, write I/O can be in progress to, at most, 124 physical LTG copies (at most,124 physical volumes) in the volume group. Any given LTG copy can, of course, have more than one write I/O in progress to it. Since optimum disk subsystem write throughput is achieved when a queue of several write I/Os is maintained on every physical disk, if write throughput is an issue and MWC must be used, a volume group should be only as large as is required to implement the desired striping and mirroring of those logical volumes in the volume group. Many small volume groups should be defined in preference to one large one.

From a database performance standpoint, enabling MWC on mirrored logical volumes can be quite costly, especially for those database files with high I/O activity, such as the redo logs. This is due to the fact that two writes are performed for every update: one for the MWC cache record and one for the actual data. However, the performance degradation associated with writes to MWC enabled logical volumes can be minimized through the use of hardware write cache. Certain SSA adapters, such as the IBM SSA Advanced SerialRAID Adapter, support an optional 32 MB non-volatile fast write cache.

If MWC is disabled to improve overall I/O performance to one or more mirrored logical volumes, some other measure must be taken to guarantee mirror consistency in the event of a system crash. In order to ensure that all copies contain the same version of the data, you must disable autovaryon for any volume groups that contain such logical volumes and manually force synchronization (**`syncvg -f -l LVname`**) of every mirrored LV. The -f option tells **`syncvg`** to choose a good physical LV copy and propagate it to all other copies, whether any copy is marked stale or not. Every **`syncvg`** must complete before varying on the volume group and making logical volumes available for use by the database.

MWC can be disabled to improve batch load performance provided:

- The logical volumes involved are completely reloaded from scratch if the system crashes and reboots.
- MWC is enabled as soon as batch loading completes.

Consider the following example:

In the middle of a database update transaction, a system crash occurs, preventing some mirrored copies from being updated. The LVM does not have time to mark any partitions stale. The system restarts, and the LVM automatically varies on the volume group(s) containing the data in question. Because none of the partitions are marked stale, logical volumes are placed back online without undergoing any form of synchronization.

At this point, the database initiates some form of crash recovery to roll back any failed transactions. The first copy of the mirror (copyA) indicates that the data was changed, but the transaction did not complete. Another copy of the data (copyB) indicates that the data was not changed. If copyA is chosen, and the transaction is rolled back, everything will be consistent from a database perspective, as all copies will be written to during the roll back of the failed transaction. However, if copyB is chosen, no recovery is performed, and two different copies of the data still exist, which can cause logical corruption of the database.

The main drawback to disabling MWC is that manually resyncing the mirrors can significantly increase the amount of time necessary to make the volumes available, as every single partition must be read and rewritten to all of the mirrors. A decision must be made as to which is the most important: speed of recovery in the event of a system failure or performance of the application.

Note: The LTG corresponds to the maximum allowed transfer size for disk I/O. To take advantage of these transfer sizes, AIX 5L accepts LTG values of 128 KB, 256 KB, 512 KB, or 1024 KB.

Passive mirror write consistency check

In AIX 5L Version 5, there is an new MWCC option: passive MWCC. It does not use an LTG tracking table, but instead sets a dirty bit for the mirrored logical volume to register write activity. In the case of a crash, the entire mirror logical volume is re-synched in the background. Note that the logical volume is available immediately after reboot while this synchronization is in process.

9.5 Direct access storage

Direct access storage (DAS) is storage that attaches directly to a host server. Controller functions (such as RAID 5 or caching) are performed in the host adapter. This is in contrast to a storage subsystem, which has its own controller(s) that perform these functions. For example, RAID 5 function in a direct attached SSA solution would be provided by the SSA SerialRAID adapters, whereas in a storage subsystem, such as the IBM TotalStorage Enterprise Storage Server, that function is provided by the controllers that are part of the ESS itself.

9.5.1 IBM 7133 Serial Disk System

IBM 7133 Serial Disk Systems, based on the industry-standard serial technology Serial Storage Architecture (SSA), provides outstanding performance and availability. The host adapter card provides the controller functions and determines the level of RAID and caching capabilities applicable to the solution.

The Serial Storage Architecture

The Serial Storage Architecture (SSA) is an open-storage interface used to connect I/O devices and adapters to host systems. SSA was designed to be a high-performance, low-cost alternative to traditional SCSI based storage systems. SSA also directly addresses some of the performance and manageability limitations of the SCSI architecture.

SSA subsystems are comprised of loops of adapters and disk devices. A theoretical maximum of 127 devices can be connected in a SSA loop, although current IBM SSA adapters limit this to a maximum of 48 devices per loop. Each SSA adapter has two loops, each with two ports or nodes. Data transfer is bi-directional in a SSA loop, with a maximum data transfer speed of 40 MB/s in each direction, for a total transfer speed of 80 MB/s per node or 160 MBs/ per loop.

In SSA terms, a node can be either an *initiator* or a *target*. As stated previously, each adapter contains two nodes or ports, and each SSA disk device also contains one node. The SSA adapter nodes are the initiator nodes responsible for issuing commands to the target nodes on the attached SSA disk devices.

SSA provides the following performance and manageability advantages:

- Dual connection paths to attached devices: If a break occurs in a loop, the data is automatically rerouted.
- Simplified cabling when compared to SCSI: Cheaper, smaller cables and connectors, with no need for separate terminators.
- Faster interconnect technology:
  - Full-duplex, frame-multiplexed serial links
  - Capable of transferring data at 80 MB/s per port, 160 MB/s per loop (320 MB/s with spacial reuse)
- Hot pluggable cables and disks.
- Supports large number of devices: Up to 127 per loop, although current IBM SSA adapters limit this to 96 disks per adapter.
- Auto-configuration of attached devices and online discovery.
- Increased distance between devices: Up to 25 meters with copper cables and 10 kilometers with optical fiber extenders.

SSA specific performance considerations

There are various performance factors specific to SSA implementations that must be considered when designing your disk subsystem. These include:

- The number of disks per SSA loop or adapter
- The distribution of data among disks in a loop
- The position of the device in the loop

Number of disks per SSA loop or adapter

While the SSA adapter itself is capable of supporting a peak data transfer rate of 160 MB/sec, the host interface or bus usually limits the speed. The actual

number of disks that can be effectively placed on a loop or adapter is usually less than the design maximum of 48 per loop and 96 per adapter.

The number of disks that can be effectively placed on a SSA loop or adapter is largely dependent on the I/O characteristics of the application accessing the data. The exact number of disks that will provide the most optimal performance will obviously vary depending on the workload placed on the disk subsystem by the application. With that in mind, the following general rules of thumb apply:

- If the application primarily performs long sequential I/O operations, a maximum of 8 to 16 disks should be configured per SSA adapter. This configuration would provide sufficient bandwidth to saturate the host system bus in a PCI architecture.
- If the application performs a mixture of sequential and random I/O operations, then 16 to 32 disks per adapter would be sufficient.
- If the application is characterized by many short transfers with random seeks, the chances of any one disk saturating the available bandwidth of the adapter or bus is fairly low; therefore, more disks should be added per loop/adapter. In this instance, two loops of 24 to 48 disks per loop should provide adequate performance while still staying within the limits of the adapter or host system bus.

Distribution of data among disks in a loop

The SSA architecture allows data to be transferred in different portions of a loop concurrently, a concept known as *spatial reuse*. The distribution of I/O operations to the physical disks in a loop must be carefully considered when designing the disk subsystem in order to take advantage of spatial reuse and maximum throughput on the adapter. As an example, consider the one adapter, single loop, eight drive configuration depicted in Figure 9-4 on page 213.

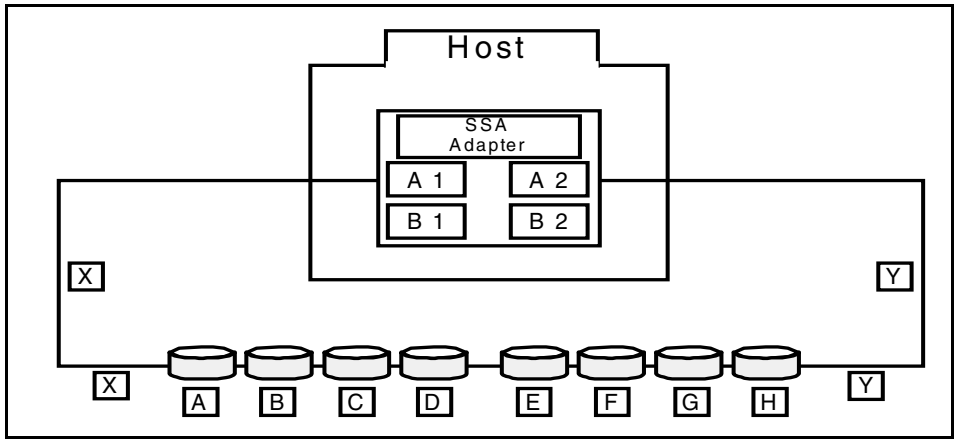

Figure 9-4 Spatial reuse in a SSA disk subsystem

With this configuration, the adapter accesses disks A, B, C, and D using portion X of the loop and disks E, F, G, and H along portion Y of the loop.

Due to the fact that the SSA link is full-duplex, each portion of the loop can concurrently process both read and write operations. Optimal utilization of the bandwidth of the loop would occur if, at any given point in time, 50% of the operations in portion X of the loop were reads and 50% were writes. If, however, 100% of the reads were accessing disks in portion X of the loop, and 100% of the writes were accessing disks in portion Y of the loop, only half of the available bandwidth of the adapter would be used.

Optimal performance can be obtained by ensuring that disk accesses are balanced across both portions of an SSA loop. This will ensure that both the available bandwidth and the number of disks that can be placed in the loop are maximized.

Position of the device in the loop

The proximity of a device in a loop to the SSA adapter can have performance implications in heavily loaded SSA networks. In these cases, the SSA drives that are furthest away from the adapter consume more of the available bandwidth than those that are closer to the adapter.

In an SSA loop, data packets are passed from the originating device or node to a packet buffer on an adjacent node, and so on, until the packet reaches the adapter. If the SSA loop has many disks, each passing data packets to their adjacent nodes, the disk(s) nearest the adapter can become very busy passing data packets to the adapter that originated farther down the loop. In order to ensure that the devices nearest the adapter do not become stuck passing data

packets for other devices on the loop, the SSA architecture employs a fairness algorithm that uses a token passing mechanism.

One token, known as the *SAT token*, circulates in each direction around the loop. If a device on the loop has outstanding I/O requests that needs to be processed, it must wait until it receives the token. The queued I/O requests are then processed in sequence up until a point in time at which the fairness algorithm determines that it must stop. It must then wait until the token recirculates around the loop before processing any additional I/O requests.

Even with the introduction of the token, devices nearest the adapter will still be responsible for passing more data packets to the adapter than those further down the loop. Therefore, in heavily loaded configurations, you should consider placing disks with the highest I/O as far away from the adapter as possible.

9.5.2 IBM 2104 Expandable Storage Plus

The IBM 2104 Expandable Storage Plus (EXP Plus) provides flexible, scalable, and low-cost disk storage for RS/6000 and IBM @server pSeries servers in a compact package. This SCSI disk system is ideal for environments where high-performance external disk storage is a requirement in a small footprint.

The EXP Plus can attach to RS/6000 servers by using a variety of SCSI adapters, but when combining with the IBM PCI 4-channel Ultra3 SCSI RAID Adapter, the EXP Plus solution delivers exceptional Ultra3 SCSI 160 MB/sec throughput performance. It also supports a variety of RAID options.

The EXP Plus can be configured to meet a variety of configuration requirements:

- In single server configurations, up to fourteen drives can be installed on a single SCSI bus.
- A single bus configuration with a second host port supports up to twelve disks and enables connectivity to two hosts for disk affinity in non-RAID environments. HACMP can then be used to provide server failover for high availability in non-concurrent mode using the EXP Plus with non-RAID SCSI host bus adapters.
- Alternatively, the bus can be split into two separate SCSI buses with up to seven drives each.
- The second host port option provides Ultra3 connectivity to either the same server or a second server.

The EXP Plus can be populated with 10,000 RPM 9.1 GB, 18.2 GB, 36.4 GB, and 73.4 GB disks. Drive capacities can be intermixed and drives can be added in single drive increments. Multiple drawers in a rack provides the flexibility to build storage capacity from gigabytes to terabytes (up to 14 TB per rack).

9.6 Integrated storage subsystems

Providing access to data in an open systems environment represents a substantial challenge given the multitude of servers and storage systems that exist within most organizations today. The ability to manage and share information is a pressing concern as administrative costs continue to climb, and the management of multiple servers and data storage systems grow more complex every day. These concerns, and the spiraling costs associated with them, have led many organizations to a strategy of server consolidation: the relocation of distributed servers and related storage into data centers with centralized management provided by corporate IT departments.

Companies need storage solutions that are flexible and designed to simplify storage management, provide sharing of storage resources, enhance data sharing, and support their plans for server consolidation. Storage consolidation can be the first step towards the goal of implementing server consolidation in reducing the number of boxes and providing IT departments with the flexibility to add or assign storage capacity when and where it is needed.

With the increasing standardization of Internet technologies and focus on Web-centric computing, rapid growth in global e-business is increasingly demanding continuous computing and 24 x 7 access to data. Intelligent storage subsystems are emerging as key players in providing servers with the capability to off-load administrative tasks, such as copy services, and even executing backups without impacting the production servers. In response to this trend, IBM offers a series of products on the Seascape Enterprise Storage Architecture platform to deal with that challenge.

9.6.1 IBM TotalStorage Enterprise Storage Server

The IBM TotalStorage Enterprise Storage Server Model 800 (ESS) is a high-performance, high-availability, high-function, and high-capacity disk storage subsystem.

Architecture

The ESS consists of two processing clusters in a base enclosure and an optional Expansion Enclosure for the larger-capacity configurations.The base enclosure provides the rack and packaging that contain the host adapters, the cluster processors, up to 64 GB of cache and 2 GB of NVS, and the device adapters. It has two three-phase power supplies and supports 128 disk drives in two cages (0.58 TB to 9.3 TB raw capacity). The Expansion Enclosure provides the rack and packaging for an additional 256 disk drives (up to 18.6 TB raw capacity) and has its own set of power supplies.

Each cluster includes a processor drawer, an I/O drawer, and three internal PCI buses. There is a Remote I/O (RIO) bridge that connects the processor drawer and the I/O drawer.

Connectivity to the ESS is achieved by means of Fibre Channel, ESCON, SCSI, iSCSI, and NAS, across a broad range of server environments, including zSeries and S/390, pSeries and RS/6000, iSeries and AS/400, xSeries and other Intel-based servers, Sun, Hewlett-Packard, and Compaq AlphaServer.

The ESS supports up to 16 host adapters (HAs) in four host adapter bays (HBs). Each host adapter can have either one Fibre Channel/FICON port or two ESCON ports or two SCSI ports and is connected to both clusters through the Common Platform Interconnect (CPI) buses, so that either cluster can handle I/O from any host adapter. The bandwidth of the CPI has been doubled compared to its predecessor to improve data throughput.

The processor drawer of each cluster has an SMP processor (with, optionally, the Turbo feature) and up to 32 GB of cache.

The I/O drawer includes the IOA cards and 1 GB of NVS per cluster. The cache and NVS are paired across the clusters so that cluster 1 uses the NVS in cluster 2, and vice versa. The I/O drawer of each cluster also includes four SSA160 device adapters (DAs), each paired with a DA from the other cluster. There are two SSA loops between each DA pair. The disks come in packs of eight disks (eight-packs) and are added in pairs.

A *disk group* consists of eight disks, four from each eight-pack in a pair. Disk groups can be configured as RAID 5 or RAID 10 *ranks* (or *arrays*) so that there would be two disk arrays per eight-pack pair. Each disk group (RAID array) is associated with one DA (of the pair) in the loop.

Intermixing disks of different types and speeds is allowed (there are rules, though); however, two disks of each speed and type are designated as spares in each loop.

The logical view

Internally, the ESS can be configured to have 8 or 16 fixed block (FB) *logical subsystems* (LS). Each logical subsystem is mapped over a specific device adapter and the RAID arrays associated with it.

Note: Besides the 16 fixed block (FB) logical subsystems, the ESS can have 16 count key data (CKD) logical subsystems as well when it is connected to an IBM @server zSeries system as well.

A *logical volume* is defined in a RAID array of a particular logical subsystem and can be any size in multiples of 100 MB up to the capacity of the array. Up to 256 logical volumes can be defined for a logical subsystem.

SCSI and Fibre Channel mapping

The ESS provides support for the SCSI-2 and SCSI-3 protocols. Both SCSI and Fibre Channel attached hosts require FB logical subsystems.

In the case of a SCSI logical volume, a *logical device* number (consisting of a SCSI target ID and *logical unit number* (LUN)) is assigned by the ESS when the logical volume is created and is the means by which a SCSI host identifies that particular logical volume. The logical device is mapped to a particular SCSI port on the HA and is only accessible to the host(s) attached to that port. Other SCSI ports can also be linked to the logical device if shared logical volumes are required. A single SCSI port on a host adapter can address up to 960 LUNs (15 targets with up to 64 LUNs per target).

In the case of Fibre Channel, a host adapter port can address up to 256 LUNs for a single target (more LUNs if the host supports the **`Report LUNs`** command). The logical device, identified by its LUN, is mapped to the Fibre Channel adapter on the host via the *worldwide port name* (WWPN), not to the ESS Fibre Channel host adapter port, as is the case with SCSI. That means that the Fibre Channel host is able to access its logical devices through any of the Fibre Channel ports on the ESS.

The ESS addresses up to 4096 LUNs in total.

Note: A logical device is a specific logical volume that belongs to a particular logical subsystem and it is accessed via a specific cluster and device adapter, and, in the case of SCSI, is accessed via defined ESS host adapter ports.

Copy functions

The ESS Model 800 provides a comprehensive set of copy functions for open system hosts.

FlashCopy

FlashCopy provides an immediate point-in-time copy of data. FlashCopy creates a physical point-in-time copy of data and makes it possible to access both the source and target copies immediately. FlashCopy is an optional feature on the ESS Model 800 (If FlashCopy is to be used, the number of logical subsystems defined in the ESS should be investigated to facilitate implementation).

Peer-to-Peer Remote Copy (PPRC)

PPRC is a proven synchronous remote data mirroring technology utilized for many years. It is used primarily as part of the business continuance solution for protecting the organization's data against disk subsystem loss or, in the worst case, complete site failure. But it is also used for remote migration of data and application workloads, and offsite backups.

PPRC Extended Distance (PPRC XD)

PPRC XD brings new flexibility to the ESS and PPRC. PPRC-XD is a non-synchronous long-distance copy option for both open systems and zSeries servers. PPRC XD can operate at very long distances, even continental distances, well beyond 103 km (maximum supported distance for synchronous PPRC), with minimal impact on the applications. Distance is limited only by the network and channel extender technology capabilities.

Some performance features

The following is a list of some of the performance features of the ESS:

- SCSI command tag queuing supports multiple outstanding requests to the same LUNs at the same time. Such requests are processed by the ESS concurrently if possible. Some of these I/O requests may then be solved by the ESS with a cache hit, and others may be solved on the disk array where the logical volumes are striped.
- The ESS has up to 64 (SSA) internal data paths to disks, each with a bandwidth of 40 MBps. It is possible for every path to be transferring data at the same time (There are eight adapters each attaching to two loops. Each loop/adapter consists of two read paths and two write paths. Note that with *spacial reuse*, both adapters in a loop operate independently).
- To neutralize the RAID 5 write penalty for sequential operations, the ESS does writes in a RAID 3 style (parallel transfer of all stripes). This avoids the read and recalculation overheads associated with the RAID 5 write operations.
- The ESS has a sequential detection algorithm that analyses sequences of I/Os to determine if data is being accessed sequentially. As soon as the algorithm detects that six or more tracks have been read in succession, the algorithm triggers a sequential staging process.
- RAID 10 allows a write to both data and mirrored copy of data (no parity generation). This operation is done in one striped write. As RAID 10 enables a read from either copy of the data, this ensures that whenever a copy is not available (busy, or with errors), then the alternate copy will be accessed.

Configuring for performance

This section contains general recommendations for configuring the ESS for performance. However, the best way to decide on the ESS configuration options most appropriate for your processing environment is for an IBM Storage Specialist or Business Partner Storage Specialist to discuss your requirements in detail and to model your workload with a tool such as Disk Magic.

Host adapters

Distribute the host connections across the host adapter bays in the sequence: Bay 1, Bay 4, Bay 2, and Bay 3 for the following reasons:

- The bays are connected to different PCI buses in each cluster, and by spreading the adapter connections to the host adapters across the bays, you also spread the load and improve overall performance and throughput.
- If you need to replace or upgrade a host adapter in a bay, then you have to quiesce all the adapters in that bay. If you spread them evenly, then you will only have to quiesce a quarter of your adapters.
- Host adapters share internal buses: HAs in Bays 1 and 3 share internal buses and HAs in Bays 2 and 4 share internal buses.
- Bays 1 and 2 are in the same cluster physically (as are bays 3 and 4), so for optimal availability, avoid the situation where all connections to a single host system are from Bays 1 and 2, or from Bays 3 and 4.

Cache

The large ESS cache size (8, 16, 24, 32, or 64 GB), together with the ESS advanced cache management algorithms, provide high performance for a variety of workloads. Modelling the workload should help to size the cache appropriately. The ESS 800 comes with 2 GB of non-volatile storage (NVS).

Disk drives

When configuring the ESS 800, you have the option of choosing different capacity and different speed disk drives: 18.2 GB, 36.4 GB, and 72.8 GB capacities are available in 10,000 rpm drives. However, the latest 15,000 rpm family of drives, which are available in 18.2 GB and 36.4 GB capacities, provide levels of throughput and performance that can translate into substantial price/performance benefits for the entire system. An ESS populated with RAID 5 ranks of 15,000 rpm drives can provide up to 80% greater total system random throughput for cache standard workload (typical database workload) than a comparably configured ESS with 10,000 rpm drives.

Spread the load

In general, use as many ranks as possible and spread the load over all the components of the ESS. The arrays are associated with particular logical device adapters and clusters. Balancing use of arrays from both clusters means that

maximum use of cache/NVS will be possible. Further, using arrays from all the device adapters and SSA loops will maximize the available bandwidth.

Isolate where necessary

In some cases, isolation of data may however be required. For example, when there are busy volumes, some of which are accessed most randomly and others that are accessed mostly sequentially, there may be I/O contention in an array.

Balance logical subsystems

Due to the requirement for spares in each loop, some RAID arrays will have fewer active disks than others. When configuring logical subsystems, ensure that the spares for the loops are not all allocated from the disk groups of the same logical subsystem, that is, aim to balance the number active disks in each logical subsystem.

Subsystem Device Driver

The IBM Subsystem Device Driver (SDD) software is a host-resident software package that manages redundant connections between the host server and the ESS Model 800, providing enhanced performance and data availability. SDD provides the following:

- Load balancing between the paths when there is more than one path from a host server to the ESS. This may eliminate I/O bottlenecks that occur when many I/O operations are directed to common devices via the same I/O path.
- An enhanced data availability capability for customers that have more than one path from a host server to the ESS. It eliminates a potential single point of failure by automatically rerouting I/O operations to the remaining active path from a failed data path.

Choosing logical disk sizes

Choose a size that is suitable in terms of granularity without creating problems in terms of the number of logical disks. Consider the following:

- The number of logical disks defined in an array is not a major performance issue for the ESS.
- Boot time is affected by the number of hdisks, since AIX would query each of them.
- When using ESS Copy Services, a minimum of two logical disks are required per array.

Note: For more detailed information about the ESS 800, please refer to the product documentation and Redbooks, *IBM TotalStorage Enterprise Storage Server Model 800*, SG24-6424 and *IBM ESS and IBM DB2 Working Together,* SG24-6262.

9.6.2 IBM FAStT Storage Servers

The IBM Fibre Array Storage Technology (FAStT) Storage Servers are RAID storage subsystems that contain Fibre Channel (FC) interfaces to both the host systems and the disk drive enclosures. These storage servers provide high system availability through the use of hot-swappable and redundant components.

IBM FAStT Storage Servers support RAID levels 0, 1, 3, 5, and 10. Physical disks are grouped into arrays and then *logical drives* are created over those arrays. Logical drives are the entities that appear to the operating system as physical disk drives. The RAID level is specified per array so all the logical drives of an array will use the same RAID level.

Although Remote Mirroring and Flash Copy are supported on FAStT Storage Servers, they are not supported on AIX at time of writing.

FAStT Storage Manager, a Java-based GUI utility, is used to configure, manage, and troubleshoot the FAStT Storage Servers.

IBM FAStT200 Storage Server

The IBM FAStT200 Storage Server (FAStT200) is designed for workgroup and departmental servers that require external storage. There is a single controller model while the FAStT200 High Availability (HA) model is a fully redundant configuration with dual-active controllers.

Each RAID controller contains an Intel 80969RN processor, running at 100 MHz and using 128 MB of ECC cache. The cache memory is protected by a battery.

The FAStT200 features a Fibre Channel host attachment and Fibre Channel drives. The host interface can be Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop (FC-AL), Fibre Channel Switched Fabric or Fibre Channel Point-to-Point. The FAStT200 HA model provides dual Fibre Channel host attachment with an aggregate bandwidth of 166 MB/sec.

The FAStT200 scales from 18 GB to 730 GB to a maximum system capacity of 4.8 TB by the attachment of IBM FAStT EXP500 or EXP700 Expansion Units. It supports 36 GB and 73 GB 10,000 RPM drives and 18 GB 15,000 RPM drives.

Up to 128 logical drives can be configured per FAStT200 Storage Server.

FAStT Storage Servers can be partitioned to allow multiple host systems to connect to the same Storage Server. Logical drives in a storage partition will only be accessible to their assigned host(s); this is known as *LUN masking*. The FAStT200 can have up to 16 partitions.

Considerations

The performance of FAStT200 Storage Server will be best with (up to) 30 disk drives.

The IBM FAStT500 Storage Server

The FAStT500 provides a higher level of performance, availability, and growth than FAStT200 and is suitable for high-end storage needs. It consists of two RAID controllers, each running a 300 MHz AMD K6 processor. Each RAID controller unit contains 256 MB of cache, which can be increased to 512 MB, making a total of up to 1 GB of cache in total.

The FAStT500 features a Fibre Channel host attachment and Fibre Channel drives. The host interface can be Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop (FC-AL), Fibre Channel Switched Fabric, or Fibre Channel Point-to-Point. The FAStT500 can connect to up to eight hosts directly, without needing a hub or switch. However, to assure redundancy, the usual way is to install a pair of host adapters inside each server and connect each of the two adapters to a different RAID controller. In this way, up to four hosts could be connected to the FAStT500.

The FAStT500 scales up to 16 TB of capacity using flexible combinations of 18, 36, and 73 GB drives. Up to 11 EXP500 expansion enclosures can be connected to each redundant FC loop (drive side), which means 110 FC disk drives per loop or 220 disk drives altogether.

On the drive side, each RAID controller can connect to up to four loops. These four Fibre Channel loops are normally cabled as two redundant loops, for example, using mini-hubs 1 and 2 to form one redundant loop and mini-hubs 3 and 4 to form another.

The FAStT500 supports up to 512 logical drives and can have up to 16 partitions.

Considerations

The performance of the FAStT500 Storage Server will be best with (up to) 90 disk drives.

The IBM FAStT700 Storage Server

The FAStT700 Storage Server is the newest addition to the range. It is the same physical size as the FAStT500 with new higher performance controllers.

The two 2 Gbps Intel controllers include a 1 GB battery-backed cache and connect via mini-hubs to the FAStT FC-2 Host Bus Adapters (HBA) or the F16 Fibre Channel switch to give a full 2 Gbps fabric.

The host interface can be Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop (FC-AL), Fibre Channel Switched Fabric, or Fibre Channel Point-to-Point. Just as for the FAStT500, the

FAStT700 can connect to a up to eight hosts directly, without needing a hub or switch. However, hosts are normally cabled via a pair of adapters to the two RAID controllers to give a high-availability solution.

The FAStT700 attaches to up to 220 Fibre Channel disks with up to 30 physical drives in an array and supports capacity options ranging from 18 GB to 16 TB. Up to 2048 logical drives are supported when *remote logical mirroring* (RLM) is not used.

The FAStT700 can have up to 64 partitions.

Configuring for performance

The following are some important factors to consider when configuring FAStT Storage Servers for performance.

Segment size

The RAID controllers of the FAStT Storage Servers read and write data to and from the physical disk drives in fixed-sized segments. A *segment* is the amount of data, in kilobytes, that the controller writes on a single physical disk before writing data to the next disk of a logical drive. *Data blocks* store 512 bytes of data and are the smallest units of storage. The size of a segment determines how many data blocks it contains. For example, an 8KB segment holds 16 data blocks and a 64 KB segment holds 128 data blocks. You can use the following values for the segment size: 8 KB, 16 KB, 32 KB, 64 KB, 128 KB, or 256 KB.

A large segment size (relative to the average request size) increases the request rate by allowing multiple disk drives to respond to multiple requests. If one disk drive contains all of the data for one request, the other disk drives in the storage set are available to handle other requests. Thus, in principle, separate I/O requests can be handled in parallel, increasing the request rate.

A small segment size (relative to the average request size) increases the data transfer rate by allowing multiple disk drives to participate in one I/O request. Sequential read and write requests should use a small segment size relative to the I/O size to increase performance.

Note: You should choose the segment size very carefully, because it can have a large impact on performance. It is specified at the logical drive level.

Cache parameters

Efficient use of the RAID controller cache is essential for good performance of the FAStT Storage Server. FAStT Storage Manager utility enables you to configure various cache settings:

Cache block size This is the size of the cache memory allocation unit and it can be either 4 KB or 16 KB. By selecting the proper value for your particular situation, you can significantly improve the caching efficiency. For example, if applications mostly access the data in small blocks up to 8 KB, but you use 16 KB for cache block size, then each cache entry block will only be partially populated. You will always occupy16 KB in cache to store 8 KB (or less) of data. This means only up to 50% of cache capacity will effectively be used to store the data. You can obviously expect lower performance. For random workloads and small data transfer sizes, 4 KB is usually the best option. On the other hand, if the workload is sequential or you use large segment sizes, 16 KB may be better. A larger block size means fewer cache blocks, which reduces cache overhead delays. Additionally, a larger cache block size will require fewer cache data transfers to handle the same amount of data.

Write cache mirroring FAStT Storage Servers can be set to mirror the write cache (active-active configuration). In this case, mirroring provides for the integrity of the write data if a RAID controller fails. This does, however, have an impact on performance, since the data is mirrored between the controllers across the drive-side FC loop, which competes with normal activity on the loop.

Read-Ahead multiplier This parameter affects the reading performance and an incorrect setting can have a large negative impact. It controls how many additional sequential data blocks will be read into cache after a read request. Obviously, if the workload is random, this value should be 0. For sequential workloads, a good value may be between 1 and 4, depending on the particular environment. When using this setting, a read request will cause prefetching of several sequential data blocks into the cache and this will speed up subsequent disk access. If an individual logical drive is experiencing a low cache hit percentage, consider enabling read-ahead for that

logical drive. It can increase the cache hit percentage for sequential I/O workloads.

Write modes

If you configure *Write-Through* caching, write operations will not use cache at all. The data will be written directly to disk. On the other hand, *Write-Back* to cache increases the performance of write operations. The data is not written to the disk drives immediately, it is only changed in the cache. From the application perspective, this is much faster than waiting for the disk. When using Write-Back mode, you can expect to have some unwritten data in the cache.

A lightly loaded disk subsystem will usually work faster in Write-Back mode. But when the workload is high, the write cache may become inefficient. As soon as the data is written to the cache, it has to be flushed to the disks to make room for new data arriving into cache. The controller performs better if the data went directly to the disks.

Cache flushing levels

The start and stop of cache flushing levels affect the way the cache controller handles unwritten cache entries. They are only effective in Write-Back mode. Writing the unwritten cache entries to the disk drives is called flushing. You can configure the start and stop flushing level values. They are expressed as percentages of the entire cache capacity. When the number of unwritten cache entries reaches the *start flushing* value, the controller begins to flush the cache. The flushing stops when the number of unwritten entries drops below the *stop flushing* value. The controller always flushes the oldest cache entries first. Unwritten cache entries older than 20 seconds will be flushed automatically. A typical start flushing level would be 80%. Very often, the stop flushing level is set to 80%. This means the cache controller will not allow more than 80% of the cache for write operations.

If stop level value was significantly lower than the start value, a high amount of disk write activity would result when flushing the cache, which would interfere with normal disk access. If the values are similar, then the controller only flushes the amount needed to stay within limits. Choosing low start and stop percentages increases the chance that data requested by a read command will not be in the cache, decreasing the

cache hit rate and the I/O request rate. It also increases the number of disk writes necessary to maintain the cache level.

These cache settings have a large impact not only on performance of the FAStT Storage Server but also on the availability of data. If you want to achieve maximum performance, you may have to sacrifice availability.

Logical drive modification priority

The performance of the FAStT Storage Server will be adversely affected by any of the following operations taking place during production hours:

- Copyback
- econstruction
- Initialization
- Changing segment size
- Defragmentation of an array
- Adding free capacity to an array
- Dynamic logical drive expansion
- Changing the RAID level of an array

This effect may be minimized by prioritizing these activities. There are five priority levels. The lowest rate favors system performance most.

Providing multiple path

If you have a FAStT Storage Server with two controllers, you can provide redundant I/O paths between the host systems and the storage subsystem. There are two different components that provide redundancy in the I/O data paths: the Auto Volume Transfer (AVT) feature of the storage subsystem and a host multi-path driver, for example, Redundant Disk Array Controller (RDAC). Some operating systems provide this as a standard feature. AVT is a feature of the microcode release and is enabled by default. It provides redundant I/O paths in conjunction with a multi-path driver installed on the host system.

When a logical volume is defined, it is assigned to one of the two controllers (*preferred* controller). Normally, this controller will manage all I/O requests for this logical drive. If there is a problem in the path, the multipath driver in the host system starts using the other path. Now the *alternate* controller will receive the I/O requests for the logical drive. The logical drive will now be moved from the preferred controller to the alternate one. I/O requests are now handled through the alternate I/O path.

Note: For more information on the FAStT Storage Servers, refer to the product documentation and the following redbooks:

- *Fibre Array Storage Technology: A FAStT introduction*, SG24-6246
- *IBM TotalStorage FAStT700 and Copy Services*, SG24-6808

9.7 Network storage

In principle, storage can either be directly attached to host servers or be accessible over a network. From a performance point of view, it would seem that the more closely storage is associated with hosts, the better application performance would be, but we should consider SAN, iSCSI, and NAS.

There are many factors to consider when deciding the design and distribution of a storage farm, not the least of which is cost. However, in this brief overview, three network storage options are mentioned with the aim of positioning them relative to one another from a technical performance point of view only.

9.7.1 Storage Area Network

A Storage Area Network (SAN) is a specialized, dedicated high speed network to which host servers and storage devices attach. A SAN, just like a LAN, allows any-to-any connections across that network, using elements such as routers, gateways, hubs, and switches. It eliminates the traditional dedicated connection between a server and its storage. A SAN could include disk, tape, and optical storage, which may be located many kilometers from its host servers.

The standard network technology used in a SAN is Fibre Channel. Fibre Channel incorporates the data delivery (OSI Transport layer) characteristics of an I/O bus with the flexible connectivity and distance characteristics of a network. It was designed to be optimized for storage environments, where the transfer of large blocks of data is a requirement.

Fibre Channel uses serial SCSI-3 lower level protocols (block I/O) like a SCSI bus does and achieves effective data rates of up to 80 MBps (1 Gbps Fibre Channel implementation), compared to about 30 MBps with Gigabit Ethernet.

Fibre Channel transmission is defined across three topologies: point-to-point, arbitrated loop, and switched fabric.

Note: For more information about SANs, see the Redbooks *IBM SAN Survival Guide*, SG24-6143 and *Designing and Optimizing an IBM Storage Area Network*, SG24-6419

9.7.2 Internet SCSI

Internet SCSI (iSCSI) is a proposed industry-standard that allows SCSI block I/O protocols (commands, sequences, and attributes) to be sent over a network using the popular TCP/IP protocol. This is analogous to the way SCSI commands are already mapped to Fibre Channel, parallel SCSI, and SSA media.

The handling of the TCP/IP protocol in iSCSI requires processor cycles at both the host and storage subsystem. Therefore, it is best suited for situations of lower I/O activity than Fibre Channel SAN, although it could still mean thousands of I/Os per second. Fibre Channel SANs support SCSI commands mapped directly to Fibre Channel media, and processor overhead for this mapping is low.

Due to reduced protocol overhead, iSCSI performs better than NAS on Ethernet. This is because iSCSI handles SCSI directly, rather than translating between file-I/O protocols and SCSI. So, a database implemented on raw devices over iSCSI is expected to perform better than if it were implemented on file systems in a NAS.

IBM iSCSI implementations are not yet available on AIX.

Note: For more information, see the Redbooks *IP Storage Networking: IBM NAS and iSCSI Solutions Second Edition*, SG24-6240 and *Using iSCSI Solutions' Planning and Implementation*, SG24-6291.

9.7.3 Network Attached Storage

Storage devices that optimize the concept of file sharing across the network have come to be known as Network Attached Storage (NAS) devices. Data is sent to and from NAS devices over the LAN using TCP/IP protocol. By making storage devices LAN addressable, the storage is freed from its direct attachment to a specific server, and any-to-any connectivity is facilitated using the LAN fabric. In principle, any user running any operating system can access files on the remote storage device. This is done by means of a common network access protocol, for example, NFS for UNIX servers.

One of the key differences of a NAS disk device, compared to DAS or other network storage solutions, such as SAN or iSCSI, is that all I/O operations use

file level I/O protocols. File I/O is a high level type of request that, in essence, specifies only the file to be accessed, but does not directly address the storage device, that is, there is no awareness of a disk volume or disk sectors in a file I/O request as there is in block I/O. So, for example, a database application that accesses data on a NAS device, by default, is configured to run with File System I/O and cannot utilize ‘raw I/O’ to achieve improved performance.

Note: For more information, see the redbook *IP Storage Networking: IBM NAS and iSCSI Solutions Second Edition*, SG24-6240.

Part 3

System optimization

This part deals with the actual tuning process for optimizing the performance of the RDBMS servers. The discussion starts with Chapter 10, “Implementing your database” on page 233 on doing the correct thing first. General monitoring discussion is provided in Chapter 11, “Monitoring an RDBMS system for performance” on page 251, and then specific tuning processes are introduced in Chapter 12, “Tuning an RDBMS system” on page 287.

Specific tuning hints and rule-of-thumbs are provided in the following chapters:

- Chapter 13, “AIX and hardware tuning considerations” on page 321
- Chapter 14, “DB2 UDB tuning” on page 339
- Chapter 15, “Oracle tuning” on page 377
- Chapter 16, “IBM Informix Dynamic Server tuning” on page 413

10

Implementing your database

This chapter covers hints and tips on how to install, set up, load, document, and test your database system on AIX systems. Basically, this chapter lets you learn from the mistakes of others, and the hints have been developed from experience of large production systems. The aim is to make your installation as simple and straight forward as possible and to avoid common pitfalls.

This chapter does not cover how to install the RDBMS code itself. This is very different for each RDBMS and even changes between releases. For details on how to install your RDBMS, refer to the documentation supplied with the product.

The topics that are covered in this chapter are:

- 10.1, “RDBMS installation process” on page 234 discusses some common implementation processes for RDBMS.
- 10.2, “Before RDBMS installation” on page 234 lists several items that need to be prepared before the RDBMS installation.
- 10.3, “Installing the RDBMS code” on page 243 lists some considerations on the installation process.
- 10.4, “After installation” on page 247 discusses some issues that should be addressed after the installation.

10.1 RDBMS installation process

Each RDBMS installation process has its own quirks. You need to carefully prepare the installation pre-requisites, installation requirements, and installation procedures. These procedures vary from one RDBMS to another, and also vary depending on the version or release of the RDBMS.

Most people rush into installing RDBMS code before really being ready. The pressure to start loading is clear and understandable. The machine has been delivered; the project has been waiting for some time; the various parts are ready, and everyone on the team wants to see some real progress before they go home. But, this pressure should be resisted. It is like a race car driver arriving at the race track for the first time and is itching to drive around the circuit. The driver will, of course, want to drive the race car, but it is still being prepared and tuned. As an alternative, the driver could take out a standard road car to “have a go”, but it is clear that the results, although interesting, will not help in the effort of winning races. The same is true of installing the RDBMS without the necessary planning and care. Indeed, many hours or days might be lost because what should be a quick test might fail to work, and it might take a long time to track down the cause. Worse still, a lot of damage can be caused by rumors and panic about this project being a failure because of reports that the machine and RDBMS do not work.

Some of the decisions made in the installation phase is critical in getting a good performance for the RDBMS operation later. The installation need to be performed correctly once, but you also need to document it to know exactly how you did it, in case you have to do it again in an emergency.

The information in this chapter is useful before, during, and after the installation process.

Summary: The recommended implementing approach is:

- Do it once.
- Do it right the first time.
- Know exactly how you did it.

10.2 Before RDBMS installation

There are several things that need to be considered before the RDBMS installation. These include preparing the hardware, installing the operating systems, and planning the RDBMS installation.

Topics covered in this section are:

- 10.2.1, “Hardware and AIX ready check list” on page 235
- 10.2.2, “Pre-starting check list” on page 238
- 10.2.3, “Database data” on page 239
- 10.2.4, “Hardware testing” on page 242

10.2.1 Hardware and AIX ready check list

The requirements before installing the database depend on who you are, or more precisely, your job role. If you are the AIX system administrator, then you are responsible for installing the IBM @server pSeries in the first place. As an alternative, you might be the database administrator and be using an internal I/T infrastructure team, IBM Global Services, a facilities management company, or IBM business partner or consultants to do this part of the work.

Whoever is preparing the IBM @server pSeries hardware and operating system needs to have the following items ready and running:

- Basic machine hardware for running AIX.
- Recent version of AIX. The AIX code is (very approximately) updated once per year. As this is a new system, make sure you at least start off with the current version of AIX and save the effort of upgrading shortly afterwards. The only reason for installing an earlier version is that application support is some times lagging behind the latest version, but only by one release. Also, from experience, both AIX and the RDBMS have improved performance with each release and additional new functions that either give performance or reduce the manpower required to maintain the system.
- Set up the AIX root user with a sensible password. This will need to be changed later once the system is ready for production use. Therefore, use something easy to type quickly for now (not something guessable, such as the machine or project name or persons name) but do have a password. During the set up and installation, many people might know the root user password to configure the various parts of the system. A simple password does this and will not waste time. Do not use a password with odd upper and lower case characters or passwords that are meaningless and easy to get wrong. Once every thing is working, root access should be limited to only those that really need root authority.
- Change the maximum number of users to the licensed limit. When the system was purchased, this included a particular number of users. It is simple to forget to install the machine with this number set up. To do this, use SMIT and use the **System Environment** menu. This is one of the few things that requires a system reboot, so get this done now. The two user license default

limit is too low for installation, and you will find the machine refusing user logins; therefore, it can take some time before you work out what is causing the problem. If you run into this problem, the root user can still log in, and you can then **su** to the user you need.

- Increase the maximum number of processes per user and set this to a number sensible for the RDBMS user who will be creating many of the processes on behalf of the users. This limit will stop the RDBMS from handling a lot of users and cause problems on the first test of the system with more than 30 to 40 users. You do not have to reboot the system, but you will have to stop the RDBMS completely, log out, and then log in and restart the database.
- The paging space created and online. There is a large debate on the size of paging space to use. We recommend that the absolute minimum is one times the size of memory. Most people would argue for much more than this. It might seem a lot when you have 32 GB of memory, but below this, you are taking a serious risk. This is a classic benchmark system mistake to forget if a quick test is run on the default paging space. If this test requires a lot more paging space, then absolute mayhem is guaranteed. Processes start crashing while running (when requesting more memory), new processes (when forking) fail, and AIX automatically attempts process re-forking at 30 second intervals. Also, UNIX commands fail to start, even root cannot log in, and usually you can either wait three hours and AIX will eventually work through these unfair demands and recover, or you can halt the machine with the reset button and wait for the long, full system check reboot. It is worth avoiding these problems by spending ten minutes setting up a proper sized paging space. Refer to 8.2.1, “Basic and future AIX resources” on page 156 for more details.
- Have all the media devices of the system working, such as the CD-ROM and tape drives, because they will be needed. It is better to get these devices working beforehand, as you might require changes to SCSI cables or stopping the system to check the hardware. A good way to test the tape drive(s) is to create a system backup (using **mksysb)** of the initial AIX system. This could also save time if the installation of the RDBMS fails, and you need to clean up quickly. For example, incorrectly setting the owner and permissions in the /dev directory (required for raw device access by the RDBMS) could take hours to fix by hand. A simple mistake on the command line is all it takes.
- All databases, of course, require disk drives. Large databases require a large number of disks. All of the disk drives have to be connected and available. We assume that, in the hardware planning stage, a suitable design has been carried out on the layout and the configuration of the disks and adapters, for example, the number of disks that may be attached to SCSI adapters to provide full access to all disks at high speed. Additionally, for SSA or FCAL

connected disks, the number of disks per loop and the loop design for recovery must be carried out. It is vital to check that the documented design has actually been implemented. It is very easy for hardware to be configured wrong by mistake, or the hardware people might have made what they thought were improvements to the design without telling anyone. It is important to have a very clear, full, and documented understanding of the adapter, loop, and disk configuration.

- Multiple user access. Do not try implementing an RDBMS on the only dumb terminal connected to the machine. Often, in the course of setting up the machine, you will want two (or more) screens, as you will be partly through one activity, and you will want to check something without stopping the tool. Two screens, or better still, an X Windows access to the machine, will save you time and frustration.
- Hardware sign off. Get an agreement with the hardware engineer installing the machine that the machine is complete (all parts delivered) and that everything is working and there are no outstanding activities. On large machines, this can take time, and you may have been told the machine is working, but you were not told that some final part or cable is missing or that not all of the hardware installation process has been completed. It is best to double check that all is finished. Also, make a check before the hardware support personnel go, as it is easy to miss things, such as earthing cables on metal covers and that all the cables are neat and tidy and their weight supported correctly.
- Finally, check that the machine reboots cleanly and without user intervention.

Summary: Installation summary:

- Get the machine running.
- Install the latest version of AIX.
- Set the root user password.
- Set the user license limit.
- Set the processes per user.
- Set up paging space.
- Quick test the devices, such as CD-ROM and tape drives.
- Quick test the disks and ensure that they are connected appropriately.
- Use an X Windows terminal.
- Get hardware sign off.
- Check the machine reboots cleanly.

10.2.2 Pre-starting check list

The last section covers the basic hardware and AIX, but before starting to install the RDBMS, there is another list of things to check and information to have at hand. These include:

- The AIX installation media. You may be told to load extra features of AIX to support the RDBMS, the application, or administration tools. Do not waste time trying to track these down later, so make sure they are available and are the correct version.
- Access to AIX manuals. You must have some means to access the AIX manual pages and AIX information. This could be hardcopy physical manuals, but, as it is more often the case these days, it is likely to be online manuals. Make sure they are current. Some of the system administrator commands have new options on each release, unlike the normal user commands that are all now POSIX standard and change little between releases. Also, have the hardware manual for the actual machine, the disk drive subsystem, and the tape units you are using, along with the IBM @server pSeries product documentation with all the boot LED codes, in case there are hardware problems. Again, this will save you time later.
- The RDBMS installation manual. The number of people attempting to install a database system without this is amazing! We have already said there are often subtle changes between versions that will catch out anyone assuming it will be the same procedure as the last version. Your notes from the last install might be acceptable for a test or development system but not for a production system.
- The RDBMS readme files will include last minute information that the vendor thinks you need to know before installing. So, make sure you have it and have read it.
- The application installation media. This might be a third party application on CD-ROM or in-house binaries supplied by your own development team. It is particularly true for in-house development that the application is often not clearly documented or controlled. Many times, these things are left until the last minute, and the development team has trouble getting the function and features correct before sitting down to write documentation about things, such as installation procedures.

  Whatever the source of application, you should know:

  - Precisely which version it is
  - What level of testing it has been through
  - If optional parts are required or not
  - Any dependencies on AIX level or extensions, IBM @server pSeries architectures, and RDBMS level and extensions

  - The required size of both disk space and memory per user
  - Placement recommendations in the file systems
  - Pre- and post-installation requirements, particularly if the RDBMS needs to be modified
  - Configuration parameters
  - How updates are going to be handled
- The RDBMS vendors and application recommended tuning parameters and options for the RDBMS. These are likely to change as you gain experience with running the system, but you need to start somewhere.

Summary: RDBMS installation check list:

- AIX installation media
- AIX documentation
- RDBMS installation manuals
- RDBMS read me files
- Applications installation media
- RDBMS vendors and application recommended tuning parameters and options

10.2.3 Database data

We are covering the database data at this point because most of the problems with database data can be tackled before the system is ready for use. At this point, you can gather the information and make sure the data will load once the database is ready. As databases grow in size, it is often forgotten that handling large volumes of data takes time. If the data is found to be wrong when it is being loaded, it can take hours or days to prepare an improved version. It might take weeks if it has to be fitted into a production cycle.

Particular care must be taken regarding the database data. Very few databases start with no data at all. We assume the application install will create the empty tables and perhaps the indexes. Some applications hide all of the complexity of the database from the installer, but this requires a lot of work from the application provider. It also limits the choices for the installer. If this is the case, you have to have faith in the application vendor or take a look at the information to determine what has been pre-decided and if it is going to perform well on your system. Other applications tell the installer to modify and then run a database creation script. Either way, there are a number of questions that need to be asked about the actual data to be placed within the database once created. Also, note that

precise answers are required. If you get either imprecise answers, or are told not to worry, then start worrying. Here are the basic items you need:

- The database schema describes the objects and relationships in the database. All good databases or applications should have a schema diagram available. The objects are implemented as tables, and the relationships are used in SQL to join tables together (in the WHERE clause). The database schema is often a large entity relationship diagram, as this is a good way to represent the schema's objects/tables (by boxes on the diagram) and relationships (by lines joining the tables). Some databases and applications will simply have the table creation script.
- Referential integrity policy. Many applications use the SQL standard to implement referential integrity using primary keys (the RDBMS will use an index to enforce this behind the scenes) and to define the other tables referring to this key. This ensures that a row referring to the primary key of another row in another table actually exists. For example, if an employee row states the employee works in department 42, then there must be one row in the department table with a primary key of 42. The script to create the tables will include these keys, and their use is explicitly described in the SQL. But, note that primary keys and enforcing them does create an overhead and has a performance cost, so many applications do not enforce this on production databases. In this case, you should be provided with a script or program that can check for referential integrity.
- A list of every table, its definition, the average row size, row count, and size, including the RDBMS overhead (to allow for rows being placed in disk blocks and some wasted space at the end of each block). This is often in the form of a spreadsheet to allow simple adding up of all the various columns to work out the overall size.
- A list of every index, its definition, uniqueness, average size, and size including RDBMS overhead. This also is often in the form of a spread sheet to allow the simple adding up of all the various columns to work out the overall size. Indexes are vital for high performance, and a tuned application will demand a minimum set of indexes, while others might be added after production goes live and be based on observed access patterns.
- The tables and indexes that are very busy (some times called the hot tables). These are the items that are critical for the best performance of the system. They will need careful placement on the disks of the database to ensure that overworked disks can be avoided. They can be placed on dedicated disks, or the data can be spread across many disks to ensure I/O bandwidth.
- The data source. If this is a machine that is very different to the database machine, then problems can be expected. If it is another UNIX machine, it is worth checking that the tape media are compatible, and the tape commands use the same format. It is worth actually trying if a small sample can be

loaded. An alternative is using a network, but check that it can handle the data bandwidth requirements and actually works. If it is a different architecture, like the IBM AS/400 or IBM mainframe, then both the tape format and the data format is worth checking. Extra care needs to be taken if the volume of the data means multiple tapes because *end of tape* marks and formats are often a difficult problem. Generally, the UNIX **dd** command can load the raw data from any tape drive, provided the drive recognizes the format and tape density. But, you may need a very good C programmer to extract the data from the file that was read from tape and produce a file that can be loaded into the RDBMS. If there is any doubt, run a test beforehand.

- The date when the data is available and if improved data is available at a later date. Many systems are tested with early data and then reloaded again with the final data just before going live. This might be because the data manipulation and cleaning is not finished or because the production system needs to go live with the very latest copy of the data, as it will have been updated during the test period.
- Verify that the data has been test loaded on the same RDBMS version. Developers often assume later releases will work the same, but there can be subtle differences.
- The instructions for loading the data. Many data suppliers assume you can read their mind and do not supply basic information. Is it clear which data is for which table? Is it clear in which order to load the tables? Is it clear which tape contains what data? Many companies have tape defaults and standards and assume everyone else understands these. Benchmark centers are often sent tapes labeled TAPE1 to TAPE9. It takes time to work out the command used to create the tape. It takes time to work out the block size. It takes time to work out the options to the command used. Then you can start to work out what data is on the tape.
- Maintaining referential integrity during the load. If the SQL standards for integrity are used, it can be very difficult to load a database, because rows and tables have to be loaded in the right order, and this makes using bulk loading methods very hard to use. It is easy to bulk load 100 million rows, and only afterwards notice they were all rejected because they refer to a table that has not been loaded yet. The alternative is to disable (sometimes called switch off) referential integrity while loading the data and then enable it afterwards. Once the database is loaded, it is important to check it was loaded correctly. The absolute minimum is to count the rows of each table. This makes sure that it was correctly loaded and ensures that the table has not been forgotten or loaded twice. Also, check that the indexes are built-in and valid.
- Recommended load method. Each RDBMS has various means to load data, including simple, bulk, and very fast loading methods. If the data for a particular table is large, then it is important to load it using the right method, or

it might take days or weeks to load the database. For example, on one benchmark, the simplest method (Oracles PL/SQL) was used to create a sample database, and it worked well. But when it was rerun to create the full database, it seemed to be taking a long time. On checking the progress, it was worked out that it would take three and a half weeks to complete. A better approach was developed using a C program to generate the raw data, which was then loaded using the Oracle loader.

This might seem to be a long list of items, but this aspect of the database implementation process is often ignored, postponed, or covered at the last possible moment, and the complexity is often not appreciated. A lack of planning can bring the installation of a database system to a complete stand still. Planning ahead and having the right data and information at the right time can often reduced the time it takes to install a system. A lot of the preparation can even take place before the machine arrives.

10.2.4 Hardware testing

Before you start loading a large amount of data onto a machine, a few things about hardware should be acknowledged. First, the good news:

- Computer systems get more reliable every year.
- Each component is designed to self-check. For example, memory with ECC and parity will automatically check for memory errors and even correct them, if they are found, without stopping the system.
- The mean time between failures is larger too. For example, the mean time between failures on disks is longer with each generation of disk, and each generation of disk supports more and more data.

Indeed, IBM is committed to improving quality in all products and does testing to ensure each new product is more reliable than the one it replaces.

Now, the bad news: new systems get bigger every year. This means that systems are more complex with many more failure points. When the complexity grows faster than the reliability, it may mean that potential failure risk increases, for example, if reliability improves twice, while the systems is 10 times more complex, then potentially the whole systems will fail five times more often.

This is a very real problem for manufacturers of very large systems. Larger systems need more and more designed-in features to cater for failures in the various subsystems that can monitor and correct temporary and permanent failures and yet do not bring the system down. IBM is leading the way in this field in machines, such as the IBM @server pSeries, which contains self-healing features. This is because IBM has such a large amount of experience in designing very reliable systems for mainframe customers.

This means we must do everything possible to try to eliminate failures in components and, therefore, reduce the risk, however small. Analysis of failures in large systems, such as large RDBMS systems, reveal three important facts:

- Most failures happen quite soon, within the first 24 hours of serious use.
- After that, failures seem to happen at completely random intervals, but usually much later in terms of weeks, months, and years.
- Occasionally, failures happen in small batches. This sounds odd, but it happens. For example, if you replace all the light bulbs in a house at the same time, you can notice several light bulbs will fail in the same week about a year later!

This is particularly true of hard disk drives because they have practically all the high speed moving parts of a modern computer system. CD-ROM and tapes have moving parts but not under the same constant pressure as disks. To eliminate disk failures, we must:

- Burn-in the system: Run a little test on the system for 24 hours, particularly on the disks. It might take an hour to create some data on disk. Then, write a script to copy the data back and forth, but it will be worth it in the long run. This test does not have to be complex.
- Prepare for failure with some form of disk protection, such as mirrored disks or RAID 5.
- If you have protection using duplication, make sure they are as far away as possible from each other, for example, that disk mirrors are not in the same disk tower or drawer, not on the same loop or cable, and not on the same adapter.

This might seem like overkill, but the big benchmark centers, who regularly install a 10 TB disk subsystem, do this because they have learned from experience. This disk burn-in will, of course, also test everything else, such as adapters, memory, buses, and CPUs.

Tip: The larger the system, the more valuable a burn-in test will be.

10.3 Installing the RDBMS code

You should always read the manual, and in this case, the manual is the installation manual or installation guide and the *read me first* information.

We advise following the RDBMS vendor standards and recommended procedures in all cases.

For example, Oracle recommends the Optimal Flexible Architecture (OFA) layout for the RDBMS code, scripts, and parameter files. Also, follow the recommended names for the RDBMS owner names and directories. This makes it far easier for others to work on your system, such as IBM, business partners, or third party consultants. These recommendations from the RDBMS vendors have been found to work by experience. Do not invent your own way of doing things, or you will be creating a problem that has already been resolved.

The recommendations also cater for the long term, for example, when you upgrade to the next release of the RDBMS and have to have two versions running at the same time.

It is very important to load all the recommended pre-requisite code, and check AIX PTFs to the latest level. It might seem like extreme caution, but they are there for a reason. This might be because:

- Other customers may have had problems that you can now easily avoid and save time.
- If you have a problem, this will be the very first thing you will be forced to check and ensure it is correct by your support people or the vendors.
- If there are problems, and you have not done this, you will look, at best, very unprofessional.

So, install the RDBMS by simply and methodically going through the installation steps, one at a time, and make sure you do it right the first time. The steps are:

- 10.3.1, “Physical layout of the database” on page 244
- 10.3.2, “Scripting the build” on page 245
- 10.3.3, “Build a small cut down system” on page 247

10.3.1 Physical layout of the database

We are now at the point where the RDBMS is installed, and the next step is the creation of the actual database. We have to assume, at this point, that the database was designed, and this was documented. This documentation should include the placement and sizes for every part of the RDBMS system, including:

- RDBMS code (actually already loaded at this point)
- Application code
- New versions of RDBMS and application and their fixes
- System catalogue or data dictionary
- Data
- Indexes

- Sort or temporary areas
- Logs (roll forward and backward)

This should also be summarized in a data placement policy so that if you need to make small changes during the database creation, you know how to keep within the design goals. Later growth and increases in the number of disks can follow the same principles. This will include:

- Disk protection used: This might be different for the various parts of the database.
- Naming conventions for volume groups and logical volumes.
- Conventions for separating data (such as mirroring) and mixing data and indexes, or not.
- Stripe sizes and the sizes of logical volumes.
- The number of disks in volume groups or RAID 5 LUNs.

You should also have the default RDBMS parameters to be initially used and options for changing these once you have some experience with the database is used. For example:

- The size of data blocks to use in the database
- How much memory has been allowed for in the RDBMS disk pool or cache and the other parts of the shared memory
- What levels of parallelism should be set and how this is set

10.3.2 Scripting the build

There are three methods for setting up the disks, installing the application, and loading the database data:

- *Hacking* the machine by sitting at a terminal until it is done
- Writing and running a script
- A mixture of the above

Experienced people only use one method, and that is the scripting method.

Tip: Use scripts to create everything. It is very tempting to just start and work your way through to the end, but please, just do not do it.

Take the time to place all the AIX commands in a script for things, such as:

- Creating AIX volume groups or RAID 5 disks
- Creating logical volumes and their stripes
- Adding logical volume mirrors
- Creating accounts and setting up .profile files
- Changing ownerships and permissions
- Creating journal file systems

Also, script RDBMS tasks, such as:

- Creating the database and loading the catalog/data dictionary
- Creating containers and tablespaces
- Creating tables
- Loading data
- Creating indexes
- Checking the database consistency

This scripting has a number of benefits that will save you time in the long run and has hidden benefits too:

- Scripting makes you think and plan ahead.
- Scripting makes sure everything is done in the right order.
- Scripting is actually faster. The machine does not have to wait for you to think of the next task or wait while you are gone for lunch.
- Scripting documents as to how it was done, which can be vital for disaster recovery.
- Scripting is much less error prone, as you can visually double check the commands and options.
- Scripting helps because, if it fails, it is simply a quick edit to get it right the next time. Even if you forget something major and have to start all over again, if it is scripted, you just fix the script and let it run overnight.
- Scripting makes things consistent, such as naming conventions and sizes. If you are typing in all the names at the command line, it is easy to make simple typing mistakes that initially go unnoticed.

Once you have a set of scripts like this, you will find creating the next database much easier.

10.3.3 Build a small cut down system

If you have a database with more than 10 GB of data, then we advise you to first implement a small cut down (say 1 GB or 2%, whichever is the greater) system as a quick trial of the main system. This allows you to:

- Work out how long the production system build will take, particularly the time to load the very large tables and indexes and investigate alternatives and options to reduce the load times. You might decide to use other tools if the time load is too slow.
- Sort out the scripts so that they will work the first time.
- Check that the data formats are correct and readable.
- Check that you have a complete set of data (although you might have to load a subset of the main large tables).
- Check that the data is consistent and that you have tools to prove it.
- Check that the application is complete.
- Check that the application performs reasonably well even on smaller data sets and tests the indexes help performance.
- Check that the administration and support tools actually work.
- Check that the backup is complete and recovery can take place.
- Check that the interfaces to the users, other application, and other computer systems work as expected.

This cut down system might be a throw away prototype system or might live on as a simple test system. Either way, the facts and experiences learned will be invaluable when it comes to building the full size system and should avoid common mistakes in handling large data volumes.

10.4 After installation

After the RDBMS code has been installed and data loaded into the systems, there are several post-installation tasks that need to be performed. Those are:

- 10.4.1, “Documentation and log book” on page 248
- 10.4.2, “Backup and recovery test” on page 248

10.4.1 Documentation and log book

It is important that the following three tasks be done:

- Finish the documentation and have a copy stored off site so that you are ready for a disaster.
- Write a two page summary of what was learned during the installation, what went right, what went wrong, how to avoid the same mistakes the next time, what still needs to be worked on, and pass this information around the whole team. This is also called quality feedback to improve the process.
- Start an IBM @server pSeries system and RDBMS log book or other change control procedure to record changes. This can be either on the system or hardcopy. This would mean that you always know what you have and why and when changes happened. This is invaluable for performance tuning later on and diagnosing the cause of problems.

The log book or change control mechanism allows a system administrator to get a quick answer for questions on the system's status, such as:

- Has anything in the system been changed recently?
- Has anything changed in the database recently?
- When was the last change, and what were the details?

The easiest change control is a log book. It can be a simple binder of pages with the following columns:

Date	The date when the change is performed
Who	The person that perform or authorized the change
What	The detailed information of the action performed
Why	The reason that warrant the change to take place

This would cover 90% of what any more complex change control system can achieve.

Tip: Start a system log book or other change control procedure now.

10.4.2 Backup and recovery test

Once the database has been established and the data is loaded, the backup and recovery plan is very important.

You have taken some time in getting the database ready for use, so save this work using the backup, in order to ensure that you do not have to repeat this work all over again.

Many sites do not test the recovery plan. When they then have a problem, it is too late. We all know a few horror stories:

- The tapes were not readable.
- They did not have the scripts to create the database and, therefore, could not reload the database.
- They were just about to recover the data from tape when the automatic backup script started and overwrote the backup with the corrupted database.
- They forgot to back up the logs (or some other vital database component), so the backup was useless.
- The expert was away on holiday, and there was no one else who knew how to recover the data or even the tape format and commands to use.

Try hard not to be the starting point for the next industry horror story and check those backups and disaster recovery plans.

Documenting and recovery planning go *hand in hand*:

- Save the scripts used to create the initial database. They are a good start for writing recovery scripts and documentation for recovery.
- Automate the generation of every configuration detail into a regular report, such as the disks' layout and parameters.
- Store off-site copies of the details along with the backups in case the site is destroyed.
- Database backup is useless unless you can re-create the database into which to load the data first.
- It is extremely easy to forget vital facts and parts of the system, so if in doubt, document it twice.
- Testing recovery is the only way to prove it; schedule a recovery test once per year. At the very least, have an independent person check that the procedures, information, and tapes are readable.

And, finally, a warning: 70% of companies that fail to recover their IT systems within two weeks of a site disaster go bankrupt. Do not let your IT department be the cause of your company failing.

11

Monitoring an RDBMS system for performance

Monitoring the RDBMS provides the database administrator with information about the interaction between user applications and the RDBMS and also between the RDBMS and the operating system. These indicators can help the database administrator identify possible bottlenecks and determine how to adjust the different RDBMS configuration parameters.

The topics in this chapter are:

- 11.1, “Performance monitoring issues” on page 252 discusses some common issues in performance monitoring.
- 11.2, “Monitoring methods usage” on page 255 lists some methods for monitoring RDBMS performance.
- 11.3, “RDBMS tools” on page 258 discusses specific tools that are available from DB2 UDB, Oracle, and IBM Informix for monitoring performance.
- 11.4, “IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases” on page 285 gives an overview of IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases that can automate monitoring RDBMS.

11.1 Performance monitoring issues

There are several common issues related to performance monitoring, such as:

- 11.1.1, “Monitoring responsibility” on page 252
- 11.1.2, “Documenting performance problems” on page 253

11.1.1 Monitoring responsibility

A poorly performing database does not necessarily mean that the hardware does not meet the system demands, or that the database design was poorly planned, or that the application programs were coded badly. However, one (or all) of them could be the cause of the database’s bad performance.

Performance in focus must be a reality for everyone involved with RDBMSs, from application developers and system designers through the database administrator. A well-tuned system takes into account not only the database itself, but all the areas that, in conjunction with the database, form the system.

Prior to designing the database structure, there is a need for understanding all the database’s resource demands regarding disks, memory, and processors. If the hardware was not very well planned for meeting all the user’s demands, this is the first possible area to be considered.

We can basically point out three different jobs that are in charge of almost all possible enhancements in the RDBMS performance area:

- The system administrator
- The database administrator
- The application developers

The system administrator should always be aware of how the databases are affecting the physical structure and also provide a stable and secure operational environment for them.

The database administrator’s main tasks are: design, develop, operate, safeguard, and maintain one or more databases. They can also be responsible for the database integrity and availability by managing the authorities and privileges over all the objects as well as controlling the backups.

The application developer is responsible for developing and testing applications that issue SQL statements for inserting, deleting, updating, and retrieving data. This is a special area where a poorly coded SQL statement is able to influence the behavior of the entire database. You can influence the IBM @server pSeries memory and swap disk consumption depending on the amount of resources the

database will have to allocate for the SQL statements to be executed. Please refer to 2.4.2, “Structured Query Language” on page 31 for more details about using SQL statements.

It is important to say that the three areas are inter-dependent, and that a change in one of the areas could possibly affect the other ones.

In almost all the cases where performance problems show up, the database administrator is usually the person capable of pointing out where the main performance bottleneck is.

Tip: The monitoring process is a team task and will only be successfully performed when all the involved areas agree and work together targeting a stable and controlled system.

11.1.2 Documenting performance problems

Performance problems, in a monitored and stable environment, can be detected by the administrators, but are usually reported to them by the end user.

After a problem is reported, problem determination monitoring should be done by involving the database administrator, the system administrator, and the application programmer.

The following sections list the items that can be analyzed for resolving the performance problem.

CPU

When the CPU is busy 90% of the time, it is considered to have reached its capacity. It is also a good practice to monitor how the CPU is being consumed by AIX. The operating system should not consume more than approximately 20-40% of CPU time. If this value is higher, use performance tools such as trace or tprof to find out which application is causing the high system CPU time consumption and continue your investigation from there. For example, find out if the application can be changed so that it consumes less system CPU time.

In multi-processor systems, the system administrator should check and see if the CPU load is balanced across all of the CPUs.

Disk

The database administrator should be aware that wrong physical data placement could lead to data skew and, sometimes, overload the I/O requests for some disks while others could be available and not processing.

The I/O requests should be equally distributed among the disk controllers and disks.

Memory

The Oracle RDBMS uses memory for manipulating the SGA, background, and user processes. DB2 UDB uses it for the bufferpools, database heaps, internal processes, and agents. Informix DS uses it for IPC, communications, user sessions, and user and system threads.

The more memory you can allocate for the database, the higher the *buffer pool hit ratio* tends to be. The buffer pool hit ratio indicates the percentage of time that the database manager did not need to load a page from disk since it was already available in memory. The greater the buffer pool hit ratio, the lower the frequency of disk I/O.

Paging space

The system and database administrators should be aware that, whenever you use the operating system paging space, the performance automatically decreases, since the number of disk I/Os and CPU consumption increases.

The amount of disk space defined for the AIX paging space will depend on how the database allocates the real memory resources. If the amount of real memory is enough to supply the RDBMS with all the memory requested, the paging space can be set to the default value recommended by the AIX Installation Assistant tool.

Sort operation

The application developers should avoid using SQL statements that can generate sort operations, such as ORDER BY and GROUP BY clauses.

If the sort operation cannot be avoided, it is recommended that you allocate enough room for this operation to be done in real memory and, thus, avoid using the paging space. DB2 UDB allows you to control the allocation of the sort heap by using the sortheap and sheapthres parameters (see also 14.3.5, “Sort heap size (sortheap)” on page 361 and 14.3.6, “Sort heap threshold (sheapthres)” on page 362). Oracle uses a similar approach, allowing the sort area to be sized by setting the value of sort_area_size in the init.ora configuration file. Informix needs a little more work, because there is no separate parameter to control sort pool size. In fact, you need to control the shmvirtsize parameter.

Locks

The database administrator should always control the number of locks on the database. Both Oracle and DB2 RDBMSs lock data using the lowest level of restrictiveness (the row level), allowing the highest degree of concurrence while

guaranteeing data consistency. Informix DS, nevertheless, uses page lock as default, but allows you to override it at a table, SQL, or environment level, specifying a different lock granularity.

The application developers should keep in mind that the frequency of COMMIT statements usually determines the degree of concurrence. The more COMMITs the application developers code, the less rows will be locked, thus allowing other users to use the rows. Although each commit operation increases the number of physical I/Os to disk in order to record the new row value, it is still recommended that, whenever suitable, COMMIT statements are used.

For information on DB2 UDB lock parameters, see 14.3.14, “Maximum storage for lock list (locklist)” on page 370 and 14.3.15, “Maximum percent of lock list before escalation (maxlocks)” on page 371.

Deadlocks

A deadlock situation happens when two or more applications are waiting indefinitely for data locked by each other.

Although this situation is automatically solved by all RDBMSs and does not need external intervention, a high number of occurrences can point to possible lock contention, and the application’s code should probably be reviewed as well as the isolation level.

11.2 Monitoring methods usage

We propose that there are three types of performance monitoring methods, which are regular monitoring, ad hoc monitoring, and alert monitoring. Although we can propose these three different methods of monitoring, it is important to highlight that the best choice will vary from administrator to administrator.

The monitoring task is very important in order to:

- Maintain a minimum level of control over the system environment. The more the establishment of the monitoring process is delayed, the more complex it will become to put the environment (hardware and software) under control.
- Prevent the machine and operating system from affecting the database, for example, through external factors, such as slow disks and CPUs, lack of memory, or older versions of operating systems.
- Preventing the database from affecting the machine and operating system. If the database is consuming more memory, disks space, and CPU than it is supposed to, the operational system can be severely impacted.

Each monitoring session consists of basically three steps:

1. Define your objectives

   You have to define exactly which database or AIX area you want to monitor. For example, you might want to know how your queries are affecting AIX memory consumption or how many disk I/Os your applications have done so far for retrieving the data.

2. Define information you want to analyze

   Once you know which area you want to analyze, you have to figure out the possible ways to achieve the results. For example, to find out how the queries are affecting AIX memory consumption, you could start the analysis by taking a look on how much memory space the database is allocating for the sort operation and also check how memory and paging space are consumed when the applications are running on AIX.

3. Define which tools will be used

   Once you have chosen what to monitor and how to monitor, you have to choose which tool will be used. You may use the predefined monitors, or you can also create your own monitoring scripts.

All three steps must be followed every time you begin a monitoring session.

Once you are familiar with all the different monitoring tools and are aware of all the possible monitoring strategies, you will be able to determine which tool best fits your daily database's monitoring needs and also create some scripts that, using the output from the monitoring commands, can help you speed up the monitoring process.

It is also recommended that you store all the daily database monitoring information so that you can have a better and cumulative understanding of how the machine resources are being consumed by your database. This monitoring history could help in determining how the database is growing and also help to plan for more memory and disk resources before these issues become bottlenecks.

11.2.1 Regular monitoring method

This monitoring technique is an essential daily routine for both system and database administrators.

The main purpose of this close and regular monitoring is to:

- Keep the AIX and database under supervised control
- Document how the system and the database are performing day-to-day

- Based on the collected history, try to narrow down the possible predictable incidents

The system administrator and the database administrator involved with the regular monitoring should have the following prerequisites:

- Global system and database knowledge
- Total knowledge of their expertise area
- Ability to manipulate the monitoring tools
- Ability to create their own monitoring scripts

They should also be committed to allocating, every single day, a time period for this monitoring process.

11.2.2 Ad hoc monitoring method

Although the regular monitoring method guarantees that the system is, most of the time, under total and assisted control, some unpredictable facts, such as unexpected delays or hangs, might sometimes happen.

For this specific scenario, the practice of regular monitoring will assist the database administrator in figuring out the main cause of basic problems, such as if an application is really hanging or just performing long sorts, if an application is stopped due to a lock or deadlock situation, or if a query response time is too low due to a disk I/O bottleneck. A good practice is to have some predefined scripts already created that can speed up the problem determination by displaying basic system characteristics, such as CPU consumption, disk usage, paging space consumption, number of users connected, and number of AIX processes allocated to the database.

Refer to Appendix B, “Vital monitoring SQLs and commands” on page 459 for more information about the suggested scripts.

11.2.3 Alert monitoring method

The alert method consists of predefining some lower and upper values for special performance variables, and, when these values are reached, the database or system administrators are notified, and then an action can be taken for solving that possible problem. This alert method can also be used with the regular monitoring method but, due to its unassisted characteristic, should not be the only monitoring technique adopted for an environment.

11.3 RDBMS tools

The DB2 UDB, Oracle, and Informix performance monitoring tools can be used to assist an analysis of how the design of your system is affecting the way the database is performing. The database administrator should be aware of the most important success factors of the system, regarding not only how the system resources are being consumed but also how the database optimizer chooses the best and cheapest path to the data.

In addition to direct API and SQL interfaces into database statistic information, all RDBMSs include pre-defined GUI (Graphical User Interface) tools designed for easier database administration of both local and remote database instances.

11.3.1 DB2 UDB monitoring tools

DB2 UDB features two types of database monitoring, defined as follows:

- Snapshot monitoring: Used for obtaining database relevant statistics at a specific point in time, this monitoring is performed using snapshot APIs.
- Event monitoring: Used for obtaining database relevant statistics over a period of time, this monitoring is performed using SQL.

There is also a tool called Performance Monitor that uses the main functions of both the Snapshot and Event Monitor tools. The Performance Monitor is part of the Control Center.

Besides these monitoring tools, there is a tool called Explain that allows the database administrator to comprehend how the database is accessing the data.

No matter which tool you use for monitoring, it is necessary to keep in mind that the monitoring process is cyclical and should be part of the database administrator's everyday tasks.

Snapshot monitoring

For snapshot monitoring, there are eight levels of data available. Six monitor switches are used to control the focus and the amount of data to be collected. These switches can be turned on and off dynamically to reduce the amount of resources dedicated to monitoring if the system is running unmonitored for an extended period of time.

Through the snapshot APIs, it is possible to collect the resources being allocated at the database level, drilling down to the tasks being executed by each application connected to the database. This is the fastest and easiest way to collect vital database information at runtime, such as all the resources being locked by a specific session, the amount of memory space used for sort

operations, how many users are connected to the databases, and which statements are being issued by each connected user.

The following list gives the existing levels and switches for snapshot monitoring:

Snapshot monitoring levels:

- Database Manager
- Database
  - Application
  - Table
  - Tablespace
  - Bufferpool
  - Dynamic SQL
  - Locks
- Application
  - Locks
  - Statements
- Bufferpool

The snapshot monitoring switches are:

- Sort
- Lock
- Table
- Bufferpool
- UOW
- Statement

The status of the snapshot monitor switches can be queried through the DB2 UDB Command Line Processor (CLP), which is a non-GUI, tool or through the DB2 UDB Control Center. An example is shown in Example 11-1.

Example 11-1 Getting monitor

```
DB2> get monitor switches

Monitor Recording Switches
Buffer Pool Activity Information  (BUFFERPOOL) = OFF
Lock Information                         (LOCK) = OFF
Sorting Information                      (SORT) = OFF
```

```
SQL Statement Information          (STATEMENT) = OFF
Table Activity Information             (TABLE) = OFF
Unit of Work Information                 (UOW) = OFF
```

The command syntax for collecting the snapshot information through CLP is shown in Figure 11-1.

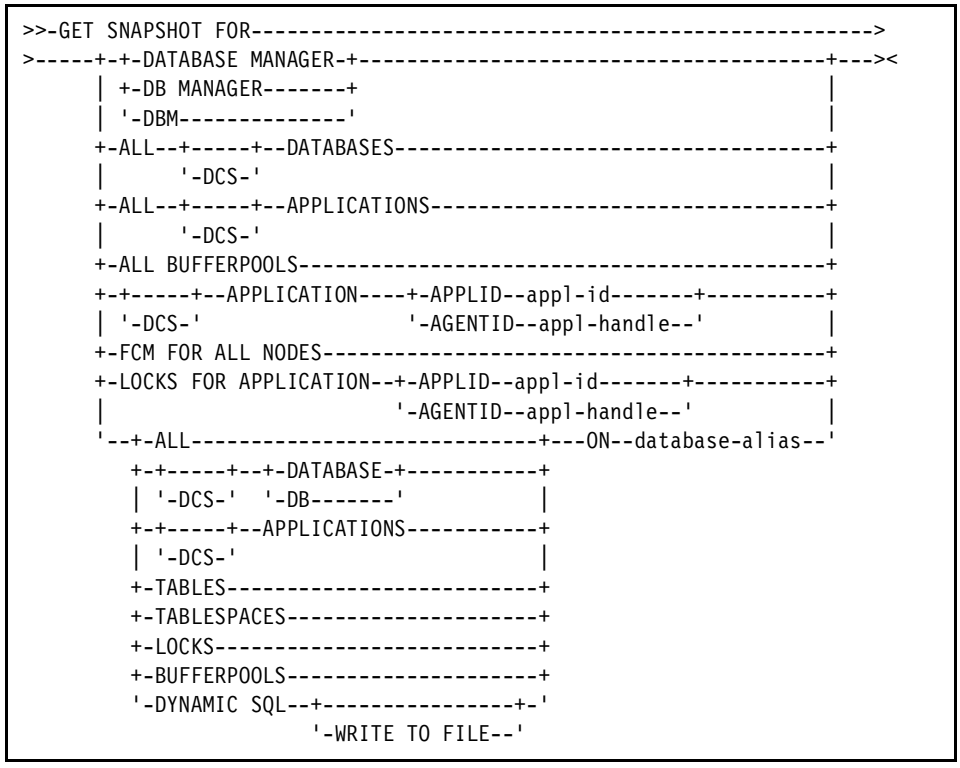

Figure 11-1 Syntax of snapshot monitoring

Based on the combination of levels and switches, your output will contain valuable information for performance and diagnosis purposes.

It is a very common task to monitor the system in order to control the locks that are being held by applications. Suppose you want to know how the locks on your database were influenced by the **`lock table org in exclusive mode`** command. The **`get snapshot for locks on database sample`** command, when issued from the CLP, will produce the output similar to Example 11-2 on page 261.

Example 11-2 Snapshot for locks

```
Database Lock Snapshot
Database name                              = SAMPLE
Database path                              =
/home/db2inst1/db2inst1/NODE0000/SQL00001/
Input database alias                       = SAMPLE
Locks held                                 = 4
Applications currently connected           = 1
Agents currently waiting on locks          = 0
Snapshot timestamp                         = 08-24-1999 12:52:59.582179

Application handle                         = 26
Application ID                             = *LOCAL.db2inst1.990824163630
Sequence number                            = 0001
Application name                           = db2bp
Authorization ID                           = ROOT
Application status                         = UOW Waiting
Status change time                         = Not Collected
Application code page                      = 819
Locks held                                 = 4
Total wait time (ms)                       = 0

List Of Locks

Lock Object Name   = 2
Object Type        = Table
Tablespace Name    = USERSPACE1
Table Schema       = ROOT
Table Name         = ORG
Mode               = S
Status             = Granted
Lock Escalation    = NO

Lock Object Name   = 3078
Object Type        = Row
Tablespace Name    = SYSCATSPACE
Table Schema       = SYSIBM
Table Name         = SYSTABLES
Mode               = NS
Status             = Granted
Lock Escalation    = NO

Lock Object Name   = 2
Object Type        = Table
Tablespace Name    = SYSCATSPACE
Table Schema       = SYSIBM
Table Name         = SYSTABLES
Mode               = IS
```

```
Status             = Granted
Lock Escalation    = NO

Lock Object Name   = 0
Object Type        = Internal P Lock
Tablespace Name    =
Table Schema       =
Table Name         =
Mode               = S
Status             = Granted
Lock Escalation    = NO
```

This output indicates that four locks are being held for providing an exclusive lock on table ORG. It also shows that tables ROOT.ORG and SYSIBM.SYSTABLES are being locked in order to provide the necessary lock level for an exclusive request.

The same **`get snapshot`** command can be issued at any time for displaying the overall locks used on the system.

Event Monitor

The Event Monitor is used for recording database related statistics for the following event types:

- Database
- Tables
- Deadlocks
- Tablespaces
- Bufferpools
- Connections
- Statements
- Transactions

More than one Event Monitor can be created, each having a state (1=on or 0=off) that is totally independent from each other.

After an Event Monitor is created, its state can be changed to 1 or 0 in order to start or stop it. When all the information is collected, the event monitor can be stopped by changing its state to 0 in order to analyze what happened during the time the monitor was running.

Event Monitors write their information to file or a pipe. By using the externalized Event Monitor stream formats, users can write applications to extract useful

information from the event logs. In addition, there are two available tools for analyzing the newly created event monitor files: db2evmon and the Event Monitor GUI tool.

The text-based tool used for analyzing the event monitor files is located in $INSTHOME/sqllib/bin and is called db2evmon.

Performance Monitor

The Performance Monitor tool monitors database objects, such as instances, databases, tables, tablespaces, and connections. It uses Snapshot Monitor data for viewing, analyzing, and detecting performance problems.

It is a GUI tool that can be started from the Control Center, either locally or remotely. It can be configured to send a visible or audible alert, predefined messages, or execute commands when certain user-defined threshold values have been exceeded.

These topics are covered in 11.2, “Monitoring methods usage” on page 255.

Alert Center

The Alert Center is used by the Performance Monitor to notify the database administrator when the threshold values have been exceeded.

Explain

The Explain tool is used by the database administrator to analyze and understand the access plan strategy the optimizer is choosing for retrieving the data as well as the cost of the access strategy in DB2 UDB’s *timerons* measures. The Explain tool can be used to explain the access strategy for both static and dynamic SQL.

The *explain tables*, composed of a set of seven tables, are used by the Explain tool to hold all the information involved in the access plan strategy, such as the command syntax, the environment in which the explanation took place, and the operators (FETCH, SORT, and TBSCAN) needed to satisfy the SQL. The explain tables are created automatically by the Control Center (when Visual Explain is used) or using the command:

```
db2 -tvf $HOME/sqllib/misc/EXPLAIN.DDL
```

EXPLAIN.DDL contains two additional tables for the DB2 UDB Index Advisor, which is a new tool in DB2 UDB Version 6.1 for recommending indexes for either individual or a workload of queries and/or updates.

The database administrator can choose one of the three available tools for analyzing the contents of the Explain tables:

- Graphical tool
- Text-based tool
- Direct query to the explain tables

Tip: It is extremely important that the **runstats** command is executed before using any Explain method in order to refresh the catalog tables metadata since the optimizer will read them for creating the access strategy plan.

Graphical tool

The Visual Explain GUI Tool is called from the Control Center panel.

Text-based tools

The text-based tool used for analyzing Static SQL is located in $INSTHOME/sqllib/bin and is called db2expln.

The text-based tool used for analyzing Dynamic SQL is located in $INSTHOME/sqllib/bin and is called dynexpln.

The text-based tool used for formatting the Explain tables is located in $INSTHOME/sqllib/bin and is called db2exfmt.

Suppose you want to use the db2exfmt tool to determine if the optimizer is choosing table scanning when you issue the **select * from org** command against database SAMPLE.

The first step is to set the special register CURRENT EXPLAIN MODE to EXPLAIN, meaning that only the explain data will be captured and inserted into the explain tables, but the query to be explained will not be executed. The sample db2 session is shown in Example 11-3.

Example 11-3 Sample running explain

```
db2 => connect to sample

   Database Connection Information

 Database server        = DB2/6000 8.1.0
 SQL authorization ID   = DB2INST1
 Local database alias   = SAMPLE

db2 => set current explain mode explain
DB20000I  The SQL command completed successfully.
db2 => select * from org
```

```
SQL0217W  The statement was not executed as only Explain information requests
are being processed.  SQLSTATE=01604
```

Running **db2exfmt** is shown in Example 11-4; we accept all default values, except for the output.

Example 11-4 Running db2exfmt

```
$ db2exfmt
DB2 Universal Database Version 8.1, 5622-044 (c) Copyright IBM Corp. 1991, 2002
Licensed Material - Program Property of IBM
IBM DATABASE 2 Explain Table Format Tool

Enter Database Name ==> SAMPLE
Connecting to the Database.
Connect to Database Successful.
Binding package - Bind was Successful
Enter up to 26 character Explain timestamp (Default -1) ==>
Enter up to 8 character source name (SOURCE_NAME, Default %) ==>
Enter source schema (SOURCE_SCHEMA, Default %) ==>
Enter section number (0 for all, Default 0) ==>
Enter outfile name. Default is to terminal ==> /tmp/exfmt.dat
Output is in /tmp/exfmt.dat.
Executing Connect Reset -- Connect Reset was Successful.
```

The generated output describes all the operations, CPU and I/O costs, and table descriptions, such as name, cardinality, and columns retrieved. For this particular example, the explain output indicates that a table scan was chosen by the Optimizer for data retrieval. The output you get looks like Example 11-5.

Example 11-5 Output of the db2exfmt command

```
DB2 Universal Database Version 8.1, 5622-044 (c) Copyright IBM Corp. 1991, 2002
Licensed Material - Program Property of IBM
IBM DATABASE 2 Explain Table Format Tool



********************* EXPLAIN INSTANCE *********************

DB2_VERSION: 08.01.0
SOURCE_NAME: SQLC2E03
SOURCE_SCHEMA: NULLID
SOURCE_VERSION:
EXPLAIN_TIME: 2002-11-11-13.41.34.443817
EXPLAIN_REQUESTER: DB2INST1

Database Context:
```

```
---------------
   Parallelism: None
   CPU Speed: 5.550044e-07
   Comm Speed: 2
   Buffer Pool size: 1000
   Sort Heap size: 256
   Database Heap size: 1200
   Lock List size: 100
   Maximum Lock List: 10
   Average Applications: 1
   Locks Available: 1130

Package Context:
---------------
   SQL Type: Dynamic
   Optimization Level: 5
   Blocking: Block All Cursors
   Isolation Level: Cursor Stability



---------------- STATEMENT 1  SECTION 201 ----------------
   QUERYNO: 19
   QUERYTAG: CLP
   Statement Type: Select
   Updatable: No
   Deletable: No
   Query Degree: 1

Original Statement:
------------------
select *
from org


Optimized Statement:
-------------------
SELECT Q1.DEPTNUMB AS “DEPTNUMB”, Q1.DEPTNAME AS “DEPTNAME”, Q1.MANAGER AS
        “MANAGER”, Q1.DIVISION AS “DIVISION”, Q1.LOCATION AS “LOCATION”
FROM DB2INST1.ORG AS Q1

Access Plan:
-----------
   Total Cost: 25.0847
   Query Degree:1

       Rows
      RETURN
      (   1)
```

```
     Cost
      I/O
      |
      60
     TBSCAN
     (   2)
     25.0847
        1
      |
      60
 TABLE: DB2INST1
ORG
```

```
  1) RETURN: (Return Result)
     Cumulative Total Cost: 25.0847
     Cumulative CPU Cost: 152635
     Cumulative I/O Cost: 1
     Cumulative Re-Total Cost: 0.0582988
     Cumulative Re-CPU Cost: 105042
     Cumulative Re-I/O Cost: 0
     Cumulative First Row Cost: 25.0274
     Estimated Bufferpool Buffers: 1

     Arguments:
     ---------
     BLDLEVEL: (Build level)
        DB2 v8.1.0.0 : s021023
     ENVVAR  : (Environment Variable)
        DB2_LIKE_VARCHAR = Y,Y

     Input Streams:
     -------------
        2) From Operator #2

            Estimated number of rows: 60
            Number of columns: 5
            Subquery predicate ID: Not Applicable

            Column Names:
            ------------
            +LOCATION+DIVISION+MANAGER+DEPTNAME+DEPTNUMB


  2) TBSCAN: (Table Scan)
     Cumulative Total Cost: 25.0847
     Cumulative CPU Cost: 152635
```

```
        Cumulative I/O Cost: 1
        Cumulative Re-Total Cost: 0.0582988
        Cumulative Re-CPU Cost: 105042
        Cumulative Re-I/O Cost: 0
        Cumulative First Row Cost: 25.0274
        Estimated Bufferpool Buffers: 1

        Arguments:
        ---------
        MAXPAGES: (Maximum pages for prefetch)
           ALL
        PREFETCH: (Type of Prefetch)
           NONE
        ROWLOCK : (Row Lock intent)
           NEXT KEY SHARE
        SCANDIR : (Scan Direction)
           FORWARD
        TABLOCK : (Table Lock intent)
           INTENT SHARE

        Input Streams:
        -------------
           1) From Object DB2INST1.ORG

              Estimated number of rows: 60
              Number of columns: 6
              Subquery predicate ID: Not Applicable

              Column Names:
              ------------
              +$RID$+LOCATION+DIVISION+MANAGER+DEPTNAME
              +DEPTNUMB


        Output Streams:
        --------------
           2) To Operator #1

              Estimated number of rows: 60
              Number of columns: 5
              Subquery predicate ID: Not Applicable

              Column Names:
              ------------
              +LOCATION+DIVISION+MANAGER+DEPTNAME+DEPTNUMB


     Objects Used in Access Plan:
     ---------------------------
```

```
Schema: DB2INST1
Name: ORG
Type: Table
      Time of creation: 2002-11-11-13.19.58.707472
      Last statistics update:
      Number of columns: 5
      Number of rows: 60
      Width of rows: 46
      Number of buffer pool pages: 1
      Distinct row values: No
      Tablespace name: USERSPACE1
      Tablespace overhead: 24.100000
      Tablespace transfer rate: 0.900000
      Source for statistics: Single Node
      Prefetch page count: 32
      Container extent page count: 32
      Table overflow record count: 0
      Table Active Blocks: -1
```

The Explain output clearly mentions, in the second section, that the optimizer chose the tablescan operation for retrieving the data. Since this is a small table (12 rows), this was the cheapest way for retrieving the data. However, if you have larger tables, and the optimizer is still choosing the tablescan as the access strategy, you should carefully think about defining indexes for the table, always considering the SQL that is most often used.

Direct query to the Explain Tables

The Explain Tables can also be directly queried through SQL SELECT commands. There are always seven tables populated by the explain tool, given the fact that the EXPLAIN MODE has been set to EXPLAIN:

- Explain_Instance
- Explain_Statement
- Explain_Operator
- Explain_Argument
- Explain_Object
- Explain_Stream
- Explain_Predicate

LIST APPLICATIONS command

The LIST APPLICATIONS CLP command uses snapshot monitoring to display, at instance or database level, the application program name, authorization ID, application handle, application ID, database name, application sequence

number, status, status change, and database path information for all connected applications.

The LIST APPLICATIONS command syntax is shown in Figure 11-2.

Figure 11-2 Syntax of list application

An example of a detailed application list is shown in Example 11-6.

Example 11-6 Output of list application with detail

```
# db2 list applications for database sample show detail

Auth Id           Application Name           Appl. Handle
------------      --------------------       --------------
DB2INST1           db2bp                       1

Application Id                            Seq#
----------------------------------------  -------
*LOCAL.db2inst1.990920184212               0001

Number of Agents         Coordinating Node Number
--------------------     --------------------------
1                                     0

Coordinator pid/thread
---------------------------
25722

Status                        Status Change Time
-----------------             ----------------------
UOW Waiting                    Not Collected

DB Name         DB Path
------------    ---------------------------------------------
SAMPLE          /db2sys/db2inst1/NODE0000/SQL00001/
```

11.3.2 Oracle monitoring tools

The Oracle Enterprise Manager (OEM) is a separate product from Oracle that is specially designed for monitoring and tuning databases. OEM typically runs on a PC with a Windows platform and connects to the database using Oracle Net Services, but it can also run on a UNIX graphical desktop.

The following products are extensions to the OEM and can be used to provide the database administrator with a better and easier understanding of the resource consumption within the machine.

The Oracle Diagnostic Pack consists of:

- Oracle Performance Manager
- Oracle Top Sessions
- Oracle Lock Manager
- Oracle Trace

The Oracle Tuning Pack consists of:

- Oracle Tablespace Manager
- Oracle SQL Analyze
- Oracle Expert
- Oracle Reorg Wizard

Most of the information available in these tools is also available using the traditional standard tools of Oracle, but the information is presented in a structured way and saves a lot of time by removing the need to type a lot of select statements or run scripts. Since its deployment, these products made a large impact on the productivity of the DBA. However, there is a charge for the OEM and its extensions.

Oracle Expert is an advanced tool that uses many rules to check and advise changes to the database for performance. It can even create scripts to do the changes. It is doubtful that it fully understands the platform on which it is running, so it tackles performance from a purely database point of view. It will only make changes within Oracle. Therefore, it will not optimize AIX level items, such as logical volume options, AIX parameters, and cater for availability using mirrors or RAID 5.

As these tools are new, most sites will not have them. They may find it hard to justify the expense of a high powered PC, the cost of the product, and the time required to install and learn the product, but it should help reduce performance problems.

Oracle Diagnostic Pack

The following is a brief description of each product within the Oracle Diagnostic Pack.

Oracle Performance Manager

The Oracle Performance Manager provides graphical-based, real-time monitoring that allows the database administrator to monitor the contention, database instance, I/O, memory, and system load. All the data displayed can be stored for replay.

Oracle Top Sessions

Oracle Top Sessions is a tool designed for monitoring all the resources being allocated for connected users. It is possible to display the top sessions, sorted by the database administrator's chosen statistics, that are needed for the analysis.

Oracle Lock Manager

Through the Oracle Lock Manager tool, it is possible to be aware of all the existing locks on the database and which session is blocking the other session's requested resource.

Oracle Trace

The Oracle Trace tool collects data through a methodology based on every occurrence of key events, such as the number of connections to, or disconnections from, a database.

Oracle Tuning Pack

The following is a brief description of each product within the Oracle Tuning Pack.

Oracle Tablespace Manager

This tool is designed to collect data about the internal structure of the database's tablespaces. It is also used to reorganize the tablespaces in order to increase the performance by de-fragmenting and coalescing the small data blocks that might exist inside the tablespaces.

Oracle SQL Analyze

The Oracle SQL Analyze tool is basically designed to tune application SQL.

Oracle Expert

Oracle Expert provides automated tuning through the use of a particular methodology based on integrated rules. It implements a tuning methodology based on the following steps: specification of tuning scope, collection, view and edit data, analysis, review of recommendations, and then implementation.

Oracle Reorg wizard

Once a storage fragmentation problem is detected, you can use the Reorg Wizard to get your database organized again. Reorganization can be on one table, tablespace, or the whole database.

The UTLBSTAT/UTLESTAT monitoring tool

Note: Note that the utlbstat and utlestat monitoring tools are no longer used for Oracle 9i. For Oracle 9i, use the Statpack (see “Statpack package” on page 275).

The UTLBSTAT/UTLESTAT monitoring tool should be used when performance data collection over a defined period of time is needed.

The following two SQL scripts are probably the most important tools in the DBA’s toolset for analyzing what Oracle is up to as a whole and for deciding which and what to tune in the Oracle parameters. The scripts can be found in the $ORACLE_HOME/rdbms/admin directory on the system.

The utlbstat.sql script (note that the *b* means beginning) is run, and it creates a set of statistics tables. Then, after a period of the database working, which might be a busy period of the day in a production system or a benchmark test, the matching utlestat.sql script (note the *e* means end) is run. This creates a report.txt file in the current directory. This human-readable file includes:

- The SQL used to collect the data so that you can look into the meaning of the columns in the Oracle documentation.
- Explanations on what to look for in the numbers in the report.
- Some ideas about what can be changed to improve performance.

The statistics compare the before and after values of many important Oracle counters, so make sure that the system is doing the sort of work that you wish to gather information about in the period the monitoring tool runs. For example, if you are tuning the daytime performance, do not capture data overnight. Example 11-7 shows a sample report.txt.

Example 11-7 Sample report from utlbstat/utlestat

```
. . .
SVRMGR> Rem Select Library cache statistics.  The pin hit rate should be high.
SVRMGR> select namespace library,
2>        gets,
3>        round(decode(gethits,0,1,gethits)/decode(gets,0,1,gets),3)
4>           gethitratio,
5>        pins,
6>        round(decode(pinhits,0,1,pinhits)/decode(pins,0,1,pins),3)
```

```
7>           pinhitratio,
8>        reloads, invalidations
9>   from stats$lib;
LIBRARY            GETS GETHITRATI      PINS PINHITRATI  RELOADS INVALIDATI
---------------------------------------------------------------------------
BODY                  0          1          0          1          0          0
CLUSTER               0          1          0          1          0          0
INDEX                 0          1          0          1          0          0
OBJECT                0          1          0          1          0          0
PIPE                  0          1          0          1          0          0
SQL AREA            114       .956        263       .947          4          0
TABLE/PROCED         26       .885         40         .9          0          0
TRIGGER               0          1          0          1          0          0
8 rows selected
. . .
```

This small sample outputs a value of .956 for SQL AREA GETHITRATIO, which is an ideal value since it shows that 95.6% of the parse calls could find a cursor to share. This value should always be in the high nineties.

It is worth running these scripts and carefully studying the output and recommendations found in the report. The report includes the following sections:

- Library cache statistics
- 96 important statistics covering the measuring period
- System-wide wait event
- Latch statistics
- Buffer busy and wait statistics
- Statistics for roll back segments
- init.ora parameters currently in effect
- Sum I/O operations over tablespaces
- I/O spread across drives
- The times that **`utlbstat`** and **`utlestat`** were run

All the above areas will display valuable performance information. Choosing which area to monitor first will depend upon which are the bottlenecks on the database.

Statpack package

Oracle 9i introduces a new performance diagnostic tool that supersedes the UTLBSTAT/UTLESTAT scripts. With this new tool, DBAs can keep historical performance data, and get performance trends analysis over time.

Statpack uses a set of SQL statements and packages to collect information from the databases server. These SQL statements and packages are divided in two groups according to their functionality:

- Data collection
- Report generation

Data collection functions are called by a function called snapshot. This snapshot allows data collection to be performed on specific times. The information captured by this snapshot is stored in the Statpack tables for latter analysis. Some of the statistics collected by Statpack snapshots are:

- Instance efficiency percentage

  This includes general wait times, buffer hit ratio, use of CPU by the query engine, and other metrics.

- Shared pool

  This section lists the free shared memory percentage.

- Top five waits

  This section lists the most frequent databases wait events and their wait time. Whenever you suspect that your application is on waiting for a long time, this section may help you identify the wait bottleneck.

- Load profile

  This section is useful to identify potential problems in the database caused by changes.

- SGA memory summary

  Shows a summary of the various SGA pools. You can use it to check if some of the pools have their sizes changed.

- Instance parameters

  This section is useful for identifying problems caused by changes in the instance parameter.

The report generation functionality takes the data collected by the snapshot function and summarizes it. With this functionality, you can even compare the result of two snapshots.

To start the snapshot, which is responsible for collecting data from Oracle, you issue the command:

```
execute statpack.snap [(<OPTIONS>)];
```

After the command completes, issue the following command from sqlplus to generate the report:

```
SQL> @$ORACLE_HOME/rdbms/admin/spreport.sql
```

Example 11-8 shows the report generated by Statpack.

Example 11-8 Statpack report sample

```
Statistic                                     Total     per Second    per Trans
--------------------------------- ------------------ -------------- ------------
CPU used by this session                        132            0.1        132.0
CPU used when call started                      132            0.1        132.0
CR blocks created                                81            0.0         81.0
DBWR checkpoint buffers written               3,778            1.5      3,778.0
DBWR checkpoints                                  0            0.0          0.0
DBWR transaction table writes                    15            0.0         15.0
DBWR undo block writes                        1,287            0.5      1,287.0
SQL*Net roundtrips to/from client               312            0.1        312.0
active txn count during cleanout                 73            0.0         73.0
background checkpoints completed                  0            0.0          0.0
background checkpoints started                    0            0.0          0.0
background timeouts                           3,050            1.2      3,050.0
buffer is not pinned count                   19,463            7.6     19,463.0
buffer is pinned count                       12,686            4.9     12,686.0
bytes received via SQL*Net from c           436,709          169.5    436,709.0
bytes sent via SQL*Net to client            189,571           73.6    189,571.0
calls to get snapshot scn: kcmgss            17,462            6.8     17,462.0
Instance Activity Stats for DB: ITSOVBD  Instance: ITSOVBD  Snaps: 1 -2

Statistic                                     Total     per Second    per Trans
--------------------------------- ------------------ -------------- ------------
parse count (hard)                              103            0.0        103.0
parse count (total)                           1,954            0.8      1,954.0
parse time cpu                                   26            0.0         26.0
parse time elapsed                               32            0.0         32.0
physical reads                                1,124            0.4      1,124.0
physical reads direct                             0            0.0          0.0
physical writes                               4,026            1.6      4,026.0
physical writes direct                            0            0.0          0.0
physical writes non checkpoint                3,747            1.5      3,747.0
Buffer Pool Statistics for DB: ITSOVBD  Instance: ITSOVBD  Snaps: 1 -2
-> Standard block size Pools  D: default,  K: keep,  R: recycle
-> Default Pools for other block sizes: 2k, 4k, 8k, 16k, 32k
```

```
                                                             Free    Write  Buffer
     Number of Cache      Buffer    Physical   Physical  Buffer Complete    Busy
P      Buffers Hit %       Gets       Reads     Writes   Waits    Waits   Waits
--- ---------- ----- ---------- ---------- ---------- ------- --------  ------
D        7,710  97.8      51,078       1,124      4,026       0        0       1
          -------------------------------------------------------------

Instance Recovery Stats for DB: ITSOVBD  Instance: ITSOVBD  Snaps: 1 -2
-> B: Begin snapshot,  E: End snapshot

  Targt Estd                                     Log File   Log Ckpt   Log Ckpt
  MTTR  MTTR   Recovery    Actual     Target      Size     Timeout    Interval
   (s)   (s)   Estd IOs  Redo Blks  Redo Blks  Redo Blks  Redo Blks  Redo Blks
- ----- ----- ---------- ---------- ---------- ---------- ---------- ----------
B    17     9       3823      30061      29229     184320      29229
E    17     6        312       4290       3769     184320       3769
PGA Aggr Target Stats for DB: ITSOVBD  Instance: ITSOVBD  Snaps: 1 -2
-> B: Begin snap   E: End snap (rows dentified with B or E contain data
   which is absolute i.e. not diffed over the interval)
-> PGA cache hit % - percentage of W/A (WorkArea) data processed only in-memory
-> Auto PGA Target - actual workarea memory target
-> W/A PGA Used    - amount of memory used for all Workareas (manual + auto)
-> %PGA W/A Mem    - percentage of PGA memory allocated to workareas
-> %Auto W/A Mem   - percentage of workarea memory controlled by Auto Mem Mgmt
-> %Man W/A Mem    - percentage of workarea memory under manual control

PGA Cache Hit % W/A MB Processed Extra W/A MB Read/Written
-------------- ---------------- -------------------------
         100.0                2                         0

                                              %PGA  %Auto   %Man
  PGA Aggr  Auto PGA   PGA Mem    W/A PGA    W/A    W/A    W/A   Global Mem
  Target(M) Target(M)  Alloc(M)   Used(M)    Mem    Mem    Mem    Bound(K)
- --------- --------- ---------- ---------- ------ ------ ------ ----------
B       121        80       44.3        0.0     .0     .0     .0      6,190
E       121        80       44.0        0.0     .0     .0     .0      6,190
Latch Activity for DB: ITSOVBD  Instance: ITSOVBD  Snaps: 1 -2
->"Get Requests", "Pct Get Miss" and "Avg Slps/Miss" are statistics for
  willing-to-wait latch get requests
->"NoWait Requests", "Pct NoWait Miss" are for no-wait latch get requests
->"Pct Misses" for both should be very close to 0.0

                                        Pct    Avg   Wait                 Pct
                              Get       Get   Slps   Time       NoWait NoWait
Latch                      Requests      Miss  /Miss    (s)     Requests   Miss
------------------------ ------------ ------ ------ ------ ------------ ------
Consistent RBA                  376    0.0             0            0
SQL memory manager latch          1    0.0             0          827    0.0
SQL memory manager worka     55,520    0.0             0            0
```

```
active checkpoint queue           1,003    0.0             0            0
archive control                      87    0.0             0            0
archive process latch                51    0.0             0            0
cache buffer handles                642    0.0             0            0
cache buffers chains            147,032    0.0    0.0      0        2,777    0.0
cache buffers lru chain          10,085    0.0             0        2,504    0.0
channel operations paren          1,706    0.0             0            0
checkpoint queue latch           54,177    0.0             0          629    0.0
SGA Memory Summary for DB: ITSOVBD  Instance: ITSOVBD  Snaps: 1 -2

SGA regions                     Size in Bytes
------------------------------ ----------------
Database Buffers                   33,554,432
Fixed Size                            741,840
Redo Buffers                          798,720
Variable Size                     570,425,344
                               ----------------
sum                               605,520,336
          ------------------------------------------------------------
```

EXPLAIN PLAN command

The Oracle EXPLAIN PLAN command gives the DBA, developer, or anyone who is writing SQL statements the means to:

- Find out which method the Oracle optimizer will use to access the data
- The order in which the tables are extracted from the database
- If indexes are used
- The relative cost of the statement

No book about Oracle is without a chapter dedicated to explaining the EXPLAIN PLAN mechanism and how to read the output. The original, but basic, method, using sqlplus, is still available, but it requires a great deal of hard work. This involves:

- Creation of a special table
- Running the EXPLAIN PLAN command
- Using a SELECT from the special table to extract the plan

The Oracle tools for management (see below) make EXPLAIN PLAN far easier to use. Note that the database does not actually run the SQL. It only gets the RDBMS to analyze the SQL and the optimizer to decide on the plan it would use to run the query.

Whichever method is used, the output of EXPLAIN PLAN is useful for investigating what Oracle is doing with particular SQL statements. This is very useful when:

- Oracle seems to take unexpectedly long to run a statement.
- Oracle seems to use an unexpected method to answer a query.
- To investigate the effects of parallelizing a query.
- Alternative SQL statements might yield a result faster. This is extremely useful for analyzing decision support statements that might differ in their execution time in terms of hours.

Prior to running the command, the Explain tables should be created using the utlxplan.sql script.

Once the Explain tables are created, the EXPLAIN PLAN command can be issued prior to any SQL statement.

Suppose you want to analyze the access plan generated for the following query:

```
SELECT * FROM EMP
```

The first step is to issue the following command:

```
explain plan for select * from emp
```

The command will be executed, and the explain data will be stored in a table called PLAN_TABLE. The result is shown in Example 11-9.

Example 11-9 Explain output

```
SQL> select id, operation, options, object_name, position from plan_table

ID OPERATION        OPTIONS OBJECT_NAME POSITION
-- ---------------- ------- ----------- --------
0 SELECT STATEMENT
1 TABLE ACCESS      FULL    EMP         1
2 rows selected.
```

The value FULL for the TABLE ACCESS entry explains that the optimizer chose full table scanning for all the tables in order to retrieve the data.

For more detail on the use of EXPLAIN PLAN with Oracle, refer to the Oracle documentation. For example, *Oracle 8 Server Tuning* and *Oracle 9 Database Performance Tuning Guide and Reference* have complete chapters on the use of EXPLAIN PLAN, and *Oracle 8 Server Concepts* has a chapter on the optimizer, which includes an explanation of the EXPLAIN PLAN output. This chapter was moved to the Performance guide in Oracle 9 documentation.

For a nested output of the EXPLAIN PLAN, which can help in complex SQL statements, see “Oracle nested explain plan” on page 465.

There are also excellent reference books on Oracle that include this subject. See “Related publications” on page 493 for more information.

11.3.3 Informix monitoring tools

Informix provides a rich set of tools for monitoring database activity and performance. The most important are:

- The Informix Server Administrator (ISA)
- The Explain utility
- The **onstat** command
- The On-Monitor utility
- The **onperf** utility
- The Server Studio JE

Informix Server Administrator (ISA)

The ISA is a Web-based server administration tool that allows you to monitor all database components from your browser. You can also use it to get performance statistics for Informix internal services and user connections. In fact, the ISA output is the same as the traditional Informix commands output. The benefit is that this output is logically organized and more intuitive. With a few clicks, you can get all Informix information you need to trace performance bottlenecks.

SET EXPLAIN ON statement

The analysis of the how Informix is executing a SQL statement can help you to identify performance problems caused either by old statistics, bad indexing strategy, or wrongly coded SQL. This analysis is performed by getting the execution plan that Informix is using to perform the query.

To get the execution plan for a specified query, you can set the SET EXPLAIN ON statement, which allows the query plan to be captured to a file for later analysis. The output of the query plan contains the query, the estimated cost, rows returned, the tables involved in the query, and type of join. Example 11-10 shows the output.

Example 11-10 SET EXPLAIN output

```
QUERY:
------
select tabname, count(*) from sysextents group by 1
```

```
Estimated Cost: 167
Estimated # of Rows Returned: 1
Temporary Files Required For: Group By

  1) informix.systabnames: SEQUENTIAL SCAN

  2) informix.sysptnext: INDEX PATH

    (1) Index Keys: pe_partnum pe_extnum   (Key-Only)
        Lower Index Filter: informix.systabnames.partnum =
informix.sysptnext.pe_partnum
NESTED LOOP JOIN
```

The onstat command

The **onstat** command is used to get useful statistics from a server, such as user connections, user transactions, memory statistics, and so on. The same output is presented by ISA tools. The **onstat** command is useful if you choose to not install ISA Server because of constraints in your environment. Example 11-11 shows the output of an **onstat -u** command.

Example 11-11 Onstat output

```
$ onstat -u

Informix Dynamic Server Version 9.30.FC3     -- On-Line -- Up 01:33:37 -- 47344 Kbytes

Userthreads
address          flags   sessid   user     tty      wait             tout locks nreads
nwrites
700000020193028  ---P--D 1        informix -        0                0    0     21       14
700000020193840  ---P--F 0        informix -        0                0    0     0        2
700000020194058  ---P--- 9        informix -        0                0    0     0        0
700000020194870  ---P--B 10       informix -        0                0    0     0        0
700000020195088  Y--P--- 17       informix -        70000002048fb00  0    1     558      336
7000000201960b8  ---P--D 13       informix -        0                0    0     0        0
 6 active, 128 total, 18 maximum concurrent
```

On-Monitor utility

On-Monitor is a menu driven UNIX utility that you can use to monitor all parts of a database. Its similar to ISA, but is specific to UNIX. ON-Monitor is accessible by the **onmonitor** command. There is a number of options that allow you to monitor your whole database server, from user activity to dbspace usage. It is a very interesting tool, even if you have installed ISA. Figure 11-3 on page 282 shows the output of the status screen with the PROFILE menu selected.

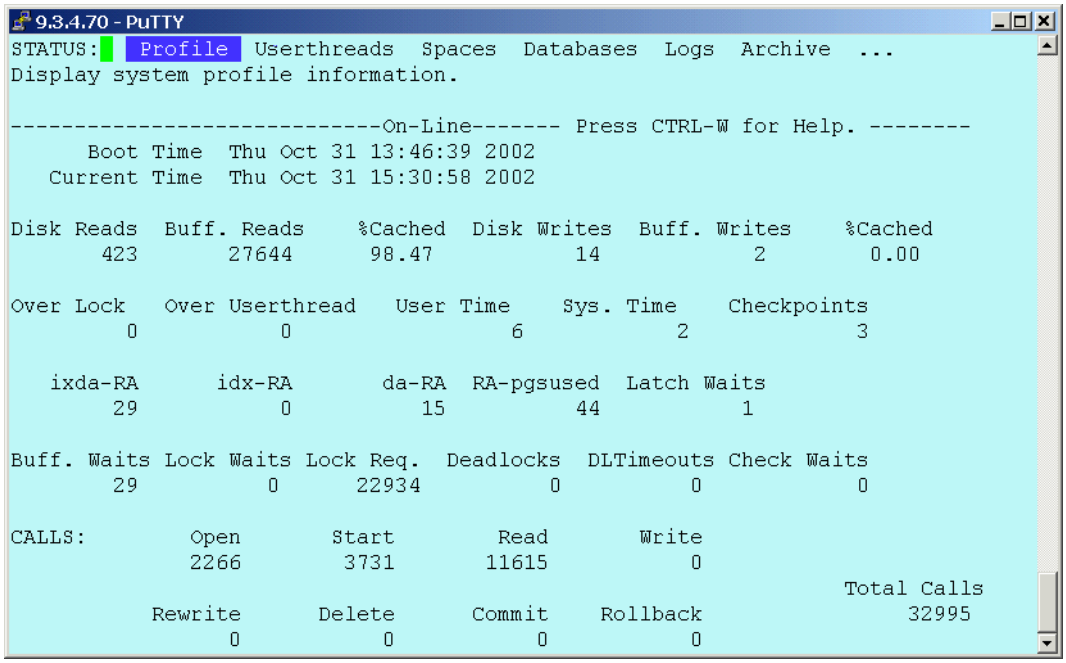

Figure 11-3 ON-Monitor status screen

The onperf utility

The **onperf** utility is a graphical performance analysis tool. With this tool, you can very closely monitor the activity of your database. You can get the disk activity shown graphically, allowing fast identification of heavy I/O and bad disk distribution or poor fragmentation of critical tables. The onperf is an essential tool for detecting bottleneck and performance problems. The query tree option can be used to get the SQLs and a graphical representation of the execution plans for a time span. As a plus, it allows you to get a trend analysis of the disk capacity. Figure 11-4 on page 283 shows the disk capacity screen of an **onperf** utility.

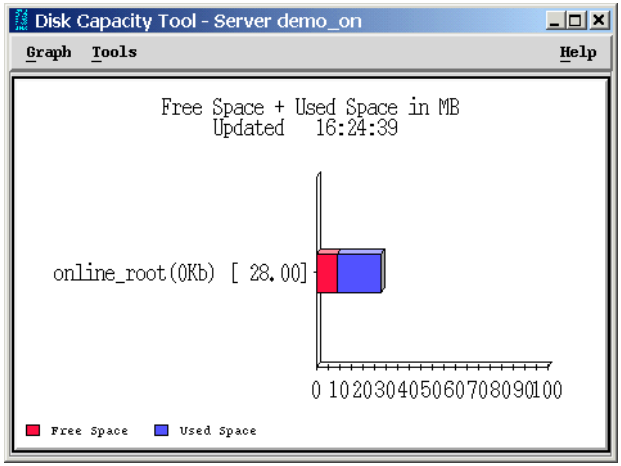

Figure 11-4 Onperf Disk capacity screen

The **onperf** utility also allows you to capture queries from a session and display its query tree. This query tree is a graphical sketch of the plan the optimizer choose to execute the query, together with the execution cost for each step. This is the preferred methodology to get query cost, because it shows the cost for each query. Figure 11-5 on page 284 shows a sample **onperf** query tree.

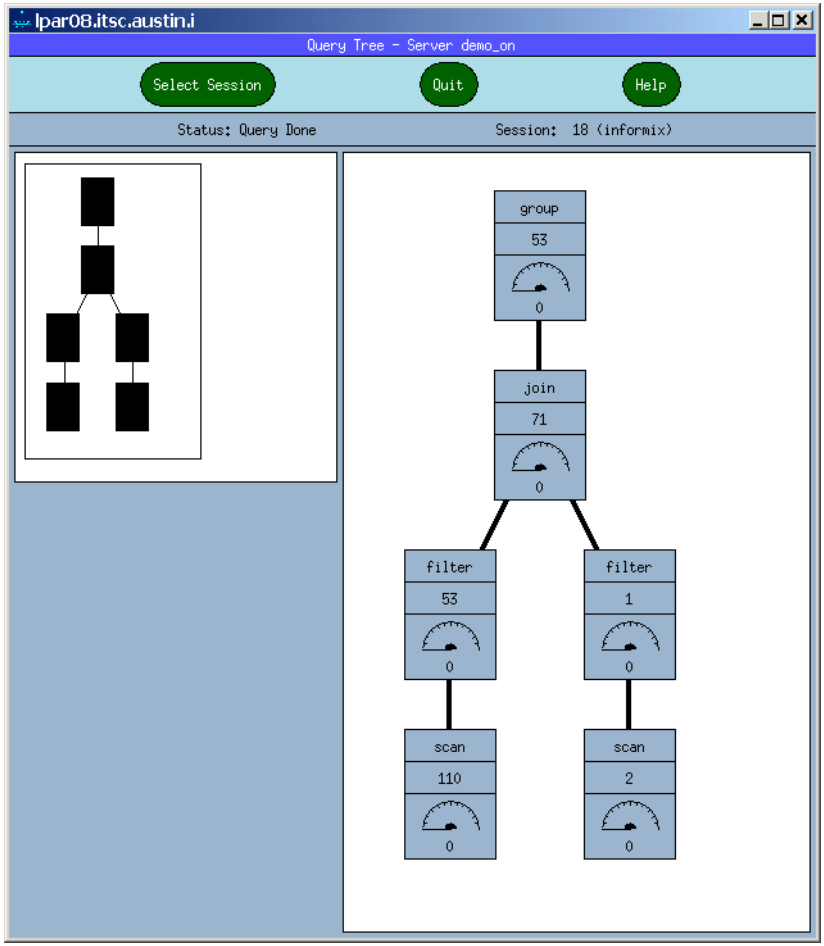

Figure 11-5 Onperf query tree

Server Studio JE

The Server Studio JE is a tool bundled to Informix that was jointly developed by IBM and AGS software. It is similar to Oracle OEM, DB2 Control Center, and Microsoft SQL Server Enterprise Manager. With this tool, the DBA is able to create, modify, drop, and get info about all Informix database components. Also, the DBA can monitor the database behavior using the reports tools. Server Studio JE also allows you to get the SQL a session is executing.

Server Studio JE is platform-independent. It runs on PCs as well as on the UNIX server itself, provided the graphical console is installed. Server Studio JE will make the productivity of Informix DBAs increase.

Server Studio JE can be used to run queries against the database as well as to capture queries for a session. Once you have this query, you can get the execution plan by reissuing the query with the avoid_execute option. The output of the command is similar to the SET EXPLAIN statement shown in Example 11-10 on page 280.

11.4 IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases

Tivoli systems, part of the IBM software portfolio, provides an application that can monitor databases performance easily. Predefined monitoring scripts and correlation have been included with the product to allow easier deployment of monitors and catch performance problems more easily.

The IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases currently consists of three modules, which are:

- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases: DB2
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases: Oracle
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases: IBM Informix

For more information on the IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases, refer to Appendix D, “IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases” on page 481.

12

Tuning an RDBMS system

This chapter discusses the general tuning process for an RDBMS system. The topics covered are:

- 12.1, “Performance tuning basics” on page 288 discusses some basic tuning philosophy, the necessary skills, and some reference information.
- 12.2, “Tuning strategies” on page 293 describes some strategies that can be used to tune an RDBMS.
- 12.3, “Bottlenecks, utilization, and resources” on page 307 discusses common tuning tasks that tackle bottlenecks and improve overall utilization of resources.
- 12.4, “Additional tuning considerations” on page 316 lists some common tuning considerations before going into specific tuning actions in later chapters.

12.1 Performance tuning basics

In the course of performance tuning, there are several aspects that we must be aware of and be prepared to handle. In this section, we discuss basic philosophy and requirement of tuning. This section includes:

12.1.1 Tuning philosophy

Everyone wants value for their money, and the point of tuning an RDBMS is to make sure that the system is delivering good performance. In tuning an RDBMS, there are two approaches:

- Minimum man-power approach

  Setting up a system that provides reasonable performance with only the minimum amount of man-power used for the on-going tuning effort of the System Administrator (SA) or Database Administrator (DBA). In this case, once set up, the machine is largely ignored unless users complain or something goes wrong.

- Maximum performance approach

  Setting up the system for maximum performance. Tuning of the system includes the system administrator monitoring the hardware and AIX, and the DBA monitoring the database and applications on a daily basis. In this case, the machines are likely to be larger and, thus, of higher value. The investment in man-power is justified in efficient use of the computing resources.

It is important to know that you are trying to achieve, and it depends on the company culture and the importance of the system itself. This decides the time invested in tuning and the investment level in extra capacity.

Regardless of which approach is used, the RDBMS will be tuned due to one of five causes:

- Regular task

  Regular periodic monitoring and tuning is standard practice. Many sites do a review of performance on quarterly, half-yearly, or yearly intervals. Problem machines would be investigated immediately.

- Generated warning

  The automated monitoring of the system has warned that performance is degrading and has hit some threshold. See Chapter 11, “Monitoring an RDBMS system for performance” on page 251 for more on this subject.

- Emergency

  There is an emergency in performance or response time, which has been highlighted by user feedback. The tuning must identify the problem, recommend a solution, and then work out how to avoid this happening again.

- New system

  A newly built system requires initial tuning for maximum performance before going into production. In most of the cases, however, this system might already be in production because of the difficultly of generating user workload artificially and not being able to predict real user workloads and work patterns. Ideally, the number of users is still growing and is not the full number yet, since this will allow tuning before system response times become unacceptable.

- System change

  The system is shortly going to have a change in workload. For example, the database size increased, the number of users increase, or a whole database is added to the system for concurrent access. In this case, the current system needs to be tuned to free up as many resources as possible before the new workload is added.

Whatever the reason, the approach will largely be the same, although, in the case of an emergency, there is much higher pressure from users to get to the root of the problem and fix it.

12.1.2 Tuning skills

Most RDBMSs are important, as they represent an important investment by the company. Any RDBMS is complex, as they include state-of-the-art architecture machines, such as the IBM @server pSeries family. They have a complex operating system, such as AIX, which offers many options for tuning and particularly disk layout, and then advanced databases, again with many tuning and performance options. On top of this platform is a complex database data structure and application software.

This means an RDBMS is both important and vital. The tuner, if not careful, could make performance worse, or even damage the database, and make it unavailable for a long period of time. To reduce the risk, make sure that the appropriate skills and knowledge are available before tuning a system. These might include:

- IBM @server pSeries and AIX architecture
- AIX system administration
- AIX tuning and performance
- DBA skills for the RDBMS
- Tuning for the RDBMS
- SQL tuning
- Application writing

If you are unsure that you do not possess these skills, either:

- Do not tune
- Investigate and propose changes to the system for others to check before implementing the changes
- Start building a team that together has all the right skills

Attention: With RDBMS tuning, a little knowledge is a very dangerous thing.

12.1.3 Reference manuals and books

Before you start tuning, make sure that you have the right reference materials readily available. While tuning, many questions will be raised, and these need to be answered quickly and completely.

For AIX, there are two excellent and highly recommended Redbooks covering performance, sizing, and the tools:

- *Understanding* IBM @server *pSeries Performance and Sizing*, SG24-4810

  This has a full explanation of how the IBM @server pSeries really performs and why. This is a good book to expel years of misconceptions, muddy thinking, and false ideas that are found in the computer industry.

- *AIX 5L Performance Tools Handbook*, SG24-6039

  This is the best place for information on the wide range of tools available for AIX, and you will need to understand many of these tools for database tuning. UNIX commands and tools are famous for having high-detail levels but very

poor headings and explanations. This book actually explains what the numbers mean and what you can do to change them.

For the RDBMS, there are the manuals for the database. In particular:

- The performance tuning manuals for your actual RDBMS in the correct version. These may be online versions due to costs, but hardcopies of the tuning manuals might be better for scanning and finding the right section.
- The RDBMS reference manuals for the RDBMS and DBA tools.
- The RDBMS SQL reference manual.
- The RDBMS introduction or concepts manuals.

There is a growing number of good performance books available. For a few recommended RDBMS tuning books, see “Related publications” on page 493.

12.1.4 About RDBMS tuning

There are several levels that need addressing in order to tune an RDBMS:

- Hardware design, which is covered in Chapter 8, “Designing RDBMS servers” on page 153.
- AIX tuning parameters, which is covered in Chapter 13, “AIX and hardware tuning considerations” on page 321.
- Application design and the usage of SQL, which are not covered in this book.
- Disk allocation: See Chapter 9, “Designing a disk subsystem” on page 187
- RDBMS parameters: See Chapter 14, “DB2 UDB tuning” on page 339, Chapter 15, “Oracle tuning” on page 377, or Chapter 16, “IBM Informix Dynamic Server tuning” on page 413.

The primary focus of this book is RDBMS performance from the hardware and database perspective. It is meant to be handled by the systems administrator or the database administrator.

If you purchase an RDBMS performance tuning book, or read the tuning chapters of a general book on your database, one thing you will notice is that there is no end to the details that can be covered in these books, and each edition of the book seems to be larger than the previous one. Next, you will find that there are some guidelines about where to tune and where performance stems from. This highlights an important message about what can be fixed in performance terms on the actual machine. They will quote some numbers, such as:

- 50% of the performance comes from a good database design and application design.

- 30% of performance comes from good programming and correct use of SQL.
- 19% comes from good implementation and tuning the system.
- 1% comes from fixing hardware errors.

The numbers might vary a bit depending on the source. This really means that if the design and programming is bad, or even just poor, then, in practical terms, there is little that can be done on the system that will remedy this. If these parts of the total performance picture are poor, the machine could run 1000 times slower than expected. If, however, these are good, then the tuning on the machine can be the cause of performance problems. A very poor implementation can cause a 100 times slow-down in performance.

While this is very interesting, there is little or nothing we, as system administrators and database administrators, can do about the design, the programming, or the SQL. The design was fixed months or years ago. If the application was bought as a package, then the application code is not even available. We cannot get the code changed, or it means a very large expense. If the code is developed in-house, then we might find that the development team is too busy on other projects. We might be able to make the case for specific SQL changes, but only if we can identify a very small number of problem statements.

For the most part, we can only alter the set up and configuration, and if we can make the business case to justify the expense, purchase a little extra hardware.

In this redbook, we have assumed there is little we can do about the SQL being sent to the RDBMS. We just have to make it work as fast as possible. This means that performance tuning books that have 70% of the book taken up with SQL tuning tips are not going to help the DBA that much. We have to concentrate on the AIX and RDBMS side of tuning.

Note: Remember performance is only *refined* by System Administrator and Database Administrator. It is *created* by the designers and programmers.

12.1.5 Performance improvement process

The following process is recommended to improve the performance of any system:

1. Establish performance indicators.
2. Define performance objectives.
3. Develop a performance monitoring plan.
4. Carry out the plan.

5. Analyze your measurements to determine whether you have met your objectives. If you have, consider reducing the number of measurements you make because performance monitoring itself uses system resources. Otherwise, continue with the next step.
6. Determine the major constraints in the system.
7. Decide where you can afford to make trade-offs and which resources can bear additional load. (Nearly all tuning involves trade-offs among system resources and the various elements of performance.)
8. Adjust the configuration of your system. If you think that it is feasible to change more than one tuning option, implement one at a time. If there are no options left at any level, you have reached the limits of your resources and need to upgrade your hardware.
9. Return to Step 4 above and continue to monitor your system.

Periodically, or after significant changes to your system or workload:

- Perform the above procedure again from step 1.
- Re-examine your objectives and indicators.
- Refine your monitoring and tuning strategy.

12.2 Tuning strategies

Before we get to the tuning hints and tips, we need to decide on the tuning method to use so that the tuning exercise:

- Does not waste time, especially if we are tuning due to an emergency because users cannot perform their tasks.
- Does not waste computer time and people's resources.
- Actually comes to a conclusion.
- Has some quantitative measure of the improvement made.
- Can be applied elsewhere, if appropriate.

Many books and papers on performance tuning detail the formal tuning method and include chapters on:

- The iterative process
- Only changing one thing at a time
- Defining the goals and objectives
- Reproducible workloads

- Careful instrumentation, measurement, and documentation

All of the above list is really common sense, but:

- It can be hard to follow in practice.
- It would mean tuning would take a very long time.
- There are fundamental things that need to be addressed immediately.

So, in addition to this normal fine tuning method, there is the *change all at once* approach to tuning that has the following phases:

1. Gather all the information about what is actually going on and disregard the rumors, opinions, and theories about the problem.
2. Fix the blatantly obvious mistakes in one pass.
3. Get the system into reasonably good shape by tuning the high-impact performance options, including hardware, AIX, and basic database parameters.
4. Start the fine tuning phase using the formal tuning method.

Note: It is much easier to tune an RDBMS badly than tune an RDBMS well.

The following sub-sections deal with formal tuning and the change all at once approach.

- 12.2.1, “Formal fine tuning method” on page 294
- 12.2.2, “Change all at once method” on page 302

12.2.1 Formal fine tuning method

There are many books on this subject, so this section is a summary of the important points and ideas about the formal and fine tuning method. Most will seem obvious and common sense, but they are here to stop one classic mistake, which might be called the *all guns firing approach*. In this approach, every option and parameter is changed, seemingly at random, and no one knows if the performance got better or worse. This has three possible outcomes:

- A miracle happens, and the performance becomes excellent.
- Performance decreases dramatically, and nobody knows which parameter was the cause.
- Tuning goes on forever, and, eventually, a manager stops the tuning as a waste of effort and money and appoints someone with a real method.

The formal tuning method can be outlined based on the following principles, outlined in the following sections.

Clear definition of the success criteria

Before actually doing anything on the system, the performance tuning team needs to define the goals and objectives. This is obvious but rarely done at the start.

Often the machine has performance problems, and the goal is to remove them. This is not a good goal, because it has no definitive end point. Try to answer the questions: How can you determine if the system performance is good enough? How is the performance actually measured?

Another poor example is: *The response times must be acceptable*. Acceptable to whom, and how is it decided if it is good or bad? It might depend on how the system administrator is feeling that day or how many complaints from users come in, and might not be based on the system at all. A further poor example is: *The response times must be less than three seconds,* but often the application has some tasks that are expected to take 10 minutes, such as creating a large report. The response time requirements need to be limited to particular transactions and, hopefully, the ones most often used.

Again, you need clearly defined and measurable goals.

You might be tuning the online performance, but the problem is with the batch run. For late night batch runs, there is often a goal set that it must take less than a certain number of hours. But do not forget there might be an alternative solution, such as performing an online backup rather than an off-line backup and, thus, increasing the time available for the batch run.

If you are given a number of targets to reach, then insist that they are given a priority order since it will help you to make better progress. For example, when you have fixed four out of five problems, you can claim to have fixed 80% of the problem, and it is the least important one that remains to be finished.

Limiting the activity

Performance tuning is a never-ending task. The data, users, and workload changes with time and more tuning can be performed. So, unless you have been told to tune this system forever, at some point of tuning, you will have to stop. A decision on the time frame allowed must be made. This might be a limited number of days or a limit to the performance gains reached. If the limit is time based, then the team should aim to increase the maximum amount of performance in that fixed period of time to increase user satisfaction. If the tuning is performance goal based, then the team should focus only on that goal and to

achieve it in the minimum amount of time and effort. Most of the time, there are actually both limits, but one is going to be a lot harder to reach than the other. So:

- If time is limited, work on the quick wins that can be tried in the time allocated.
- If the goal is limited, work on all the options in impact priority order that can help reach the target.

Iteration

Tuning is an iterative process. A test is run, the results are studied, a change is made, a further test is run, and so on. This is obvious, but has large implications. First, you have to define what is a test. It can be very hard to be precise (see “Reproducible workloads” on page 298) and you have to be careful to collect the right results. Next, the changes made have to be carefully controlled (see “One change at a time” on page 296). Continue to iterate until either:

- The original goals are met.
- You run out of time.
- You run out of ideas and areas to tune.
- You proved it cannot be done and need the goal moved.

One change at a time

Only change one thing at a time between test runs. If, as the result of a test, you want to try to change two variables, the temptation is to change them both and rerun the test. But, when the results show a small improvement, you cannot determine what caused the small improvement. One change might have made all the difference. The other change might have made no difference; it might have stopped the first from making an enormous improvement, or it might have reduced the performance, which is hidden by the improvement of the other. The only reliable method is to change one thing at a time. This is obvious, but it is very tempting to make a lot of changes (see 12.2.2, “Change all at once method” on page 302).

In practice, all tuners change multiple things at a time and are forced to by time limitations, but they try to limit the function area. For example, tune just the allocation of memory to the various memory consumers, but do not tune the disk layout at the same time.

Deciding priorities

Once a test is run, and the results are analyzed, there will be a number of conclusions. For example, the buffer cache size, number of locks, and perhaps the AIX parameter to free up memory should be tuned. The team then must decide which area to tune next.

There needs to be a balance between how hard it is to tune this area, the benefits in performance, and, if the machine is in production, the likelihood that this could cause a major problem if it goes wrong. A list of the priorities needs to be drawn up. Usually, the safest and most effective changes are the route to go. Sometimes good choices are ignored because the team does not have strong skills in this area.

Some effective teams draw up all the alternatives on a white board. They then discuss each option and try to estimate the potential performance improvement. Finally, they all vote on which option to try in the next round of tests.

Hot spots

When investigating the machine's performance, one of the CPU, memory, disk, and network areas will become the focus of your attention. This area seems to be the bottleneck area, and it needs addressing. It is called the *hot spot*. But be aware that, if this area is fixed, then the hot spot will just move elsewhere. For example, we can reduce data disk bottlenecks by increasing caching, but that might cause high paging rates. We need to tune the system to make it balanced. We can express this as having a lot of small bottlenecks all over the system, somewhat impacting performance, or that no one area is the hot spot, but all areas are getting warm.

There is always one hot spot in a computer system. After all, in a perfectly tuned system, there is always something stopping it from reaching infinite performance and zero response times. The point is, if all areas of the machine are well used, the apparent hot stop must be regarded as normal.

Also, note that the hot spot can move around. As users do different tasks during the day, week, or month, the hot spot might change in the system from the lack of CPU in periods of high OLTP transaction rates to the lack of disk speed during report creation at a different time. Also, the needs of the nightly batch work or data loads and summaries can be very different to the needs of online users during the day. Many sites have different tuning setups for daytime and nighttime activities.

Well known important areas

There are hundreds of options and parameters that can affect performance in a modern computer system. These range from hardware choices and connections to AIX and on to the RDBMS parameters and configuration. But there is a list of well known things that have the largest impact on performance. Also, check the list of well known simple mistakes (12.4.3, "Classic mistake list" on page 318) to make sure you avoid them.

Reproducible workloads

This is a particular problem with systems that have many online users. The users' work patterns change, even during the day. They may do different things in the morning and afternoon. For example, mornings might be telephone sales, and the afternoon mail order, and later in the day, reports. Most businesses have peaks in orders on particular days of the week or times of the month and year. Also, every business has business administration induced peaks, such as end of quarter and end of year. To make matters worse, users also can work at different rates at different times. This causes a problem when the workload changes between tests. It can be very difficult to determine if the performance difference is the result of the tuning effort or the users changing their work patterns.

One last problem is that if performance improves, and, therefore, the system has better response times, the users simply do more work, and the system slows down again. This means the transaction rate is higher, but the response time remains unchanged.

What we need to do is to capture and compare both the response times and the transaction rate before determining if the performance is better or worse.

Batch workload, in comparison, is quite sane, but do check the numbers in this case also. For example, you might find there are differing numbers of records used in batch runs on different days of the month.

Decision Support Systems have an even worse problem in this area. The transactions are usually 10 to 100 times (or much more) bigger than the transactions of an OLTP system. This means that different queries can differ in response times by large amounts, so measuring the response time and throughput is still important. The extra problem is that the size of the SQL statements can vary a great deal when compared to other systems. DSS queries can differ in complexity by 1 to 1,000,000 simply by changing the criteria for the SQL statement. For example, looking for a trend of a particular product, a small time period, and a limited number of stores might take 15 seconds, but looking for all products, a large time period, and all stores might take 30 hours, simply due to the volume of data and that summary tables cannot be used. Also, many sites bring new data onto the system irregularly, sometimes just once a month. In the next few days, this new data is investigated intensively, and, therefore, the queries that are submitted change during the months. The only suggestion to correct this problem is to also measure large table scan rates and the volume of data extracted from the disks, or to develop a standard and typical set of queries for testing.

How to measure response time

This is a problem for online user systems because it is very difficult to accurately record the response time from a system. If the system is extremely slow, then

there will be no discussion that the response time is not sufficient. But if the system is responding in about 1.9 to 2.1 seconds, and the requirement is two seconds, there can be a large argument about how it is measured. A human cannot start and stop a stop-watch with an accuracy of 1/10th of a second anyway. Also, note that a fixed response time goal (for example, all response times must be under two seconds) is unlikely to be achieved nor guaranteed for two reasons. First, there are peaks in user demands that are unpredictable, for example, if all the users attempt to commit a transaction at the same time (this is rare but can happen). To guarantee the response time for this extreme case would mean a system at least ten times more powerful than really warranted. Second, there are always transactions that take too long. For example, creating a report or certain wildcard lookups of large numbers of rows (such as looking up a customer with only part of their name) will take longer than two seconds, which no one really would expect within this time limit. This results in a more realistic response time goal, for example, 90% of responses are under a fixed time limit and for specific transactions (usually the most used 10 or 20 transactions). Again, this makes statistically accurate measurements extremely hard to agree on.

Tip: Trusting the users to give an accurate picture of response times is a common way to be inaccurate.

One approach in the industry is that the application code is modified to keep track of the response time by measuring and reporting the response time. The down side is that this takes CPU power, and the data needs to be collected and summarized. This extra work results in slowing the system down. But, we may see more of this in the future.

The alternative is running a small tool that, while the users are working, executes some well know SQL statements that are as typical as possible to the user workload, and the response times of these are accurately measured. This sample workload is small compared to the user workload and is run at regular intervals to allow the performance tuning team to accurately determine the relative response time of the sample. These accurate response times help in working out the benefit (or not) of tuning changes.

Careful instrumentation and measurement

Tuning is impossible unless you have the means to decide if you have made an improvement or not. This requires you to take measurements on the system to help decide what the problem is, and later, to decide if performance has improved due to tuning changes. Instrumentation is an IBM term that means the system has the right tools and features to allow the data to be collected, be meaningful, precise, and not intrusive. This instrumentation should not impact performance itself more than a few percent. Fortunately, AIX is extremely well instrumented

and has powerful tools beyond the standard UNIX system. This includes AIX tools, such as Performance Toolbox/6000 and the AIX trace system. The DB2 UDB and Oracle databases have excellent tools as well. In all cases, they need to be used and understood before this benefit can be harnessed for making performance enhancements to the system.

Documentation

Although some dread this word, it does not need to be painful in the case of performance tuning. The bulk of the facts needed for tuning can be collected from the tools. You do need to be careful that you save these results in a methodical way. In addition, you need to make notes of what was done in each test in terms of when the tests were run, the particulars of the workload and users, the interesting facts discovered, and suggestions for improvements. This sounds like a lot, but it is worth it to formally record this data. This can either be in a tuning log book or in read.me type files saved along with the tool output files and results. If this is neglected, and you later want to refer back to earlier tests, you will find that you have forgotten or are unsure of the facts. This then means rerunning the test to be sure. So, we recommend keeping good records of each test, as this will save time. It also helps writing these things down because you have to think about how sure you really are of the facts and how much is guessed.

Tuning log recommendations:

- First of all, create a log. Without a clear and detailed log, it is very easy to forget the configuration details, the conclusions of each test, and the set of results. This results in having to rerun a test in order to check it, which wastes time.
- Perhaps include parts of the hardware and database logs of the system.
- We recommend that you use a lot of directories and use a standard script to capture all the configuration details and then add a read.me about what the test hoped to prove and what it did prove.
- Collect data with scripts, such as those in Appendix B, “Vital monitoring SQLs and commands” on page 459 and with database supplied tools, such as Statpack for Oracle or **`snapshot`** for DB2 UDB.

Scheduling the tests

If the system is not in production, then you have an excellent chance of making quick progress, and you have time to try out some ideas. It is good to try to reduce the test period to a time as short as possible. 20 to 30 minutes is a good time. Keep in mind that large systems take a while to reach a steady pace, for example, to get all the users working and the RDBMS buffer cache or pool filled

with data. If the test is longer than 20 to 30 minutes, this drastically reduces the number of test cases that can be run in one day.

If the system is in production, then there are a number of problems to overcome. First, if you make a mistake in tuning the parameters, then all the users will be complaining the next day. Second, many of the tuning options require the database to be restarted. This is not an option on production systems, and many international companies might only allow this once a week. This cuts down the number of opportunities you have to improve performance. In this case, a test machine is the only real option, but, ideally, this needs to be a similar size to the production machine, but this can be hard to justify because of the costs. Alternatives are renting machines or using IBM test centers to run a tuning project or having sole access to the machine, but this usually means early hours, such as three to five in the morning or on Sundays.

Verifying the improvement

The change was made and the test rerun. Did it make a difference? There are a number of possible outcomes:

- Big improvement: Good. A further change might be in order to see if a larger change would cause a larger improvement.
- Small improvement: Fine. You might try again or change something else that might help even more.
- Tiny improvement or degradation: You have to decide if this was worth it or not. You might find that the margin of error means that you cannot tell if anything improved or not. You have a choice of leaving it at the new level or returning it to the original.
- The before and after performance was not checked: Not very professional, and might well cause a bottleneck later.

We recommend:

- If the old level was a default, then return it to the default.
- If you think the new number should really help but suspect there is another item that stopped this improvement of performance, then leave it at the new level and investigate the other item further.
- If this change was to remove the current bottleneck but made little difference, then return it to the original value and think again.

The tuning team

Do not forget that you are not alone. There is help available from your supplier, as it is in their best interests that the hardware, software, and RDBMS are working well and meeting your needs, because they know happy customers are likely to

buy more in the future. IBM, IBM Business Partners, application providers, and the database vendors have support organizations that can assist you if you cannot solve the performance issues.

When you escalate to other people, they have to start from scratch, so save them time (and possibly your company money) by getting them the facts and information before engaging with them. Then, be ready to get further information that they might need and be ready to run other tests and, if necessary, add instrumentation so that they can investigate at a higher level of detail. Do not expect to phone in a *it does not work* problem and expect the support people to solve it from there.

See Appendix C, “Reporting performance problems” on page 473 for more information on getting assistance.

12.2.2 Change all at once method

In the previous section, we have outlined a good approach to tune a system for maximum performance and minimum response times. If the system is working reasonably well, then this is an excellent approach to fine tune the system further.

But, often the system performance is very poor, or this is the first ever tuning session on the new system. In this case, you might use the alternative *change all at once* approach (see Figure 12-1) to try and get the system working reasonably well and as quickly as possible.

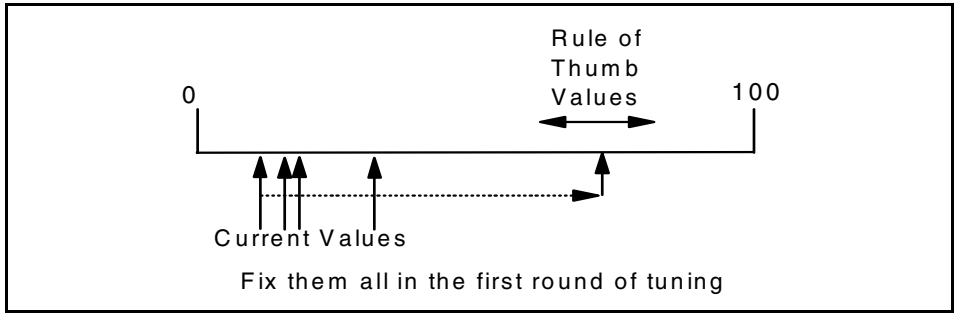

Figure 12-1 Change all at once method

This approach involves six key stages:

1. Ignoring the rumors about what is wrong, as these are based on little or no information.
2. Check for errors.

3. Get to the latest fix level.
4. Measure what is actually going on regarding performance and then document all the parameter settings.
5. Check and change the top ten performance parameters to sensible settings and use defaults for most of the rest.
6. Measure performance again to check if performance has improved.

The point of using a change all at once approach is to get the system into good shape as soon as possible. Most of the tuning parameters should be the default values apart from a few, well known, key ones that need to be set, depending on the size of the machine and the workload type. You also need to check that the machine is configured properly so that it can make good use of the various parts available.

Once this is done, you need to re-measure the system performance; hopefully, it has improved. Then you can do further tuning using the formal tuning method.

The above stages are covered in more detail in the following sections.

Ignore the rumors

The IBM technical support groups often get involved with performance situations that are escalated through customer management and then through IBM. By the time a technical specialist is involved, there have been gross distortions in what is the actual problem and what are the symptoms leading people to decide what the problem is caused by. There is a need to ignore the rumors, theories, assumptions, and suspicions and get to some solid facts. Often, a simple misunderstanding of some performance figure leads people to think there is a problem when there is no problem at all.

Tip: There is a clear tendency to first blame the hardware.

A classic example is monitoring CPU I/O wait time and assuming high I/O wait time on an 8-way SMP is bad and indicates a disk problem. In fact, it is just a quirk about the way I/O wait is reported before AIX Version 4.3.3. A system can report 80% I/O wait time and easily provide sub seconds response times. So, the performance problem is actually a lack of understanding of the performance figures.

Another example is the *it is slow* problem, but no ones knows:

- What is slow?
- How was slow measured?
- What is acceptable?

- Has it changed or was it always slow?
- What has been changed to make it slow?

The only performance fact available is everybody thinks there is a problem! The first task in this situation is trying to workout who started saying it is slow and why. Many performance problems result from too many managers dutifully escalating but are not based on technical facts.

Tip: Ignore the rumors; just stick to the verifiable performance facts.

Gathering the information

Before changing anything on the system or database, it is worth checking a few basic parameters to make sure that they are either the default value, a sensible number, and that we know when, by whom, and why they have been changed.

Machine details

You should have an understanding of the machine, including the following:

- CPU rating and number of CPUs
- Memory size and type
- Disk types and configuration
- Disk speeds in seek time and throughput
- Disk usage and logical volume
- Adapter types and ratings

Workload details

You should know the workload profile:

- The busy periods of the system so you can tune for these peaks in workload.
- The number of users logging on and actually being busy during the peak.
- The number of transactions per minute during the peaks.
- If there are online and batch peaks in the workload.

AIX virtual memory parameters

Check to see if the **vmtune** command is present on the system. See Appendix A, “AIX performance tools summary” on page 439 for more details. The **vmtune** command is part of the bos.adt.samples AIX fileset.

If is not available, then no one can have changed the **vmtune** parameters. If it is present, then use the **vmtune** command with no parameters to detail the current settings. Then, check that all the values are set to their default values. The

default values for various levels of AIX and those that depend on the system size (for example memory) are documented in the AIX manuals.

If any parameter is not set to the default value, either:

- Clearly document in the system log who, when, and why the parameter was set.
- If no explanation is available, then you should seriously consider setting it back to the default value, as inappropriate values can have serious impact on AIX and database performance.

Inappropriate use of these parameters is the cause of many reported performance problems.

AIX system tunable parameters

Use the **`lsattr -E -l sys0`** command to detail the AIX tunable parameters.

Check to see that all the values are set to their default values. The default values for various levels of AIX and those that depend on the system size (for example, memory) are documented in the AIX manuals.

If any parameter is not set to the default value, either:

- Clearly document in the system log who, when, and why the parameter was set.
- If no explanation is available, then you should seriously consider setting it back to the default value, as inappropriate values can have serious impact on AIX and database performance.

Inappropriate use of these parameters is the cause of many reported performance problems. See Appendix A, “AIX performance tools summary” on page 439 for more details.

Network parameters

Use the **`no -a`** command to document the network parameters. See Appendix A, “AIX performance tools summary” on page 439 for more details.

Hardware configurations

Use the **`lscfg`** command to document the adapters. See Appendix A, “AIX performance tools summary” on page 439 for more details.

Document the RDBMS parameters

Use the DBA tools to output the database parameters currently in use. See Chapter 11, “Monitoring an RDBMS system for performance” on page 251 for more information.

Check for errors

The first thing is to see if the system is, in fact, trying to tell you that there is a problem. Many times the machines are in a computer room, and there are warning messages on the console screen that have gone unnoticed. In AIX, the second place to look is in the AIX system error log. To do this, use the **errpt | pg** command, and if there are recent errors, check the full details with the **errpt -a | pg** command. The error log is particularly likely to show disk and network errors. If it is a network problem, then the network specialists or support group should be handed the problem. If it is a disk error, take actions immediately to rectify the problem. AIX reports temporary disk errors when a disk is about to fail, but still works after the disk is stopped and started again by a *hardware reset*. This takes time and can produce a performance problem. If you are quick, the data can be moved to an alternative disk and, thus, a more serious problem can be avoided. Second, check the RDBMS error logs. On a DB2 UDB system, these are in the $DIAGPATH/db2diag.log file. On Oracle, these are in the $ORACLE_HOME/rdbms/logs directory.

Upgrade to the latest fix levels

Check if there are outstanding upgrades for:

- AIX - PTF
- Hardware firmware
- RDBMS fixes or PTF
- Application fixes or newer versions

Review what is available and decide when to schedule the upgrades. Stay current; use the latest release or the latest release -1 plus all fixes.

Investigating the system

This is an extension of the investigation order suggested in the redbook *Understanding IBM @server pSeries Performance and Sizing*, SG24-4810. It is different, as this concentrates on an RDBMS system. The investigations are ordered into a sensible list of tasks.

First, check for errors and then go through CPU, memory, disks, and finally, the network. The memory and disks fields are more likely to be the bottleneck and the areas in which we have more choices in tuning. Run the following during a busy period and save the output:

- The **vmstat** command.
- The **iostat** command.
- Run **_config.sh** from **perfpmr**.
- The **lsattr** command.

- The **vmtune** command.
- If available, use other tools for performance monitoring, such as **nmon**.
- Use **lsvg**, **lspv**, and **lslv** to draw up a diagram of the disk configuration.
- Use the database tools to document the parameters and performance numbers.
- Use the applications to document the number of transactions.
- Load **perfpmr** from the AIX media or the IBM ftp site; see Appendix C, "Reporting performance problems" on page 473 for details.

Check and set top performance parameters

This is detailed in Chapter 14, "DB2 UDB tuning" on page 339, Chapter 15, "Oracle tuning" on page 377, and Chapter 16, "IBM Informix Dynamic Server tuning" on page 413 for the databases.

12.3 Bottlenecks, utilization, and resources

The base-line is that we only have hardware. This means we have to make the best use of the CPU, memory, adapters, disks, and avoid network limits.

The CPU, memory, and disks of the system have to work together to achieve the maximum performance. In many of the things that can be tuned, we find that there is a trade off. For example, using more memory for disk block caching results in less disk I/O, and this means less CPU time for running device drivers. So, we are trading more memory used for less disk I/O. Figure 12-2 on page 308 tries to show how these things are all linked together. More memory can reduce disk I/O. More memory can mean more CPU due to longer in-memory searches. More disk I/O means more CPU to run the disk device drivers. All three dimensions are linked together.

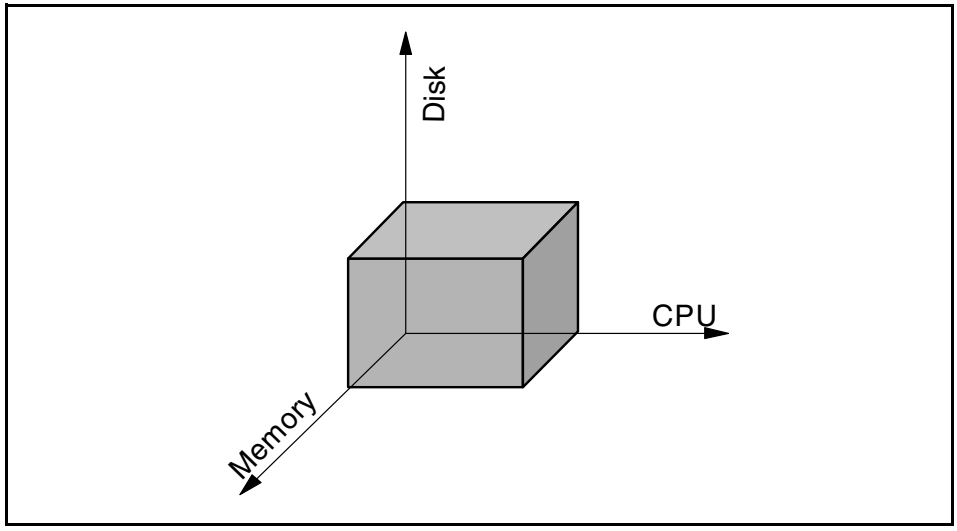

Figure 12-2 Hardware is CPU, memory, and disks: Tuning means balancing

The network is a further limiting factor, but we assume that the network is not the problem. This is a large subject area and is outside the scope of this redbook.

In a poorly balanced system, one of the components causes a bottleneck before the other components. Figure 12-3 shows the disks will hit a bottleneck before other components. If caching was increased, this would move the disk curve to the right and mean higher workloads are possible before the response time rises.

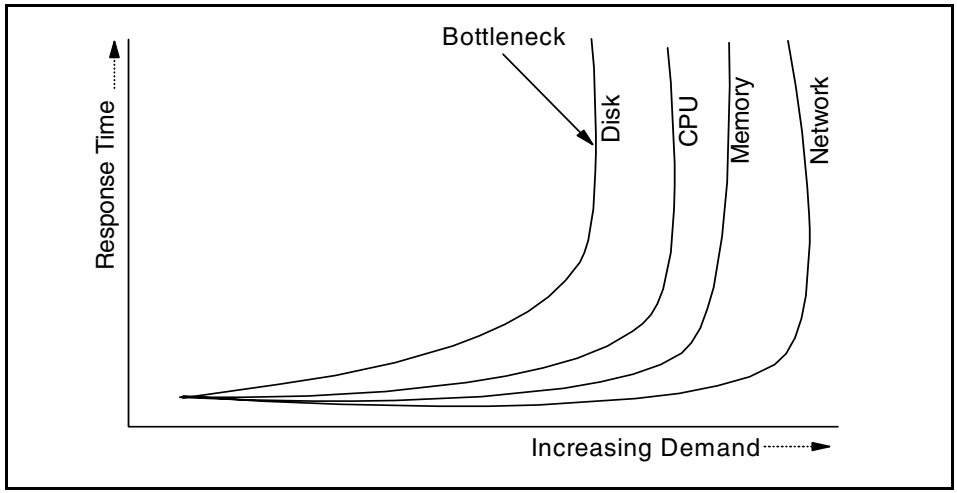

Figure 12-3 Poorly tuned means one bottleneck slows the system

In a well balanced and tuned system, we will find that no one component causes a bottleneck. For example, Figure 12-4 shows a well balanced system where no component is going to hold back the others.

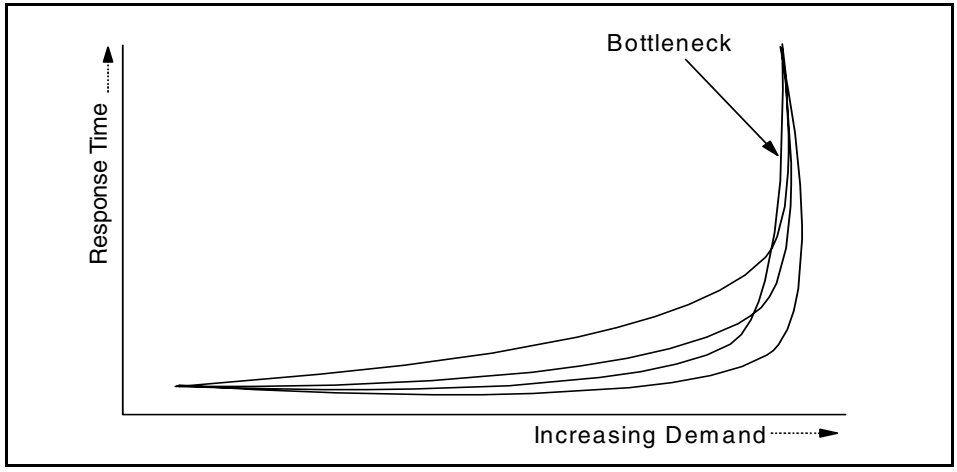

Figure 12-4 Well balanced systems postpone the bottleneck

The first thing to investigate is the utilization level of each of these resources and compare them to the levels we would like to find. Each of these resources has an optimal level which, if exceeded, has a negative impact on the overall system performance. These levels differ between workloads, and various people have different opinions on these levels too. Table 12-1 on page 310 can be used as a starting point.

Table 12-1 Bottleneck thresholds depend on the resource and workload

Resource	Measured by	OLTP	DSS	OLAP	Batch
CPU	Percent system + percent user time	70%	80%	70%	100%
System memory	[1]	99%	99%	99%	99%
RDBMS memory	Cache and library hit ratio	99%	80%	99%	60%
Adapters	Percent busy and throughput	50%	50%	50%	50%[2]
Disks	Percent busy	40%	40%	40%	60%[2]
Network	Transfers and throughput	30%	40%	30%	60%[2]

Notes:
[1] AIX makes use of all available memory once it is running for any length of time.
[2] Batch can stress the system higher than these levels, but checks need to be made in order to make sure that other workloads or users of these resources are not affected.

Generally speaking, batch and DSS workloads can use higher utilization levels because they are focused on throughput rather than response time.

12.3.1 Insufficient CPU and latent demand

On well performing machines with many users attached, the workload varies during the working day. Figure 12-5 on page 311 shows the typical pattern where there is a dip in workload during the lunch time period, and the CPU is not 100% busy during the peaks during mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

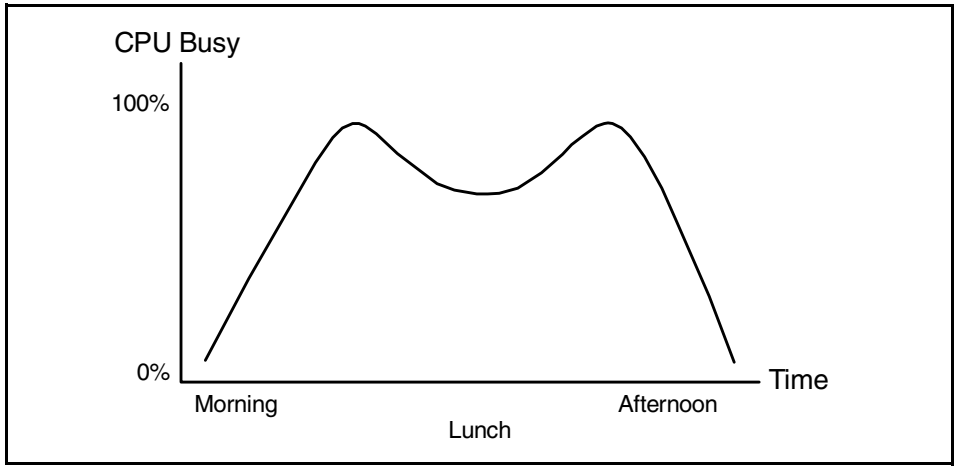

Figure 12-5 Demand over the working day

On an overworked system, the picture changes quite a lot, because during the peaks, the CPU becomes 100% busy, as shown in Figure 12-6. It is nearly impossible to work out how much CPU power is required to stop the CPU from becoming the bottleneck. If the system is then tuned, the CPU may still be the bottleneck, even though the tuning might improve the performance on the machine.

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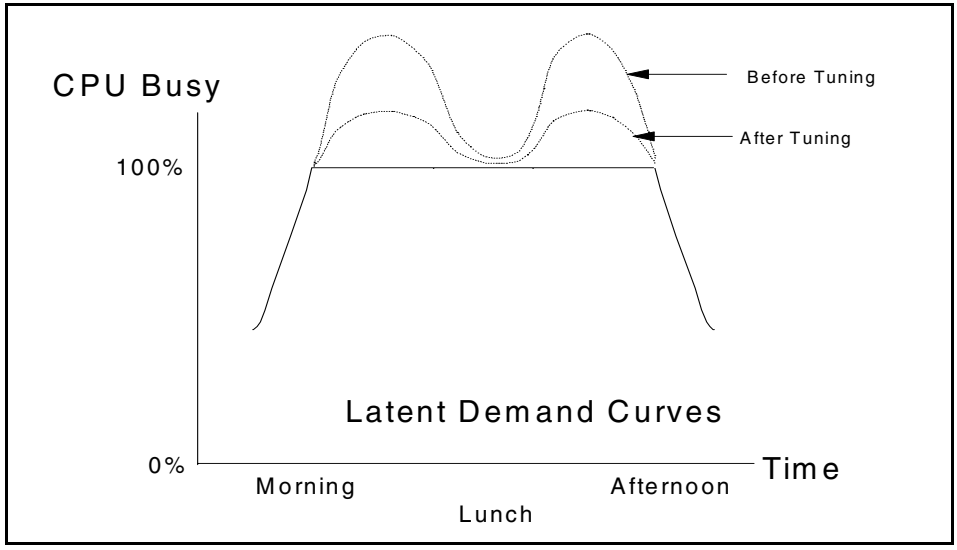

Figure 12-6 Overworked machine

In these cases, the response times may improve even if the CPU is still overworked. If the CPU is still overworked after tuning, and an upgrade is recommended, it is still going to be very hard to estimate the CPU requirements of the upgraded machine, because the height of the peaks cannot be determined.

12.3.2 Insufficient memory

When a machine does not have sufficient memory, the symptoms can be difficult to clearly detect. First, the machine might look like it has a disk or I/O throughput problem. This can be caused by simple UNIX paging and swapping activity. If the paging space is on a dedicated disk, this can be easily spotted. If the paging space is on other disks, such as the AIX, RDBMS code, or other working file disks, it can be difficult to determine that the high disk activity is due to paging. AIX commands, such as **vmstat**, can highlight paging activity. As the RDBMS buffer cache or pool takes up memory, one way is to reduce its size in order to free memory. This may stop paging, but may mean the database cannot keep enough of the database in memory for high performance, and this results in the database performing a lot of extra I/O operations. This means paging I/O and database I/O have to be balanced, and a compromise has to be reached, as shown in Figure 12-7.

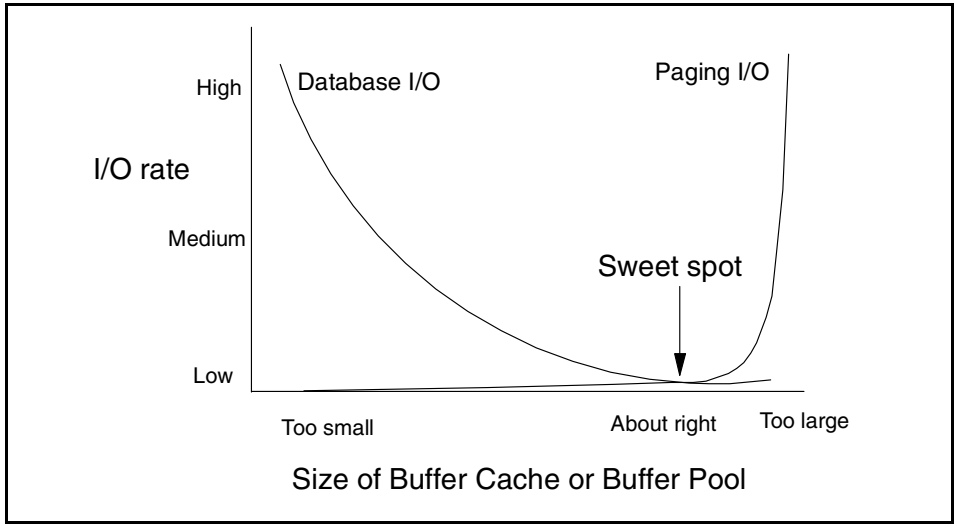

Figure 12-7 Balancing paging I/O against database I/O

Generally, most systems are tuned for near zero paging. On large systems, such as the IBM @server pSeries Regatta machines, sometimes paging cannot be avoided if a large number of user processes change their memory usage over time. Given a well placed paging space, this does not present a problem and

these machines are designed for efficient I/O subsystems in order to handle paging I/O.

To determine if the database buffer cache or buffer pool is of sufficient size, each database provides tools to provide details of the cache hit ratio. For OLTP systems, this is normally in the region of 95% to 99%. The other main usage of the memory by the RDBMS is for the shared_pool and log buffers.

12.3.3 Insufficient disk I/O

If the database does not have sufficient disk I/O capability, this is clearly seen by monitoring the disk performance statistics and CPU statistics. If the machine has high I/O wait CPU numbers, this *can* indicate I/O problems, but care has to be taken in trusting this number. First, I/O wait is assigned in a manner that is not clear to many people and has been changed in AIX Version 4.3.3 to make more sense. Please refer to “Virtual memory management statistics: vmstat” on page 456 for more details.

If the disk statistics are investigated, then there are three areas to check:

- Disk I/O is distributed across the disk evenly. It is the job of both the system administrator and the database administrator to ensure the I/O is spread across many disks. If one disk is overworked, and the others under-used, then the whole system performance can suffer. The **`iostat`** command should be used to investigate this issue.

  Figure 12-8 shows a system with one disk overworked. This disk is probably slowing down the entire system.

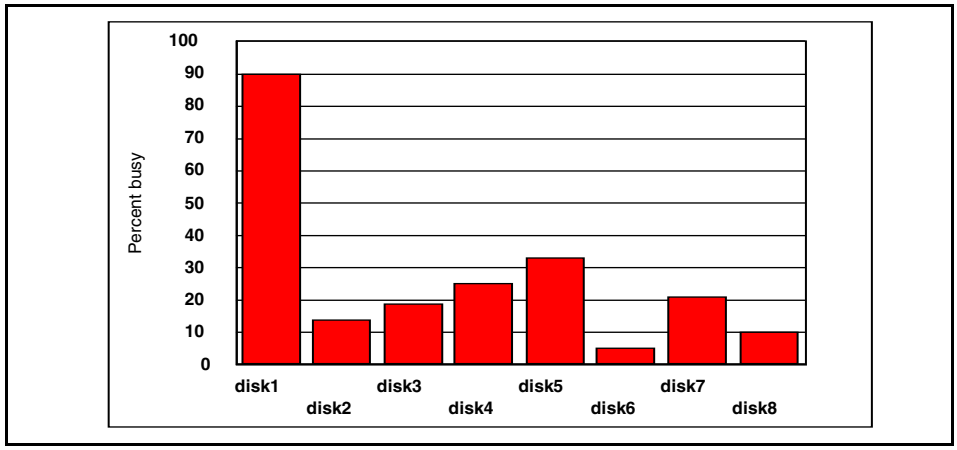

Figure 12-8 Unbalanced disk I/O: Disk 1 will cause a bottleneck

If data is moved from this disk and manually spread across other disks, the outcome should appear as shown in Figure 12-9.

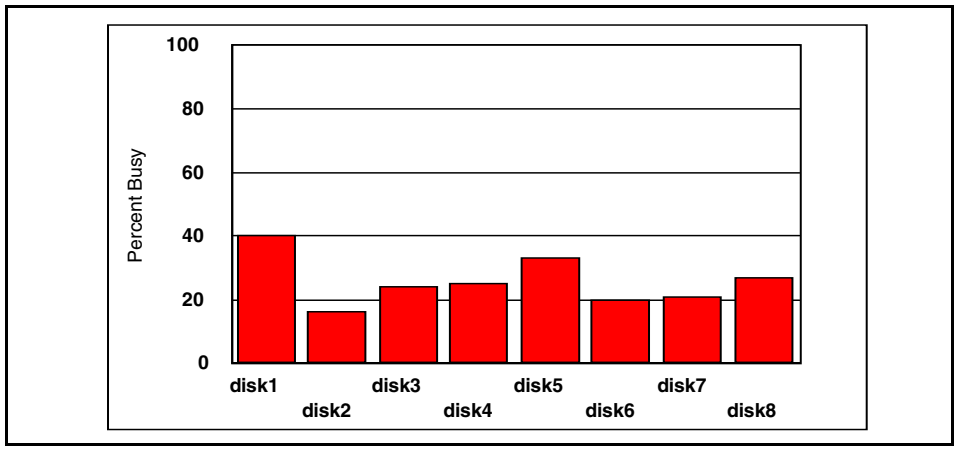

Figure 12-9 Balanced disk I/O: No bottlenecks

If, however, disk striping of some sort is used, the balancing of disk I/O across disks is performed by AIX or the disk subsystem (rather than by manually moving data). In this case, you will see very balanced I/O, as shown in Figure 12-10.

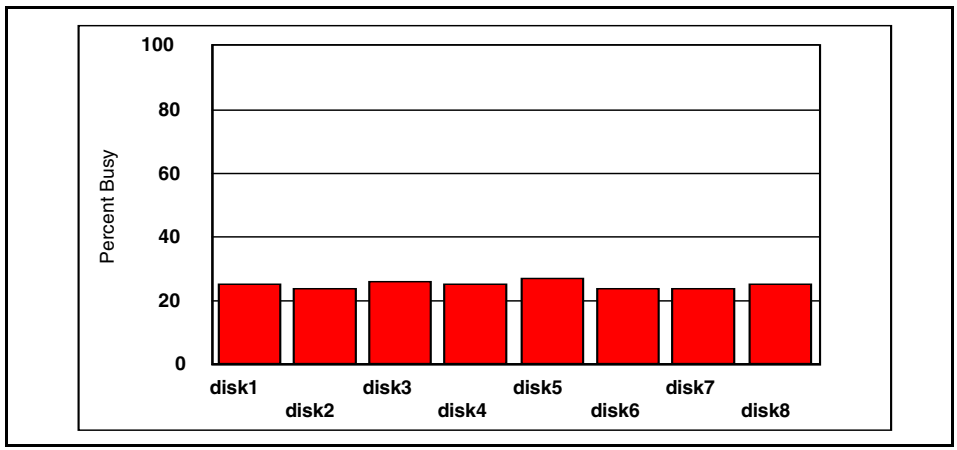

Figure 12-10 Disk I/O balanced by the system using data striping

- Disks are not overworked. For a disk to perform well and respond quickly to user demands, it is best to have the disk not running above 50% busy, because it will mean that the queue for devices drivers can become large and, as a result, response times grow. For large query DSS and batch workloads,

the disks can be used above 50% busy. The **iostat** command should be used to investigate this issue.

- Disk channel is not a limiting factor. The disk channel is the PCI or MCA bus, SCSI, FCAL or SSA adapters, cables, and SSA loops. Any of these can become limiting factors, especially when a lot of disks are attached on the same channel. It is very hard to track if the channel is overworked and to prove it is a limiting factor. The disks will appear to not be overworked, but the CPU appears to be in I/O wait state. The **nmon** tool gives the adapter busy and throughput statistics by adding up the statistics for all the disks attached to the adapter.

Note: The RDBMS logs (if placed on a dedicated disk or set of disks) are an exception to most of the rules above. Logs should not be spread across disks, are often overworked, and, if necessary, should have dedicated adapters and cables.

12.3.4 Insufficient network resources

The general rule of thumb is to monitor network throughput and do not allow it to be over 50% of the maximum throughput. Any collision detect protocol network suffers with throughput problems above this level of network traffic.

12.3.5 Insufficient logical resource access

Within AIX and the RDBMS, access to logical resources is carefully controlled to make sure that data is not corrupted. This control is implemented as locks, latches, and semaphores. But whatever method is used, this restriction means that many operations cannot be performed in parallel, and for important resources, the tasks are serialized. This can have a large impact on performance.

Unfortunately, this is extremely hard to detect from observing CPU, memory, and disk activity. The system will seem to not be particularly busy, but the performance will be low. Only internal examination of AIX or the RDBMS will reveal the problem. AIX has trace facilities to allow this. DB2 UDB has the snapshot facility to allow this to be investigated. Oracle has numerous internal performance tables that can be used to monitor locks and latches. In all three cases, you may need assistance from technical support to determine the nature of the problem and provide a solution.

Fortunately, logical resource contention is one of the last places to investigate for possible performance problems.

12.4 Additional tuning considerations

When all the resources have been considered and tuning is about to be performed, there are several things that may help you during the tuning process. In this section, we shows some additional considerations for tuning.

12.4.1 What can we tune

It is easy to think the only items we can change is a few disks and the database tuning parameters, but there is quite a long list of things that can be changed. For example:

- A little purchasing power. Performance tuning should always highlight which component of the system should be considered for the next upgrade. If this is relatively inexpensive (similar to a few days performance tuning consultation), then it might be better to upgrade the machine immediately rather than continue tuning. Also, it allows planning and budgets to be prepared for longer term upgrades.
- Balancing the use of CPU, memory, and disk I/O. If one is overworked, you might be able to use the others to compensate.
- Balancing the use of memory between AIX, user processes, RDBMS processes, and the RDBMS shared memory.
- Balancing the various consumers of the RDBMS shared memory. For example, buffer, library, and locks.
- Tuning disks by balancing speed over reliability with options, such as RAID 5, striping, and mirrors.
- Changing data placement on the disks using the AIX LVM options center, middle, or edge.
- Removing hot spots by moving data between disks or hardware spreading of data using stripes or RAID 5.
- Dedicating disks to particular tasks for maximum response time and throughput. For example, the log disks.
- Ensuring equal use of disk and network I/O across adapters and that they are not approaching their theoretical or practical limits.
- Balancing disk I/O against memory. One of the many benefits of using memory is to reduce time-consuming disk I/O.
- Ensuring all CPUs of SMP machines are at work. Many performance problems are caused by a single batch process not making use of all the CPUs in the system.

- Maximizing backup rate to reduce the backup window or minimizing user interference with online backups. These considerations might affect the usage of disks and reserving disks for backup purposes.
- Balancing workloads. Many performance problems are simply poor management of workloads, in particular, batch operations or online requested reports. Sometimes users are willing to change their working habits if they realize they can improve performance (and their job) by making small changes to their work patterns.
- Identifying and fixing poor application modules and SQL statements.

  The database can help you work out the worst offenders. Many DBAs assume they cannot change the application code or SQL. This means they never investigate the SQL or try to get it improved. Having identified the worst SQL example and the ones used repeatedly, these will yield the largest performance improvements:

  - If you know other sites that use the same application or SQL, then find out if they have the same list of issues.
  - Join the appropriate user groups.
  - Start providing feedback to the vendor or your own development team and start increasing the pressure for getting these problems fixed.
  - Although many developers resist making individual changes to application code, they do welcome real production feedback to improve their products performance in the longer term and for future releases.
- Starting to think in parallel on SMP machines. Unless you can make use of all the CPUs, you will be making use of a fraction of the available compute power.
- Starting to turn your attention toward logical resources, such as lock, spin counts, time-out, delay flags, and database latches, when the machine looks idle but responds badly.
- Finally, tuning the database using the parameters and options.

12.4.2 Tuning window

If this is a real production machine, there is often a problem to find:

- The opportunity to change parameters or move disk space or data around
- The means to run tests to check performance
- A way to create a reproducible workload

Possible tuning windows are:

- At night, which makes tuning not very desirable to those doing the work.
- Just once per day when the database is restarted (perhaps after a backup), and you have to hope that you never make a mistake, therefore, making the system unusable in the morning.
- Sometimes a copy can be made (on a similar or smaller size machine). If it has the same performance issues and architecture (for example, like an 8 way SMP), then this can be used to do a lot of tuning without affecting the production machine.
- Ideally in the pre-production phase, testing time is allocated to allow full scale, full speed testing, but time constraints and problems of user emulation can make this impossible.
- Extra machines can be rented, loaned, or a test run within IBM at a benchmark center, although this can be expensive in man-power terms.

12.4.3 Classic mistake list

These problems mostly arise due to people making simple statements but not covering the exceptions, assuming that performance options do not change when hardware and software improves, and assuming that their experience extends to all known cases.

Be very careful you do not encourage folklore, misunderstandings, or oversimplifications. The following lists the classic mistakes to avoid:

- Thinking file system based databases are as fast as raw devices.
- Thinking a RAID database is fast (it is inexpensive).
- Thinking RAID write performance will not be too bad or the database does not do many writes to disk.
- Thinking that using a new, just released, feature is going to work and fix all know performance issues the first time it is used with no testing.
- Misreading I/O wait CPU statistics and deciding a high value is a problem.
- Performing a seemingly simple test, not understanding the results, and assuming something is wrong with the machine.
- Assuming the database defaults will be fine (especially the Oracle init.ora parameters).
- Changing from a file system based database to raw devices and not adjusting the RDBMS buffer cache/pool to use more memory.
- Using the tool you know rather than the right tool.

- Changing AIX parameters to try and fix a problem, not knowing if they helped or not, and then forgetting to set them back to the safe default values.
- Running more than one database on a machine and expecting the machine to work out which is more important.
- Working out a transaction rate per second or minute, based on the number of transactions for a year in total, and assuming a completely flat and even work rate for five days a week and an even workload during the whole day. This is especially not true for e-business.
- Basing a transaction rate on marketing estimates.

13

AIX and hardware tuning considerations

In this chapter, we discuss some RDBMS related tuning considerations from the operating system and hardware perspective. There are several important things that will greatly affect an RDBMS performance that can be done from AIX and hardware point of view.

The discussion in this chapter consists of:

- 13.1, “Tuning categories in this chapter” on page 322 lays out some basic conventions that we present in this chapter.
- 13.2, “Common AIX issues” on page 322 discusses some common mistakes in tuning AIX.
- 13.3, “AIX tuning for RDBMS hints” on page 324 describes some common tuning actions that can be done on AIX.
- 13.4, “Advanced AIX tuning hints” on page 333 lists some advanced options in tuning AIX.

13.1 Tuning categories in this chapter

This chapter discusses tuning hints. It is assumed you are a Database Administrator (DBA) or AIX System Administrator (SA). This section contains some guidelines in using the hints in general. We have categorized these tuning hints in the following way to highlight the performance difference you might expect and the risks involved.

Performance impact or benefit explains the level of potential performance gain by performing a specific tuning action:

Low	A 5% or less improvement
Medium	Between 5% to 25% improvement
High	25% or more improvement
Very high	More than 100% improvement might be possible

Performance risk covers the fact that some tuning actions may involve some risk that may actually degrade performance. The hints that contain risks must be used with care, while others are only going to improve things and should always be used. The associated risks are categorized as:

None	This is not expected to cause any problems.
Low	Safe change to make.
Medium	You need to check that this actually improves performance.
High	This can cause problems or reduce performance.

13.2 Common AIX issues

This section contains the common AIX and system administration items that are needed that are related to database systems. The items in this sections are necessary to ensure a good performing database systems, and these are worth checking before engaging in fine, detailed-level database tuning. Those are:

- Failure to use asynchronous I/O

  Asynchronous I/O is the normal operation for AIX. It reduces CPU use with no risk and is recommended for performance reasons. See 13.3.1, “AIX asynchronous I/O” on page 325 for more information.

- Poor disk subsystem installation

  This includes not making good use of the available hardware or configuring too many disks per adapter and forgetting availability in the disk setup. This

subject is beyond the scope of this redbook. Some information is discussed in Chapter 9, “Designing a disk subsystem” on page 187. Some examples are:

  - Not balancing disks and I/O across SSA loops and adapters
  - Not having mirrors on different disks and adapters

- Separate database logging disks

  For a system with more than a few disks, the redo log should be separated out onto a dedicated and mirrored pair of disks. The AIX system administrator has to set this up for DBA use.

- Poor use of AIX disk features

  AIX has many advanced features for maximum performance and minimum workload for the System Administrator (SA) and DBA.

  - Failure to use AIX striping will reduce disk management effort and automatically reduce hot disks. See 13.3.2, “AIX Logical Volume Manager or database files” on page 325 for more information.
  - Failure to create logical volumes that are easy to manage and allocate, such as:
    - For LV sizes, see 13.3.3, “Create logical volumes at a standardized size” on page 327.
    - For a comparison of JFS and raw device files, see 13.3.4, “AIX JFS or raw devices” on page 328.
    - For making the hot files faster, see 13.3.5, “AIX disk geometry considerations” on page 329.

- Busy disks

  There is always going to be some disks that are used more than others. The busiest disks are called hot disks, because of the idea that a disk might heat up if it is used repeatedly due to the head movement. The AIX administrator should always know which are the warm or hot disk disks and be ready to fix them when necessary. See 13.3.9, “Hot disk removal” on page 331 for more information.

- Setting paging space and monitoring paging

  This is simple to forget, especially on a newly set up machine; see 13.3.7, “AIX paging space” on page 330 and 13.3.8, “AIX paging rate” on page 330 for more information.

- Not allocating enough memory to the RDBMS

  RDBMS must have a significant amount of memory to operate at high performance levels. The initial guess will depend on the number of users, their process size, and the application (see 7.4, “Memory goals and sizing” on page 141 for more information). Once running, any free memory should be

allocated to RDBMS. The AIX administrator can make careful use of the **rmss** command to determine the amount of free memory. Because AIX will make use of all memory after running for a while, we use the term *free* for memory that AIX is using, but allocating it for another purpose would not affect performance. To check for free memory, use the **rmss** command to take away 2% of memory and then release it. Watching the speed at which this is allocated indicates if the memory is really needed or not. See “Reduced memory system simulator: rmss” on page 451 for more information.

- Naming convention

  When creating volume groups, logical volumes, and file systems, decide on a naming convention and stick to it. We recommend creating all these using scripts to minimize mistakes. Any clear and consistent policy is better than none at all. Many sites only allow one person (or group) to create logical volumes to make sure the policy is adhered to. This makes performance tuning much simpler, as the logical volume name tells you what sort of data it contains, and the system characteristics are simpler to monitor.

  – Most people end the volume group name with *vg*.

  – For logical volumes, include something in the name to indicate the owning subsystem and the purpose, such as *ora* for Oracle and *data*, *idx*, *tmp,* or *log* for the various parts of the database.

13.3 AIX tuning for RDBMS hints

This section contains the most common AIX tuning hints that should be considered as normal operation. In 13.4, “Advanced AIX tuning hints” on page 333, we include advanced AIX hints that must be used with caution. The hints, their potential benefits, and associated risks are given in Table 13-1.

Table 13-1 AIX tuning hints

Hint	Benefit	Risk
13.3.1, “AIX asynchronous I/O” on page 325	High	None
13.3.2, “AIX Logical Volume Manager or database files” on page 325	High	None
13.3.3, “Create logical volumes at a standardized size” on page 327	Medium	None
13.3.4, “AIX JFS or raw devices” on page 328	High	None
13.3.5, “AIX disk geometry considerations” on page 329	Medium	None

Hint	Benefit	Risk
13.3.6, “AIX sequential read ahead” on page 330	Medium	Low
13.3.7, “AIX paging space” on page 330	Low	None
13.3.8, “AIX paging rate” on page 330	High	Medium
13.3.9, “Hot disk removal” on page 331	High	Low
13.3.10, “Disk sets for hot disk avoidance” on page 332	High	Low
13.3.11, “SMP balanced CPU utilization” on page 332	High	None

13.3.1 AIX asynchronous I/O

You need to set the parameters for AIX asynchronous I/O. Use the AIX **`smit aio`** command or go through the SMIT menu **Devices** -> **Asynchronous I/O** -> **Change/Show Characteristics of Asynchronous I/O**. The following is the recommended values:

MaxServers The minimum of 10 * number of disks or 10 times the number of processors in the machine.

MinServers MaxServers /2.

For example, on a machine with 30 disks, then Max Servers = 300 and MinServers should be 150, but if this machine only has four CPUs, the MaxServers = 40 and MinServers = 20 is sufficient. Higher numbers will not hurt performance, as it only results in more kernel processes running that do not actually get used.

Using asynchronous I/O is likely to increase performance. There is no risk of reducing performance, so it should always be used.

13.3.2 AIX Logical Volume Manager or database files

To spread out the data and disk workload across disks, you have two choices:

- Manually: As the DBA, allocate the physical files and place them onto disk by creating a logical volume on a particular disk, then monitor the database objects (tables and indexes) in the files and move objects between files to balance disk use. In this case, the AIX System Administrator simply creates each database file (JFS or raw logical volume) on a separate disk.
- Use AIX: As the AIX system administrator, use the AIX Logical Volume Manager (LVM) to create each JFS or raw logical volume on multiple disks.

Use striping to spread data across disks and then monitor the AIX physical volumes. In this case, the DBA does not have to balance disk use between database files and disks.

These two options might sound similar, but there is one main point. Either AIX spreads the disk work out across the disks, or the DBA has to do it. That is, either a human does it, or the computer does it automatically. It is strongly recommended that the benefits of the AIX LVM are fully used.

The AIX LVM has a number of options, and striping data across disks is very effective, as it makes full use of the disks in usage terms, makes excellent use of read-ahead for sequential I/O, and spreads disk I/O evenly for better performance. For striping, use the following values:

Stripe unit size 32 KB or 64 KB

max_coalesce 64 KB

minpgahead 2

maxpgahead 6

For a full explanation of these parameters, see the AIX documentation or the redbook *RS/6000 Performance Tools in Focus*, SG24-4989.

- The striped LV size must be a multiple number of the drives used. For example, if the strip size is 32 KB, and the LV is spread across eight disks, then the size of the LV must be a multiple of 32 * 8 K. This allows the LVM to create the LV with a complete number of stripes and avoid the case that the last stripe does not cover all the disks.
- It is recommended that striped data and the database logs are on different sets of disks.
- Before AIX Version 4.3.3, striped logical volumes could not be mirrored. This resulted in striping not being used or sites opting for RAID configurations. There is an alternative that gives the load balancing effect of striped and mirrored disks that can still be used, called PP level striping, that works for large files (large being over 100 MB). The logical volume is created on a set of disks with the INTER-POLICY set to maximum. This results in the physical partitions (typically 4 or 8 MB chunks) being spread across the disks one after the other.
- After AIX Version 4.3.3, the LVM does allow striping and mirroring at the same time. This has been tested for performance and works well.

Benchmarks have shown using AIX LVM to stripe data can increase performance on disk bound systems by as much as a factor of three. Disk bound batch workloads particularly benefit from this. Using the LVM to spread and stripe data

across disks reduces hot disks and reduces DBA man-power in monitoring and moving data within the database.

13.3.3 Create logical volumes at a standardized size

When creating logical volumes in order to use them as database files, create all of them with standard size. You might decide on two or three standard sizes, but make sure they are multiples of each other and will fit nicely into the standard disk sizes on the system.

For example, a standard 4.5 GB disk drive, when assigned to a volume group with a physical partition (PP) of 8 MB, contains 537 PPs, which means 4296 MB of space for logical volumes. This would make four logical volumes of 134 PPs each, which is 1072 MB. These disks are then grouped together for striping and mirroring. In practice, you might like to use a binary number, such as 128 PPs and 1 GB files.

We recommend making all the files 1 GB or 2 GB is size on large machines. For huge installations, like ERP, where one single extent may be greater than 2 GB, a rule of thumb is try to keep file sizes between 6 GB and 8 GB, because smaller sizes will lead to the constant need to add new datafiles, because there is no sufficient contiguous space for one extent, and larger sizes may cause backup and restore times to be drastically increased. On small machines, try using 256 MB files.

The standard 2 GB file size does not cause large file problems and can be copied or moved around the system. It is worth staying under the 2 GB limit because larger files can still cause problems and lower performance. Some applications, tools, and commands have problems with files larger than 2 GB because they have not been re-coded to make use of the 64-bit file system calls required to handle larger file sizes. To hold files larger than 2 GB in a JFS requires the use of the *large file support* version of the JFS. There are occasions when smaller files are needed in the database, and we recommend using 64 MB as a minimum.

These sizes will mean the number of files is kept down to a reasonable limit and are still usable.

13.3.4 AIX JFS or raw devices

This is a much discussed subject with arguments in favor of both sides. In the books and manuals, there are almost religious opinions that are completely opposite. The two options are:

- JFS: If your database is not I/O bound, that is, your applications do a lot of computation on small or infrequently retrieved data, then the JFS is a good choice because it is simpler to create, work with, administer, and back up/recover.

  Reading a block from a JFS file means it is moved from disk to the AIX buffer cache and is then copied from the AIX buffer cache to the RDBMS buffer for the process to access the data.

  Because there is a copy in the AIX buffer cache, disk I/O may be avoided in the case where the copy from the RDBMS buffer was removed (reused for other purposes), but the AIX buffer cache copy survived.

  Note that when RDBMS writes data to the database, in most cases, it has to force the data to disk, which results in a copy from RDBMS buffer to AIX buffer cache and then moving the block out to the actual disk drive.

  The extra overhead is incurred because the block is in the JFS cache (taking up memory), and AIX has to lock the data structures and maintain the inode details and indirect block structures (taking more CPU cycles).

- Raw devices (also called raw logical volumes, raw partitions, or raw disks) are harder to work with, as they do not appear in the file system and, for example, the files cannot simply be copied with the **cp** command. They are harder to back up and recover, as the **dd** command has to be used. Raw devices avoid the double buffering of data, which means the data is read from disk straight to the RDBMS buffer. The same is true for writing to a raw device. Because the database does not use the AIX buffer cache for data access, the AIX buffer cache size can be a lot smaller, and, thus, memory is freed up and can be used to support a much larger RDBMS buffer. For example, memory with a JFS based database might be:

  – 33% for processes

  – 33% for RDBMS buffer

  – 33% for AIX buffer cache

  For raw device databases, this might be:

  – 33% for processes

  – 60% for RDBMS buffer

  – 6% for AIX buffer cache

But, and it is a big but, raw devices are faster (see 9.4.1, “Raw logical volumes versus Journaled File System” on page 204).

The number of databases that cannot benefit from faster disk access is small. Therefore, raw devices are recommended for performance reasons.

The main problem is that some backup systems do not directly support the backing up of raw devices. Before moving to raw devices, check that you can back the files up to tape or disk using your backup method.

From benchmark experience, moving to raw disks for disk I/O bound systems is likely to increase performance by zero to 50%, provided the RDBMS buffer size is also adjusted to counteract the fact that the AIX buffer cache is no longer used.

Tip: Also, the move from JFS to raw devices is a simple process and does not require exporting and importing the whole database but can be done file by file.

13.3.5 AIX disk geometry considerations

With the AIX LVM, you can place data (logical volumes for JFS use or raw devices) on particular positions of the disk. These position on the disk are called:

- (outer) edge
- (outer) middle
- center
- inner middle
- inner edge

The center part of the disk is the fastest because, on average, the seek time to the center position is less than a seek to or from the edges of the disk, which causes higher head movements. Use the -a option of the **`mklv`** command to set this or, in SMIT, use the **POSITION on physical volume** menu; see 9.2.2, “Use of LVM policies” on page 194 for more information.

If the disk center position is the only part of the disk that is used, then the disk average seek times will be much faster. This means the disk will appear to have lower seek times than the average quoted for the entire disk. This option should be considered if you:

- Do not need the unused edge parts of the disk (you have spare disk capacity).
- Have highly performance critical parts of the RDBMS where maximum performance outweighs the extra costs.

This may increase performance by up to 10%.

Tip: When creating a database, create the performance critical logical volumes first and in the center of the disks to ensure they get the best possible performance.

13.3.6 AIX sequential read ahead

The AIX sequential read ahead only affects JFS file system based database files. The Virtual Memory Manager spots sequential reading of JFS based database files by watching the access pattern of read system calls. After a number of sequential reads are noticed, it will attempt to read up to the maxpgahead blocks of the file in advance. By default, these are:

minpgahead 2

maxpgahead 8

These can be increased to increase sequential reading ahead of data, so you can speed up sequential reads using **vmtune**. For example:

```
vmtune -r 512 -R 1024
```

Keep the numbers in powers of 2.

For a full explanation of these parameters, see the AIX documentation or the redbook IBM @server pSeries *Performance Tools in Focus*, SG24-4989.

13.3.7 AIX paging space

Never run out of paging space. Use **lsps -a** to determine the size and usage of the current paging space.

We also recommend spreading out paging space onto multiple disks. As a rule of thumb, only put 1 GB of paging space on any one disk. If the system starts to heavily use paging space, having 9 GB of paging on one disk means it instantly has a disk I/O problem, but by having nine times 1 GB paging area on nine disks means the temporary paging problem will be sorted out nine times faster.

The performance benefit is low, and there are no risks unless you run out of paging space, at which time, it can be very bad.

13.3.8 AIX paging rate

Paging in any form of UNIX is very bad news. It can very seriously reduce performance. If paging gets bad, AIX will start swapping processes out too.

Ideally, paging should be completely avoided. When users start and stop large processes, there is likely to be some limited paging (this is how AIX gets the program into memory). But this paging should be limited and short lived, and no paging for long periods is the best.

Check to see what is in memory with **ipcs** and **ps aux** (check the RSS column values) and use the **vmstat** command to monitor paging. See Appendix A, "AIX performance tools summary" on page 439 for more details or the AIX manuals.

The **vmtune** command can adjust AIX paging parameters.

Also, refer to the redbook *Understanding IBM @server pSeries Performance and Sizing*, SG24-4810 for more information on monitoring paging.

In large configurations, such as the IBM @server pSeries Regatta systems with 16 to 32 CPUs, AIX can support thousands of users and their processes. With large numbers of programs running, there is a high chance that they are going to change their working sets. This causes regular paging. So, for this size of machine, benchmark people use the rule of 10 pages per second per CPU. So, for a 12 way machine, 120 pages per second is acceptable; zero is preferred.

On AIX Version 4.3.3 and onwards, paging is deferred. It means that AIX will page only if it needs to do so. Thus, a good configured and sized system, with memory rightly allocated to each process, will have no, or in the worst case, little paging activity.

13.3.9 Hot disk removal

First, always know where you have spare capacity for both disk space and spare disk I/O capability. When an emergency happens, you can avoid having to work this out, and the knowledge about it will save you time.

Once you have determined which is the hot disk (use the **filemon** command; see "File I/O monitor: filemon" on page 440 for details), you have to find out which file on that disk is causing the I/O and whether it is read or write or both. The choices are then to:

- Move that file completely to a new disk with space capacity.
- Move part of that file. AIX allows the physical partitions (PP) of a logical volume to be moved to alternative disks. So, either the raw device can be partially moved to alternative disks, or the JFS containing the file can be partially moved.
- Move the contents of that file (in Oracle terms, you could move the table to a different tablespace or recreate the table in alternative extents).

- Stripe the data across multiple disks to spread the I/O between disks rather than just moving the problem. Use striping and mirroring in AIX Version 4.3.3 onward. Before this release, you can use PP level striping and mirroring.

13.3.10 Disk sets for hot disk avoidance

This redbook consistently recommends disk protection and avoiding hot disks within the database.

For both RAID 5 and striped mirror disk protection, the data is spread across multiple disks:

- For RAID 5, we recommend seven disks plus one parity disk for an eight disk RAID 5.
- For striped mirror (both PP level or fine stripe on AIX Version 4.3.3 and 5L), we recommend spreading across eight or 16 disks.

The result is that a single hot disk is impossible, but you can still have hot eight or 16 disk sets. But, the performance problems will be eight (or 16) times smaller as a result.

It is traditional to split index, data, and temporary tablespaces onto different sets of disks. This means we should have these groups of eight (or 16) disks assigned to one purpose or another.

13.3.11 SMP balanced CPU utilization

Most large systems are now SMP machines, as this allows multiple fast processors to scale up to higher power machines. There is one small drawback in that the application and database must have enough processes to keep all the CPUs busy. If only one process is used, only one CPU can be used (assuming it is a single threaded application), and, therefore, only a fraction of the available power of the machine is used.

Fortunately, most RDBMSs have multiple processes (one per user as a default) and, for large tasks, allow them to be parallelized to make them effective on an SMP.

It is worth checking that this is actually happening, particularly for batch jobs that have, in the past, often been implemented as a single process.

Use the **`sar -P ALL 1 10`** command to check if all CPUs are busy.

13.4 Advanced AIX tuning hints

This section includes hints for advanced AIX options. You are normally not expected to use these options, since the performance benefit are generally small and they involve a larger risk factor. However, they may be used if:

- You have tried everything else.
- You fully understand what these options do.
- You are running a benchmark and need the last 1% in performance.

The hints, their potential benefits, and associated risks are given in Table 13-2.

Table 13-2 Advanced AIX tuning hints

Hint	Benefit	Risk
13.4.1, “AIX logical track group size” on page 333	Low	Medium
13.4.2, “AIX write behind” on page 334	Low	Medium
13.4.3, “AIX disk I/O pacing” on page 334	Medium	Medium
13.4.4, “AIX processor binding on SMP” on page 334	Medium	Medium
13.4.5, “AIX process time slice” on page 335	Low	Medium
13.4.6, “AIX free memory” on page 335	Medium	Medium
13.4.7, “AIX buffer cache size” on page 336	Medium	Low

13.4.1 AIX logical track group size

AIX 5L allows you to specify a larger transfer size for disk I/O. It can be used to speed up a disk subsystem. You can set it to a different value on VG creation using the **mkvg** command, or change it later using the **chvg** command. To make a volume group called datavg001 with a transfer size of 256 KB, you can use:

```
mkvg -L256 datavg001
```

or change it later using:

```
chvg -L256 datavg001
```

The change operation will take the volume group offline to ensure consistency. Also, the 256 value is only a example. You can specify any value up to 1024 KB for a logical track group. Refer to the redbook *AIX 5L Differences Guide Version 5.2 Edition*, SG24-5765 for more information.

13.4.2 AIX write behind

This only affects JFS file system based database files. This affects the way AIX writes JFS files to disk. Do not use this feature unless the machine is a dedicated database server. This feature is set or unset using the **vmtune** command.

To disable the AIX write behind feature, run the command:

```
vmtune -c 0
```

To set the AIX write behind back to normal, use:

```
vmtune -c 8
```

For a full explanation of these parameters, see the AIX documentation or the redbook IBM @server pSeries *Performance Tools in Focus*, SG24-4989

13.4.3 AIX disk I/O pacing

Disk I/O pacing is an AIX feature that stops disk I/O intensive applications flooding the CPU and disks. This is changed using the low and high watermarks using the SMIT command and selecting **System Environment** -> **Change/Show Characteristics of OS**.

If not set correctly, this can reduce performance. Test the effect of disk I/O pacing before and after changing from the default values.

13.4.4 AIX processor binding on SMP

A process (for example, Oracle processes or the application process) can be forced to run on only one particular CPU of an SMP machine. The benefit is increased CPU cache memory hits. The down side is that the process then cannot be dispatched to an unused CPU. If the CPU to which it is allocated is busy running another process at the same priority, then the process cannot (as is normally the case) be allocated to another CPU.

This option is set using the **bindprocessor** command. This feature is only available on AIX Version 4 and above. You can use this feature to bind the main Oracle processes to different processors with good effect. Also, if the SQL*Net listener is bound, all the processes it creates (for example, the Oracle servers used to connection the remote application process) are also bound to that CPU. This can be used to limit remote connects to particular processors. This may increase performance by 15%.

Note that this is rarely done on production machines, because it can also reduce performance unless carefully and permanently monitored and measured. For a

full explanation of these parameters, see the AIX documentation or the redbook *RS/6000 Performance Tools in Focus*, SG24-4989.

Tip: Since AIX Version 4.3.3, many improvements have been made regarding processor affinity within AIX to improve performance, and also Workload Management has been introduced. Therefore, the **bindprocessor** command is hardly of any benefit any more in AIX Version 4.3.3 onwards.

13.4.5 AIX process time slice

Only the root user can set the process time slice value using the **schedtune** command. This is found in the bos.adt.samples fileset and will be **/usr/samples/kernel/schedtune**. This command can increase the time a process is allowed to run on a CPU before the scheduler removes it in favor of another runable process.

It can be found on a very busy system with hundreds of processes in which many Oracle or application tasks nearly finish but then get taken off the CPU and have to wait to be scheduled again to finish the task. In this case, letting the process run a little longer would mean the task is finished and, thus, reduce response times. This is not easy to determine. The best way is to increase the time slice and try to measure the effect on performance.

We do not recommend testing this task on production systems. Check the AIX documentation or the redbook IBM @server pSeries *Performance Tools in Focus*, SG24-4989 for further information.

13.4.6 AIX free memory

For JFS database files, there can be a copy of the disk block in both the RDBMS buffer cache and in the AIX buffer cache. This double buffering can affect performance and cause disk I/O bottlenecks. There are two AIX buffer cache tuning parameters that determine the size of the free list:

minfree Below this limit, page stealing starts trying to reclaim memory pages.

maxfree Above this limit, page stealing stops.

The numbers are the number of pages. For a full explanation of these parameters, see the AIX documentation or the redbook IBM @server pSeries *Performance Tools in Focus*, SG24-4989.

Increase minfree and maxfree using the **vmtune** command. This way, the read page ahead algorithm does not reduce the amount of free memory pages all the

way down to zero so that there is always free memory for disk I/O. AIX naturally tries to keep used memory pages for as long as possible in case the contents can be reused, so that disk I/O can be avoided. This means the memory free list on AIX is always small (after the system has been running for a while).

On machines with large memory (512 MB or more), you should try to keep a small amount of free memory. Making minfree and maxfree larger should increase the free memory slightly. This means always wasting a little memory, but also means disk I/O is not delayed. For example, keep 128 pages free by using:

```
vmtune -f 128 -F 144
```

On machines with less memory (less than 512 MB), do not change these parameters.

We recommend that only experienced AIX administrators change these limits, as it can, if set wrong, cause a system to perform slowly or strangely.

13.4.7 AIX buffer cache size

This depends mostly on the workload and I/O characteristics of your database and whether you are using a JFS file system based database or raw devices.

There are two AIX buffer cache tuning parameters that determine the AIX buffer cache size:

minperm Below this limit, file and code pages are stolen.

maxperm Above this limit, only file system pages are stolen.

The numbers are pages of memory used by the buffer cache. A simplistic way of remembering this is that AIX will try to keep the AIX buffer cache size between the **minperm** and **maxperm** percentage of memory. Use the **vmtune** command with no parameters to determine the current values of the **minperm** and **maxperm**. At the bottom of the output is the total pages in the system. Look for:

```
number of valid memory pages = [number]
```

Also, at the bottom of the output is the percentages of memory that the values of **minperm** and **maxperm** work out to, which is often more helpful. To change **minperm** and **maxperm**, you have to work out the actual number of pages that will work out to the percentages you are aiming for.

The defaults should work out to approximately 20% and 80% of memory.

Buffer cache size for a JFS based database

For JFS based databases, you are using the AIX buffer cache.

On machines with large memory (1 GB or more), you will find that 20% of memory is not available for file system cache (200 MB). This is a large amount of memory. There are two cases to consider:

- On systems that have only a few or small applications, this memory is not all used up by the application or RDBMS code. In this case, raising maxperm will make more of this memory available for AIX buffer cache use. For example, change maxperm to 95% of memory.
- On systems with very large applications, you might find that AIX keeps stealing application code pages, which results in continuous paging of application code. In this case, lowering maxperm will allow a higher percentage of memory to be allocated to application code and therefore reduce paging. For example, change maxperm to 70% of memory.

On machines with less memory, do not change these parameters, or be very careful, as the default values have been found to work well.

Buffer cache size for a raw device based database

For raw device (also called raw disk, partition, or logical volume) based databases, you are not using the AIX buffer cache to any great extent. It is actually being used for disk I/O for AIX processes and, for example, RDBMS error log files, but the bulk of the RDBMS disk I/O is bypassing the AIX buffer cache (that is a major point of using raw devices).

On machines with large memory (say 1 GB or more) that are only running an RDBMS, you will find that between 20% and 80% of memory has been earmarked for the AIX buffer cache. But the RDBMS buffer is occupying a large part of memory. For example, the RDBMS buffer might be 50% of memory, so the other 50% is shared between processes and buffer cache. This means the values of 20% to 80% are not a sensible setting. We might page out process memory (code or data) from memory unnecessarily.

When the system is running normally, use the **vmtune** command with no parameters to determine the amount of memory used for the buffer cache. At the end of the output, you will find a line like:

```
number of file memory pages=[number] numperm=[num] percent of real memory
```

The second number (the numperm percentage) is the one to think about. If this is less than the minperm (on the line above), then we have the memory pages being stolen from code and file system buffer cache equally. This results, probably, in unnecessarily paging out processes.

Another way to look at this is to say that the file system buffer cache should be 20% to 80% of the memory *not* occupied by the RDBMS buffer. If, for example, the RDBMS buffer is 50% of memory, then the buffer cache should be 10% to 40%. The important value is that of minperm. You could never reach the 80% default value of maxperm because the RDBMS buffer is taking up a large part of memory.

There are a number of cases to consider:

- If minperm is greater than 20% of the non-RDBMS memory, set minperm to be this value and reconsider once the system has settled down.
- If the numperm number is greater than minperm, you should consider allocating more memory to the RDBMS buffer.
- If numperm is smaller than minperm, you are freeing processes memory and should reduce minperm. For example, change minperm to 2% of memory.

14

DB2 UDB tuning

This chapter explains the options that you can use for tuning a DB2 UDB database. This chapter focuses on operational and environmental factors only because they can be changed during the life time of a database system and managed by the database administrator. Those are:

- DB2 UDB database and database manager parameters
- System catalog statistics
- SQL compiler
- SQL explain facility
- Using the DB2 UDB governor

The discussion includes the following topics:

- 14.1, “Introduction to DB2 UDB tuning” on page 340 discusses some generic tuning considerations that apply to DB2 tuning.
- 14.2, “Areas of interest” on page 346 considers the options that can be changed to affect performance of the DB2 UDB database.
- 14.3, “Which options will make a large difference” on page 354 shows options that can make large differences in DB2 UDB performance in detail.
- 14.4, “Simulating through SYSSTAT views” on page 374 illustrates some methods on access path simulation using SYSSTAT views.

14.1 Introduction to DB2 UDB tuning

This section provides some generic considerations on DB2 UDB tuning. The discussion consists of:

- 14.1.1, “Quick-start tips for tuning” on page 340
- 14.1.2, “General tuning elements” on page 341

Tip: DB2 UDB provides many tools and commands that interface with the control files and catalog tables, thus providing easy, fast, and valuable monitoring information usually not well exploited on other RDBMSs.

14.1.1 Quick-start tips for tuning

When you start a new instance of DB2, consider the following suggestions for a basic configuration which you can then further tune if required:

- Use the Configuration Advisor in the Control Center to get advice about a reasonable starting configuration for your system. The advisor requests information about your system and produces a recommended configuration, which can be applied immediately or can be saved as a script for running later.

  OR

  Use the AUTOCONFIGURE command, which is the CLP equivalent of the Configuration advisor.
- Use other wizards in the Control Center and Client Configuration Assistant for performance-related administration tasks. The Health Center also provides a set of monitoring and tuning tools.
- Use the Design Advisor to find out what indexes will improve query performance.
- Use the ACTIVATE DATABASE command to start databases. This command activates the database on all partitions and avoids the startup time required to initialize the database when the first application connects. If you use ACTIVATE DATABASE to start the database, then you must use DEACTIVATE DATABASE to shut the database down. In this case, the last application to disconnect from the database does not shut it down.

14.1.2 General tuning elements

The following sections provide a short description of some tuning elements of a DB2 UDB RDBMS.

Tuning considerations

Before starting the tuning process, you may want to consider the following:

- Operational performance considerations

  These considerations are about how to improve the operational performance by analyzing the performance indicators collected at runtime. The database administrator is responsible for maintaining a stable and well tuned RDBMS in order to achieve an excellent operational performance.

- Environmental considerations

  These considerations apply to database manager configuration parameters, database configuration parameters, such as buffpage or sortheap, and registry variables of DB2 UDB, and may be tuned by the database or system administrator.

- Application considerations

  A number of factors exist that can impact the run-time performance of an application, such as concurrency, locking, or stored procedures. Application developers have to pay attention to all these factors during application design and development because they cannot be changed without recompiling and binding the program. However, if only the isolation level is changed, no recompilation is needed. In this case, only a bind with the new isolation level is required.

System catalog statistics

The database manager creates and maintains two sets of system catalog views: SYSCAT and SYSSTAT. These system catalog views are created when a database is created.

- The SYSCAT view is updated during normal operation in response to SQL data definition statements, environment routines, and certain utilities, such as RUNSTATS. Data in the system catalog views is available through normal SQL query facilities.
- The SYSSTAT view contains statistical information used by the optimizer. The optimizer uses these statistics to estimate the costs of alternative access paths that could be used to resolve a particular query. Some columns in the SYSSTAT views may be changed to investigate the performance of hypothetical databases.

After a certain time or after a large number of rows were inserted or updated into a database, it is recommended to issue the RUNSTATS command so that all statistics will reflect the current, new state. The RUNSTATS command is a DB2 UDB command that updates statistics about the physical characteristics of a table and the associated indexes. These characteristics include the number of records, number of pages, and average record length. The optimizer uses these statistics when determining access paths to the data. It is recommended to call this command when a table has had many updates or after reorganizing a table. See the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Command Reference*, SC09-4828, for more details about reorganization and RUNSTATS and Chapter 5 of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-4821 for more details about system catalog statistics.

SQL execution considerations

DB2 UDB application access data in the database using SQL. There are some considerations relating to the SQL statements executions. This relates to how the statement is compiled, how the statement is executed, and how to limit the execution.

- SQL compiler

  The SQL compiler generates, during runtime of a *dynamic SQL* statement, the access plan for this particular query. It performs several steps before producing an access plan that can be executed. Information about access plans for *static SQL* is stored in the system catalog tables. When the package for a certain static SQL statement is executed, the database manager will use the information stored in the system catalog tables to determine how to access the data and provide results for the query. For more information on how the SQL compiler generates the access plan, see Chapter 6 of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-4821.

- SQL Explain facility

  The SQL Explain facility is part of the SQL Compiler that can be used to capture information about the environment in which the static or dynamic SQL statement is compiled. The information captured allows the database administrator to understand the structure and potential execution performance of SQL statements. The Explain facility assists in designing application programs, determines when an application should be rebound, and assists in database design (see “Explain” on page 263).

- Using the DB2 UDB governor

  The governor monitors and changes the behavior of applications that run against a database. The governor is a DB2 UDB process (daemon) that collects statistics about the applications running against a database. It then checks these statistics against the rules that the database administrator specified in a governor configuration file that applies to that specific database.

The governor then acts according to these rules. It can change the priority of a DB2 UDB process, or it can force an application that uses more resources as defined in the governor configuration file. The database administrator uses a front end utility to configure the governor. For more information, refer to Chapter 9 of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-4821.

Scaling the configuration

If a database system grows and reaches a configuration that does not satisfy the business needs anymore, further system resources may be added. Please refer to 8.3.2, “System resource considerations” on page 165 for more information about the system resource demands. Some facts must be taken into consideration depending on the current database system. For example, the current database system is a single-partition configuration with a single processor (UP system). An exchange of the UP CPU planar through a SMP CPU planar allows the database manager to take advantage of the new processors by using the parallel implementations of DB2 UDB. However, to allow the new functionality, some configuration parameters should be reviewed and perhaps updated. These are:

- Enable intra-partition parallelism (intra_parallel)
- Default degree (dft_degree)
- Maximum query degree of parallelism (max_querydegree)

Many more options exist for upgrading an SMP system with a single database partition to an SMP system with more CPUs and more database partitions. For more information about scaling a database system, refer to Chapter 10 of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-4821.

Memory usage by DB2 UDB

Many of the configuration parameters available in DB2 UDB affect memory usage on the system. To better understand how DB2 UDB manages the systems memory, Figure 14-1 on page 344 shows how DB2 UDB uses memory for the database manager shared memory, for database global memory, for application global memory, for application private memory, and for agent/application shared memory (see Chapter 8 of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-4821). The memory usage diagram is shown in Figure 14-1 on page 344.

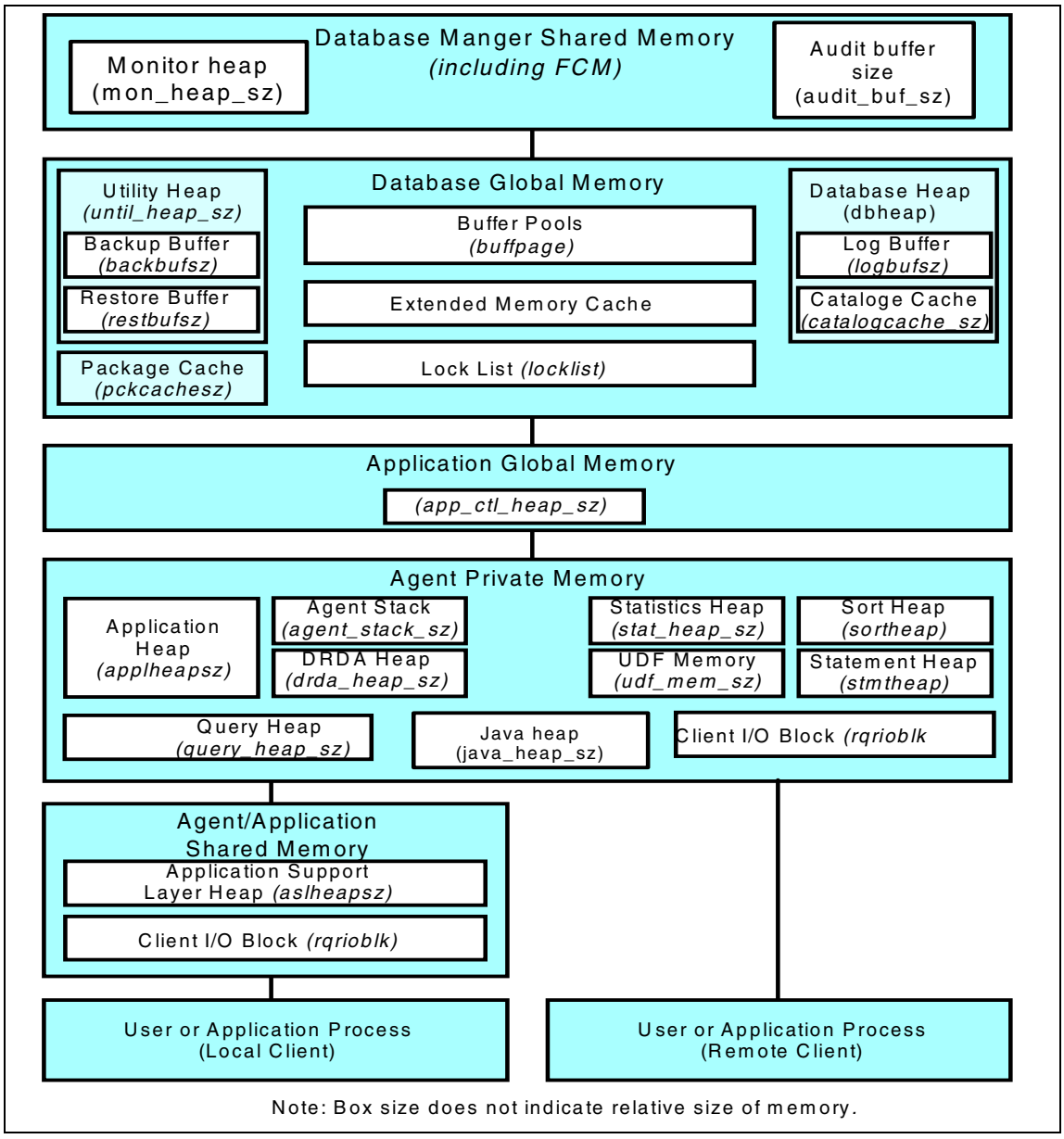

Figure 14-1 Memory usage by DB2 UDB Database Manager

A database administrator should seek to balance the overall memory usage on the system. Different applications that run on the operating system may use memory in different ways. For example, some applications may use the file

system cache, while the Database Manager uses its own buffer pool for data caching instead of the operating system facility.

14.1.3 Tablespace page size

Since Version 5.2, DB2 UDB has provided the capability to expand the page size of tablespaces from the default 4 KB to 8 KB; Version 6.1 supported 16 KB or 32 KB page sizes.

This allows larger tables and larger row lengths. For example, a table created in a tablespace with a page size of 32 KB can reach a maximum size of 512 GB.

A bufferpool using the same page size must be assigned to each tablespace. For example, if you have tablespaces with 4 KB, 8 KB, and 16 KB page sizes within a database, the database must have at least three bufferpools that also use a page size of 4 KB, 8 KB, and 16 KB.

A tablespace page size larger than 4 KB is advantageous for tables with large data rows. However, it is important to be aware that on a single data page there will never exist more than 255 rows of data, regardless of the page size.

14.1.4 Reorganizing tables

The performance of SQL statements that use indexes can be impaired after many updates, deletes, or inserts have been made. Newly inserted rows can often not be placed in a physical sequence that is the same as the logical sequence defined by the index (unless you use clustered indexes). This means that the Database Manager must perform additional read operations to access the data because logically sequential data may be on different physical data pages that are not sequential. The DB2 UDB REORG command performs a reorganization of a table by reconstructing the rows to eliminate fragmented data and by compacting information. REORG can now be run online.

Because the REORG utility needs a great deal of time for reorganizing a table, it is useful to run the REORGCHK command before running the REORG command. The REORGCHK utility calculates statistics on the database to determine if tables need to be reorganized or not. Please refer to 8.5.1, “DB2 UDB reorganization method” on page 176 for more information about reorganizing the tables.

Sensible use of multidimensioned clustering on tables suitable for this technique can minimize the fragmentation and reduce the need for reorganization.

14.2 Areas of interest

After creating an instance and a database, all configuration parameters come up with default values. Default values are implemented for systems with small databases and a relatively small amount of memory. These default values are not always sufficient for all installations. Different types of applications and users have different response time requirements. An OLTP system needs other tuning procedures than a DSS system. In an RDBMS environment, there are many factors affecting the performance of the entire system. Most of these parameters can be changed (configurable parameters), and some cannot be changed (informational parameters). DB2 UDB has been designed with a wide array of tuning and configuration parameters. These parameters can be subdivided in two general categories:

- Database Manager parameters
- Database parameters

Each parameter has a different scope. To understand the scope of a parameter allows the database administrator to estimate the potential impact of changing the parameter. The different scopes are:

- Database instance (for example, dir_cache)
- Database (for example, util_heap)
- Application/Agent (for example, sortheap)

The impact on performance of these parameters is different. They are categorized into four levels:

- High: This parameter can have a significant performance impact and should be selected and changed very carefully.
- Medium: This parameter indicates that it has some impact on performance.
- Low: This parameter has only a low impact.
- None: This parameter does not have to be observed because it does not directly impact performance.

All configurable parameters can be viewed, changed, or reset by any of the following methods:

- Using the DB2 UDB Control Center. This utility provides a comfortable and easy-to-use interface for database administration. It is available on the server itself but also on any supported client. (See also 14.1.1, “Quick-start tips for tuning” on page 340)

- Using the Command Line Processor (CLP). This is a non-GUI tool that provides the capability of issuing all available DB2 UDB commands from the AIX command line. (See also 14.1.1, “Quick-start tips for tuning” on page 340)
- Using the application programming interface (API) delivered with DB2 UDB.

The following sections list the configuration parameters that have an important impact on database performance.

14.2.1 Database manager configuration parameters

Database manager configuration parameters are related to the entire instance and reside on both database servers and clients. However, only few parameters are available on a client. They are subsets of the database manager configuration on the server. Most of them either affect the amount of system resources that will be allocated, or they configure the setup of the database manager and the different communication subsystems.

In previous versions of DB2 UDB, after changing any of the database manager configuration parameters, the database manager had to be stopped and restarted to make the changes available. In Version 8, we have some parameters where this is still true; parameters will only take effect after the database is reactivated, and all applications must first be disconnected from the database. If the database was activated, it must be deactivated, and parameters that can be changed online are called *configurable online configuration parameters*.

If you change the setting of a configurable online database manager configuration parameter while attached to an instance, the default behavior of the UPDATE DBM CFG will be to apply the change immediately. If you do not want the change applied immediately, use the DEFERRED option on the UPDATE DBM CFG command.

For clients, changes to the database manager configuration parameters take effect the next time the client connects to a server.

For further details, see Chapter 13, "Configuring DB2" of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance,* SC09-4821.

Note: While new parameter values may not be immediately effective, viewing the settings using GET DBM CFG will always show the latest updates. To see the latest update and the current in memory value, use the SHOW DETAIL clause on the GET DBM CFG command.

The database manager configuration parameters are stored in a file named db2systm. It is created at the time of DB2 UDB instance creation and resides in the $HOME/sqllib directory. This file cannot be changed directly.

Table 14-1 shows the most important configurable database manager parameters with high and medium impact on performance. For a complete list of dbm parameters, see Chapter 13, "Configuring DB2", of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance,* SC09-4821.

Table 14-1 Database manager configuration parameters at a glance

Database Manager parameter	Configurable online	Automatic	Performance impact	Description
agentpri	No	No	High	Priority of agents given to all database processes
aslheapsz	No	No	High	Applications support layer heap size
audit_buf_sz	No	No	High	Audit buffer size
intra_parallel	No	No	High	Enable intra-partition parallelism
java_heap_sz	No	No	High	Maximum Java interpreter heap size
max_querydegree	Yes	No	High	Maximum query degree of parallelism
num_poolagents	No	No	High	Agent pool size
rqrioblk	No	No	High	Client I/O block size
sheapthres	No	No	High	Sort heap threshold
backbufsz	No	No	Medium	Default backup buffer size
comm_bandwidth	Yes	No	Medium	Communications bandwidth
conn_elapse	Yes	No	Medium	Connection elapse time

Database Manager parameter	Configurable online	Automatic	Performance impact	Description
dft_monswitches dft_mon_bufpool dft_mon_lock dft_mon_sort dft_mon_stmt dft_mon_table dft_mon_timestamp dft_mon_uow	Yes	No	Medium	Default database system monitor switches
dir_cache	No	No	Medium	Directory cache support
discover	No	No	Medium	Discovery mode
fcm_num_buffers	Yes	No	Medium	Number of FCM buffers
federated	No	No	Medium	Federated database system support
fenced_pool	No	No	Medium	Maximum number of fenced processes
indexrec	Yes	No	Medium	Index re-creation time
initfenced_jvm			Medium	Initialize fenced process with JVM
instance_memory	No	Yes	Medium	Database manager instance memory
keep_fenced	No	No	Medium	Keep fenced process indicator
maxagents	No	No	Medium	Maximum number of agents
maxcagents	No	No	Medium	Maximum number of concurrent agents
max_connections	No	No	Medium	Maximum number of client connections
max_connretries	Yes	No	Medium	Node connection retries
max_coordagents	No	No	Medium	Maximum number of coordinating agents
max_time_diff	No	No	Medium	Maximum time difference among nodes

Database Manager parameter	Configurable online	Automatic	Performance impact	Description
maxtotfilop	No	No	Medium	Maximum total files open per application
min_priv_mem	No	No	Medium	Minimum committed private memory
num_initagents	No	No	Medium	num_initagents
num_initfenced	No	No	Medium	Initial number of fenced processes in pool
priv_mem_thresh	No	No	Medium	Private memory threshold
query_heap_sz	No	No	Medium	Query heap size
restbufsz	No	No	Medium	Default restore buffer size
spm_log_path	No	No	Medium	Sync point manager log file path

14.2.2 Database parameters

These parameters reside only on a database server and are individually assigned to each database. The information is stored in the file SQLDBCON located under the directory SQL*nnnnn* (nnnnn is a number assigned when the database is created). It cannot be edited directly.

In previous versions of DB2 UDB, after changing any of the database configuration parameters, the changes would only take effect after all applications had disconnected from the database (if the database was activated, it must be deactivated) and then reconnected. In Version 8, we have some parameters that can be changed online; these are called *configurable online configuration parameters*.

If you change a configurable online database parameter while connected, the default behavior is to apply the change online, wherever possible. Some parameter changes may take some noticeable amount of time due to the overhead associated with allocating space.

For further detail see Chapter 13, "Configuring DB2", of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance,* SC09-4821.

Table 14-2 lists database configuration parameters with high and medium performance impact. For the complete list of database parameters, see Table 27 in Chapter 13, "Configuring DB2" of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance,* SC09-4821.

Table 14-2 Database configuration parameters at a glance

Database parameter	Configurable online	Automatic	Performance impact	Description
avg_appls	Yes	No	High	Average number of active applications
chngpgs_thresh	No	No	High	Changed pages threshold for asynchronous page cleaners
catalogcache_sz	Yes	No	High	Catalog cache size
dft_degree	Yes	No	High	Default degree for intra-partition parallelism
logbufsz	No	No	High	Log buffer size
mincommit	Yes	No	High	Number of commits to group
min_dec_div_3	No	No	High	Decimal division scale to 3
num_iocleaners	No	No	High	Number of asynchronous page cleaners
num_ioservers	No	No	High	Number of I/O servers
pckcachesz	Yes	No	High	Package cache size
seqdetect	Yes	No	High	Sequential detection flag
sheapthres_shr	No	No	High	Sort heap threshold for shared sorts
sortheap	Yes	No	High	Sort heap size
locklist	Yes	No	High	Maximum storage for lock list
maxlocks	Yes	No	High	Maximum percent of lock list before escalation
app_ctl_heap_sz	No	No	Medium	Application control heap size

Database parameter	Configurable online	Automatic	Performance impact	Description
appgroup_mem_sz	No	No	Medium	Maximum size of application groupmemory set
applheapsz	No	No	Medium	Application heap size
audit_buf_sz	No	No	Medium	Audit buffer size
database_memory	No	Yes	Medium	Database shared memory size
dbheap	Yes	No	Medium	Database heap
dft_extent_sz	Yes	No	Medium	Default extent size of table spaces
dft_loadrec_ses	Yes	No	Medium	Default number of load recovery sessions
dft_prefetch_sz	Yes	No	Medium	Default prefetch size
dft_queryopt	Yes	No	Medium	Default query optimization class
dft_refresh_age	No	No	Medium	Default refresh age
discover_db	Yes	No	Medium	Discover database
dlchktime	Yes	No	Medium	Time interval for checking deadlock
estore_seg_sz	No	No	Medium	Extended storage memory segment size
groupheap_ratio	No	No	Medium	Percentage of memory for application group heap
indexrec	Yes	No	Medium	Index re-creation time
locktimeout	No	No	Medium	Lock timeout
logfilsiz	No	No	Medium	Size of log files
logprimary	No	No	Medium	Number of primary log files
logsecond	Yes	No	Medium	Number of secondary log files

Database parameter	Configurable online	Automatic	Performance impact	Description
maxappls	Yes	Yes	Medium	Maximum number of active applications
maxfilop	Yes	No	Medium	Maximum database files open per application
num_estore_segs	No	No	Medium	Number of extended storage memory segments
overflowlogpath	No	No	Medium	Overflow log path
softmax	No	No	Medium	Recovery range and soft checkpoint interval
stmtheap	Yes	No	Medium	Statement heap size

14.2.3 DB2 UDB registry variables

Apart from the database manager and database configuration parameters, DB2 UDB provides a set of environment variables that are stored in the DB2 UDB profile registry. The **db2set** command allows the database administrator to display, set, or remove these profile variables. Some of these variables affect the performance of a database system (see Table 14-3). For further detail, see Appendix A, "DB2 Registry and Environment Variables" of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance,* SC09-4821.

Table 14-3 DB2 UDB environment variables affecting performance

Parameter	Description
DB2_APM_PERFORMANCE	Enables performance related changes in the access plan manager that affect the behavior of the SQL package cache.
DB2_AVOID_PREFETCH	Specifies whether or not prefetch should be used during crash recovery.
DB2_BINSORT	Enables a new sort algorithm that reduces the CPU time and elapsed time of sorts.
DB2BPVARS	Buffer pool tuning affecting prefetch behavior.
DB2CHKPTR	Specifies whether or not pointer checking for input is required.
DB2_ENABLE_BUFPD	Specifies whether or not DB2 uses intermediate buffering to improve query performance.

Parameter	Description
DB2_EXTENDED_OPTIMIZATION	Specifies whether or not the query optimizer uses optimization extensions to improve query performance.
DB2MAXFSCRSEARCH	Specifies the number of free space control records to search when adding a record to a table.
DB2MEMDISCLAIM	Changes the behavior of DB2 UDB to disclaim some or all memory.
DB2MEMMAXFREE	Specifies the amount of free memory that is retained by each DB2 UDB agent.
DB2_MMAP_READ	Allows DB2 UDB to use mmap as an alternate method of I/O.
DB2_MMAP_WRITE	Used in conjunction with db2_mmap_read to allow DB2 UDB to use mmap as an alternate method of I/O.
DB2_OVERRIDE_BPF	Specifies the size of the buffer pool, in pages, to be created at database activation or first connection time.
DB2_PARALLEL_IO	Enables parallel I/O on reading from or writing to tablespaces.
DB2_PINNED_BP	Specifies the database global memory, including buffer pools, to be kept in main memory.
DB2PRIORITIES	Controls the priorities of DB2 UDB processes and threads.
DB2_SORT_AFTER_TQ	Specifies how the optimizer works with directed table queues in a partitioned database.
DB2_STPROC_LOOKUP_FIRST	Specifies if DB2 UDB server will perform a catalog lookup for ALL DARIs and stored procedures before it looks in the function and unfenced subdirectories of the sqllib subdirectory.

14.3 Which options will make a large difference

The previous tables show that many configurable database manager parameters and database parameters exist, which affect the performance of a database manager and the databases that run on it. The following topics show the most important database manager configuration (dbm) and database configuration (db) parameters. These are parameters that have a large impact on performance and should, therefore, be tuned first.

14.3.1 Buffer pool size

The buffer pool is the area of memory where database pages (table rows or indexes) are temporarily read and manipulated. All buffer pools reside in global memory, which is available to all applications using the database. The purpose of the buffer pool is to improve database performance. Data can be accessed much faster from memory than from disk. Therefore, the more data (rows and indexes) the database manager is able to read from or write to memory, the better the database performance. Only large objects and long field data are not manipulated in a buffer pool.

One component of the database manager is the Bufferpool Services (BPS). The BPS initializes the segments for buffer pool and extended storage within the memory when the first connection is made to a database or at the time the database is activated through the **db2 activate database *database_name*** command. Buffer pools can also be created, dropped, and resized while the database manager is running. If you use the IMMEDIATE keyword when you use the CREATE BUFFERPOOL or ALTER BUFFERPOOL to increase the size of a buffer pool, memory is allocated as soon as you enter the command, if the memory is available. If the memory is not available, the change occurs when all applications are disconnected and the database is reactivated, equivalent to using the DEFERRED keyword. When you decrease the size of a buffer pool, memory is deallocated at commit time.

Note: To reduce the necessity of increasing the size of the dbheap database configuration parameter when bufferpool sizes increase, nearly all buffer pool memory, which includes page descriptors, buffer pool descriptors, and the hash tables, comes out of the database shared memory set and is sized automatically.

The BPS is responsible for reading data and index pages from disk into memory and to write pages from memory to disk. The BPS will use the File Storage Manager or the Raw Storage Manager to get the pages, depending on whether an SMS tablespace or DMS tablespace is used. When an application accesses a row of a table for the first time, the BPS places the page containing that row from disk into the buffer pool. The next time an application requests data, the buffer pool is checked first if the data is in this memory area. If the requested data is found in the buffer pool, the BPS does not need to read the data from disk. If the buffer pools are not large enough to keep the required data in memory, the BPS has to read new data from disk. Avoiding data retrieval from disk storage results in faster performance.

There are two ways to place pages into the buffer pool and to write it back to disk:

- Read/write operations done by a db2agent resulting in synchronous I/O operations.
- Read operations performed by the I/O servers (prefetchers) and write operations done by the page cleaners using asynchronous I/O.

If a db2agent needs data requested by a query, and it cannot find this data in the buffer pool, it reads the pages from disk. This synchronous I/O consumes time. To avoid this response time, DB2 UDB uses asynchronous I/O servers to read data ahead into the buffer pool. This is done by the prefetcher. It is recommended to configure at least one I/O server for each physical disk (see also 14.3.3, “Number of asynchronous page cleaners (num_iocleaners)” on page 359). For performance reasons, it is desirable to hit as many pages as possible in the buffer pool. The buffer pool hit ratio indicates the percentage of time that the database manager did not need to load a page from disk into memory. The greater the buffer pool hit ratio, the lower the frequency of disk I/O.

Each database has at least one buffer pool, IBMDEFAULTBP, which is created when the database is created. You can create more than one buffer pool and can assign each buffer pool to a certain tablespace. For example, it is possible to assign a buffer pool to a tablespace that contains data of a large table or to create a buffer pool for an index tablespace to hold all indexes in memory.

Tip: The configuration of one or more buffer pools is the single most important tuning area since it is here that most of the data manipulations take place for applications connected to the database. This is valid for regular data only (except large objects and long field data).

Never leave this parameter on its default value. Buffer pool performance should be tracked permanently.

For more detailed information, refer to Chapter 8, "Operational performance" of the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance,* SC09-4821 and the ALTER BUFFERPOOL, CREATE BUFFERPOOL and DROP BUFFERPOOL commands in the *IBM Universal Database SQL Reference, Volume 2*, SC09-4845.

Description

The buffer pool size parameter for DB2 UDB on AIX has a default value of 1000 pages. Related parameters are:

- Database heap (dbheap)
- Number of asynchronous page cleaners (num_iocleaners)

- Changed pages threshold (chngpgs_thresh)

Recommendations

- The buffpage parameter controls the size of a buffer pool when the CREATE BUFFERPOOL and ALTER BUFFERPOOL SQL statements were run with NPAGES -1; otherwise, the buffpage parameter is ignored, and the buffer pool will be created with the number of pages specified by the NPAGES parameter. To determine whether the buffpage parameter is active, issue:

  ```
  SELECT BPNAME, NPAGES from SYSCAT.BUFFERPOOLS
  ```

  Each buffer pool that has an NPAGES value of -1 uses the buffpage parameter.

Important: Instead of using the buffpage parameter, it is recommended to use the CREATE BUFFERPOOL and ALTER BUFFERPOOL SQL statements to create and change buffer pools and their sizes. This is helpful if more than one buffer pool is installed on the system.

- Because the size of the buffer pool has a major impact on performance, consider the following factors to avoid excessive paging:
  - The amount of physical memory installed on the database server.
  - The size of memory used by other applications running concurrently with the database manager on the same machine.
- In an OLTP environment, it is recommended to allocate as much as 75% of the system's memory that is left after taking out the memory required by the operating system, applications running on the system, and memory for communication to the buffer pools under the following conditions:
  - There are multiple users connected to the database.
  - This system is used as a database server only.
  - The applications access the same data and index pages repeatedly.
  - There is only one database installed.

  Other key OLTP parameters are mincommit, num_iocleaners, pckcacgesz, and agentpri.
- Particularly in OLTP environments, where there is typically a repetitive access to indexes, it is recommended to strive to have a buffer pool large enough to keep all indexes in memory.
- In a DSS environment, it is recommended to allocate up to 50% of the left over memory to the buffer pool. More memory is required to the database sort parameters for large queries.

- The buffer pool hit ratio should reach 100%. This can be monitored by the DB2 UDB monitor utility.
- For every buffer pool page allocated, some space is used in the database heap for internal control structures. This means that if you increase the buffpage size parameter, you may need to increase the dbheap parameter also. This can be monitored using the database system monitor. Each page in the buffer pool has a descriptor. This descriptor is an internal structure of about 140 bytes for each page in the buffer pool. For every 30 buffer pool pages, there is an additional one page overhead in the dbheap size.
- The size of the buffer pool is used by the optimizer in order to determine access plans. Therefore, after changing the value of this parameter, you have to rebind your applications. When selecting the access plan, the optimizer considers the I/O cost of fetching pages from disk to the buffer pool. In this calculation, the optimizer will estimate the number of I/Os required to satisfy a query. This estimate includes a prediction of buffer pool usage since additional physical I/Os are not required to read rows in a page that are already in the buffer pool. The I/O cost of reading the tables can have an impact on:
  - How two tables are joined.
  - Whether an unclustered index will be used to read the data.
- The page size of a bufferpool can be 4 KB, 8 KB, 16 KB, or 32 KB. The page size of the bufferpool must match the page size of the tablespaces that are associated with it.

14.3.2 Number of I/O servers (num_ioservers)

DB2 UDB can activate prefetchers that read data and index pages into the buffer pool by anticipating their need by an application (asynchronously). Prefetchers are also used by utilities, such as backup, restore, and load for asynchronous I/O. In most situations, these pages are read just before they are needed. To enable prefetching, the database manager starts separate threads of control, known as I/O servers, to perform page reading. As a result, the query processing is divided into two parallel activities: data processing (CPU) and data page I/O. The I/O servers wait for prefetch requests from the CPU processing activity.

The database parameter num_ioservers specifies the number of I/O servers for a database. No more than this number of I/Os for prefetching and utilities can be in progress at any time.

Description

The default value of num_ioservers is 3, and the range is from 1 to 255. Related parameters are:

- Default prefetch size (dft_prefetch_sz)
- Sequential detection flag (seqdetect)

Recommendations

Because one I/O server can serve only one I/O device (disk), it is recommended to configure one or two more num_ioservers than the number of physical devices on which the tablespace containers reside. It is better to use additional I/O servers since there is a minimal overhead associated with each one.

14.3.3 Number of asynchronous page cleaners (num_iocleaners)

Page cleaners are DB2 UDB processes that monitor the buffer pool and asynchronously write pages to disk before the space in the buffer pool is required by another database agent. This means that the agents will not wait for changed pages to be written out before being able to read a page. Pages that are changed by an UPDATE statement must be written to disk to store them permanently. These pages are called *dirty pages*. After the dirty pages are written to disk, they are not removed from the buffer pool unless the space they occupy is needed for other pages. Page cleaners ensure that db2agents will always find free pages in the buffer pool. If an agent does not find free pages in the buffer pool, it must clean them itself, and the associated application will have a poorer performance. Another purpose of page cleaners is to speed the database recovery if a system crash occurs. The more pages that have been written to disk, the smaller the number of log file records that must be processed to recover the database.

Description

The default value for num_iocleaners is 1; the range is from 0 to 255.

Related parameters are:

- Buffer pool size (see 14.3.1, “Buffer pool size” on page 355)
- Changed page threshold (chngpgs_thresh) (see 14.3.4, “Changed pages threshold (chngpgs_thresh)” on page 360)

Recommendations

If this parameter is set to 0, no page cleaners are started, and, as a result, the database agents will perform all of the page writes from the buffer pool to disk. This parameter can have a significant performance impact on a database stored across many physical storage devices since, in this case, there is a greater chance that one of the devices will be idle. If no page cleaners are configured,

your applications may encounter periodic log full conditions. If the applications for a database primarily consist of transactions that update data, an increase in the number of cleaners will speed up performance.

In an OLTP environment, where many transactions are run against the database, it is recommended to set the value of this parameter to between one and the number of physical storage devices used for the database. Environments with high update transaction rates may require more page cleaners to be configured. This is valid also for database systems with large buffer pools.

In a DSS environment, which will not have updates, it is usual to set this parameter to 0. The exception would be if the query workload results in many TEMP tables being created. This can be determined by using the Explain utility. In this case, it is recommended to set the number of I/O cleaners to the number of disks that assigned to the TEMP tablespace.

You can use the database system monitor or the **`get snapshot for bufferpools on database_name`** command to monitor the write activity information from the bufferpools in order to determine if the number of page cleaners must be increased or decreased. You should reduce the number of page cleaners if both of the following conditions are true:

- The number of buffer pool data writes is approximately equal to the number of asynchronous pool data page writes.
- The number of buffer pool index writes is approximately equal to the number of asynchronous pool index page writes.

However, you should increase the number of num_iocleaners parameter if either of the following conditions are true:

- The number of buffer pool data writes is much greater than the number of asynchronous pool data page writes.
- The number of buffer pool index writes is much greater than the number of asynchronous pool index page writes.

14.3.4 Changed pages threshold (chngpgs_thresh)

This parameter can be used to specify the level (percentage) of changed pages at which the asynchronous page cleaners will be started if they are not currently active. When the page cleaners are started, they will build a list of the pages to write to disk. Once they have completed writing those pages to disk, they will become inactive again and wait for the next trigger to start.

Description

The default value is 60%, and the range is from 5% to 99% of dirty pages to be written. Related parameters are the number of asynchronous page cleaners (num_iocleaners).

Recommendations

In an OLTP environment, you should generally ensure that there are enough clean pages in the buffer pool by setting the chngpgs_thresh value to be equal to or less than the default value. A percentage larger than the default can help performance if the database has a small number of very large tables.

In an DSS environment, these page cleaners are not used.

14.3.5 Sort heap size (sortheap)

The sortheap is a database configuration parameter. It is the maximum number of private memory pages to be used for private sorts, or the maximum number of shared memory pages to be used for shared sorts. The memory is allocated only at the time of sort and deallocated after sorting has been finished. It is possible for a single application to have concurrent sorts active. For example, in some cases, a SELECT statement with a subquery can cause concurrent sorts. The larger the table to be sorted, the higher the value should be for this parameter. If the value is too large, then the system can force to page if memory becomes overcommitted. If directed by the optimizer, a smaller sort heap than the one specified by this parameter is allocated using information provided by the optimizer.

Description

The default value is 256 pages, and the ranges are:

32-bit platforms 16 pages to 524,288 pages

64-bit platforms 16 pages to 1,048,575

A related parameter is the sort heap threshold (sheapthres) (see 14.3.6, “Sort heap threshold (sheapthres)” on page 362).

Recommendations

If the memory for sorts is too small, the database manager will create temporary sort tables, possibly on disk. This reduces the performance.

The use of sort heap can be minimized by the appropriate defined indexes.

Hash join buffers and dynamic bitmaps use sort heap memory and increase the size when these techniques are used.

It is recommended that you increase the size of sortheap when frequent large sorts are required. This can be monitored with the Explain utility.

When increasing sort heap size, examine whether the database manager configuration parameter sheapthres needs to be adjusted

Be aware that memory for sortheap is allocated from the same agent private memory heap as the application heap, statement heap, and statistic heap.

Because the optimizer uses this parameter when determining whether or not to pipe a sort, it is necessary to rebind the application when the value is changed.

This is one of the most important areas to be tuned, since a sort operation done in real memory can significantly improve performance. It is recommended that the remaining real memory that is not allocated to the AIX, applications, and other DB2 UDB memory structures is allocated to the sort operations.

If there are more data to be sorted than memory space, merge phases will be required in order to finish the sort operation. A possible way to avoid this is to increase the sortheap parameter.

The database system monitor or the **`get snapshot for database database_name`** command will provide two indicators that can be used for tuning the sortheap parameter:

- Total sort time
- Total sorts

It is recommended that you keep on increasing the sortheap parameter as long as both of the following conditions are true:

- You have real memory available.
- The result value of the equation total sort time/total sorts is decreasing.

14.3.6 Sort heap threshold (sheapthres)

This is a database manager configuration parameter. DB2 UDB uses this parameter to control the sum of all sortheap allocations of all applications in the instance. Therefore, this parameter impacts the total amount of memory that can be allocated across the database manager instance for sortheap.

The sheapthres parameter is used differently for private and shared sorts.

- For private sorts, this parameter is an instance-wide soft limit on the total amount of memory that can be consumed by private sorts at any given time. When the total private-sort memory consumption for an instance reaches this

limit, the memory allocated for additional incoming private-sort requests will be considerably reduced.

- For shared sorts, this parameter is a database-wide hard limit on the total amount of memory consumed by shared sorts at any given time. When this limit is reached, no further shared-sort memory requests will be allowed (until the total shared-sort memory consumption falls below the limit specified by sheapthres).

Description

The default value is 20,000 pages, and the ranges are:

32-bit platforms 250 to 2,097,152 pages

64-bit platforms 250 to 2,147,483,647 pages

Related parameters are:

- Sort heap size (sortheap) (see 14.3.5, “Sort heap size (sortheap)” on page 361)
- Sort heap threshold for shared sorts (sheapthres_shr)

Recommendations

Explicit definition of the threshold prevents the database manager from using excessive amounts of memory for large numbers of sorts. It is recommended to set this value to a reasonable multiple of the largest sortheap parameter defined in the database manager instance. This parameter should be at least two times the largest sortheap value for any database within the instance.

Use benchmarking techniques to tune this parameter to find the proper balance between sort performance and memory usage.

You can use the database system monitor to track the sort activity.

14.3.7 Statement heap size (stmtheap)

The statement heap size is a database configuration parameter that specifies the size of workspace used for the SQL compiler during the compilation of an SQL statement. For dynamic SQL statements, this memory area will be used during execution of the program. For static SQL statements, it is used during the bind process only, not the execution of the program. The memory will be allocated and released for every SQL statement handled.

Description

The default value is 2,048 pages, and the range is from 128 to 65,535 pages.

Related parameters are:

- Sort heap size (sortheap) (see 14.3.5, “Sort heap size (sortheap)” on page 361)
- Application heap size (applheapsz)
- Statistics heap size (stat_heap_sz)

Recommendations

For most cases, the default value can be used. If an application has very large SQL statements, and DB2 UDB reports an error when it attempts to compile a statement, then the value of this parameter has to be increased. The error messages issued are:

```
SQL0101N The statement is too long
SQL0437W Performance of this complex query may be sup-optimal. Reason code 1.
```

These messages are sent to the applications that run the queries and are also logged in the DB2 UDB error log file called db2diag.log.

14.3.8 Package cache size (pckcachesz)

This database configuration parameter is used to define the amount of memory allocated out of the database shared memory for caching static and dynamic SQL statements. Caching packages allows the database manager to reduce its internal overhead by eliminating the need to access the system catalogs when reloading a package or, in the case of dynamic SQL, eliminating the need for compiling a query twice. For example, if two users run the same application with the same query, the access strategy for this query can be used by both users as long as the compilation environment for both users and the application is the same. The compilation environment includes isolation levels, query optimization level, blocking, and application code page.

The package cache is available until the application terminates, the package or dynamic SQL statement is invalidated, or the cache runs out of space.

Description

The default value is -1, which means the value used to calculate the page allocation is eight times the value specified for the maxappls configuration parameter, unless this results in a value less than 32. In this case, the default of -1 will set pckcachesz to 32. The ranges are:

32-bit platforms 32 to 128,000 pages

64-bit platforms 32 to 524,288 pages

Recommendations

The package cache is important in an OLTP environment where the same query is used multiple times by multiple users within an application. To tune this parameter, it is helpful to monitor the package cache hit ratio. This value shows if the package cache is used effectively. If the hit ratio is large (greater than 90%), the package cache is performing well.

The package cache hit ratio can be obtained by the following formula:

(1 - (package cache inserts / package cache lookups)) * 100%

These indicators can be retrieved by the **`get snapshot for database on database_name`** command.The usage can also be tracked using the database system monitor.

14.3.9 Database heap size (dbheap)

Each database has one memory area called a database heap. It contains control block information for tables, indexes, table spaces, and buffer pools. It also contains space for the event monitor buffers, the log buffer (logbufsz), and the and temporary memory used by utilities. The minimum amount of memory the database manager needs to get started will be allocated when the first application connects to the database or the database is activated. The data area is expanded as needed up to the maximum specified by dbheap. The database manager keeps all control block information until all applications are disconnected or the database is deactivated.

Description

The database heap size configuration parameter has a default value of `automatic`, and the range is from 32 to 524 288 pages.

A related parameter is log buffer size (logbufsz) (see 14.3.11, “Log buffer size (logbufsz)” on page 367).

Recommendations

Each page in the buffer pool has a descriptor of about 140 bytes. For every 30 buffer pool pages, an additional page for overhead is needed in the database heap. For databases with a large amount of buffer pool, it may be necessary to increase the database heap appropriately.

14.3.10 Catalog cache size (catalogcache_sz)

The catalog cache is allocated out of the database shared memory. It is used to cache system catalog information. In a partitioned database system, there is one catalog cache for each database partition.

Caching catalog information at individual partitions allows the database manager to reduce its internal overhead by eliminating the need to access the system catalogs (and/or the catalog node in a partitioned database environment) to obtain information that has previously been retrieved.

The catalog cache is used to store:

- SYSTABLES information, including packed descriptors
- Authorization information, including SYSDBAUTH information and execute privilege for routines
- SYSROUTINES information

The use of the catalog cache can help improve the overall performance of:

- Binding packages and compiling SQL statements
- Operations that involve checking database-level privileges
- Operations that involve checking execute privileges for routines
- Applications that are connected to non-catalog nodes in a partitioned database environment

Running any DDL statements against a table will purge that table's entry in the catalog cache. Otherwise, a table entry is kept in the cache until space is needed for a different table, but it will not be removed from the cache until any units of work referencing that table have completed.

Catalog cache is allocated when the database is initialized and released when the database is shutdown.

Description

The catalog cache size parameter indicates the amount of memory used for the catalog cache. The default value is -1. The value used to calculate the page allocation is four times the value specified for the maxappls configuration parameter, unless this results in a value less than 8. In this case, the default of -1 will set catalogcache_sz to 8. The range is from 8 to 524,288 pages.

A related parameter is the maximum number of active applications (maxappls)

Recommendations

The default value is appropriate for most database environments. More cache space is required if a unit of work contains several dynamic SQL statements or if you are binding packages that contain a lot of static SQL statements. For OLTP databases with a large amount of tables and views, it is necessary to improve this value by tuning it using small increments. If the catalog cache hit ratio observed by DB2 UDB monitor utility is less than 80%, it is recommended to increase the value also.

In a partitioned database environment, consider whether the catalogcache_sz at the catalog node needs to be set larger since catalog information that is required at non-catalog nodes will always first be cached at the catalog node.

Note: The catalog cache exists on all nodes in a partitioned database environment. Since there is a local database configuration file for each node, each nodes' catalogcache_sz value defines the size of the local catalog cache. In order to avoid overflow and to provide efficient caching, you need to explicitly set the catalogcache_sz value at each node. Bear in mind the point made in the previous paragraph about the local catalog cache being a subset of the catalog cache at the catalog node and the effect that has on the comparative sizes.

14.3.11 Log buffer size (logbufsz)

This database configuration parameter specifies the amount of the database heap to use as a buffer for log records before writing these records to disk. The log records are written to disk when one of the following occurs:

- A transaction commits, or a group of transactions commit, as defined by the mincommit configuration parameter.
- The log buffer is full.
- As a result of some other internal database manager event.

Buffering the log records will result in more efficient logging file I/O because the log records will be written to disk less frequently, and more log records will be written at each time.

This parameter must be less than or equal to the dbheap parameter.

Description

The default value for this parameter is eight pages. The ranges are:

32-bit platforms Four to 4,096 pages

64-bit platforms Four to 65,535 pages

Related parameters are:

- Database heap (dbheap) (see 14.3.9, "Database heap size (dbheap)" on page 365)
- Number of commits to group (mincommit)

Recommendations

It is recommended to increase the value of log buffer size if there is a high disk utilization or considerable read activity on the dedicated disks for log files.

Consider the dbheap parameter when increasing the value of this parameter.

The database system monitor can be used to determine how much of the log buffer space is used for a particular transaction or unit of work.

14.3.12 Maximum number of active applications (maxappls)

This database parameter specifies the maximum number of concurrent applications that can be connected (both local and remote) to a database. Since each application that attaches to a database causes some private memory to be allocated, allowing a larger number of concurrent applications will potentially use more memory.

Setting maxappls to `automatic` has the effect of allowing any number of connected applications. DB2 will dynamically allocate the resources it needs to support new applications.

If you do not want to set this parameter to `automatic`, the value of this parameter must be equal to or greater than the sum of the connected applications, plus the number of these same applications that may be concurrently completing a two-phase commit or are in rollback. Then add to this sum the anticipated number of indoubt transactions that may exist at any one time.

In a partitioned database environment, this is the maximum number of applications that can be concurrently active against a database partition. The catalog node in a partitioned database environment requires a higher value for maxappls than is the case in other environments because, in the partitioned database environment, every application requires a connection to the catalog node.

As more applications use the Data Links manager, the value of maxappls should be increased.

Description

The default value for this parameter is `automatic`. The range is from 1 to 60 000 active applications.

Related parameters are:

- Maximum number of agents (maxagents)
- Maximum number of coordinating agents (max_coordagents)

- Maximum percent of lock list before escalation (maxlocks)
- Maximum storage for lock list (locklist)
- Average number of active applications (avg_appls)

Recommendations

Increasing the value of this parameter without decreasing the maxlocks parameter or increasing the locklist parameter can cause the database's limit on locks to be reached more frequently, thus resulting in many lock escalation problems.

Be aware of the relationship between the maximum number of applications and the configuration parameters maxagents and max_coordagents.

14.3.13 Maximum number of agents (maxagents)

This parameter indicates the maximum number of database manager agents (db2agent), whether coordinator agents or subagents, available at any given time to accept application requests. There are two types of connections possible that require the use of DB2 UDB agents. Local connected applications require db2agents within the database manager instance as well as applications running on remote clients. The maxagents parameter value must be at least equal to the sum of both values.

This parameter is useful in memory constrained environments to limit the total memory usage of the database manager because each additional agent requires additional memory.

Description

The default value for maxagents is 200 agents for non-partitioned database servers and 400 agents for partitioned database servers. In both cases, the range is from one to 64,000 agents.

Related parameters are:

- Maximum number of active applications (maxappls)
- Maximum number of concurrent agents (maxcagents)
- Maximum number of coordinating agents (max_coordagents)
- Maximum number of fenced processes (fenced_pool)
- Minimum committed private memory (min_priv_mem)
- Agent pool size (num_poolagents)

Recommendations
The value of maxagents should be at least the sum of the values for maxappls in each database allowed to be accessed concurrently.

14.3.14 Maximum storage for lock list (locklist)

This parameter indicates the amount of storage that is allocated to the lock list. There is one lock list per database, and it contains the locks held by all applications concurrently connected to the database. Locking is required to ensure data integrity; however, too much locking reduces concurrency. Both rows and tables can be locked. The database manager may also acquire locks for internal use.

Note: This parameter can be changed online, but it can only be increased online, not decreased. To decrease the value, you will have to reactivate the database

On 32-bit platforms, each lock requires 36 or 72 bytes of the lock list, depending on whether other locks are held on the object:

- 72 bytes are required to hold a lock on an object that has no other locks held on it.
- 36 bytes are required to record a lock on an object that has an existing lock held on it.

On 64-bit platforms, each lock requires 56 or 112 bytes of the lock list, depending on whether other locks are held on the object:

- 112 bytes are required to hold a lock on an object that has no other locks held on it.
- 56 bytes are required to record a lock on an object that has an existing lock held on it.

If the memory assigned for this parameter becomes full, the database manager performs lock escalation. Lock escalation is the process of replacing row locks with table locks, thus reducing the number of locks in the list. DB2 UDB selects the transaction using the largest amount of the locklist and changes the record locks on the same table to a table lock. Therefore, one lock (table lock) replaces many locks (record locks) of a table. This reduces the concurrency and, therefore, the performance. For example, two applications, A and B, select and update rows on a certain table. The lock manager manages the data access on row level. If the database manager has to change the locks for application A from row locking to table locking, application B has to wait until application A releases

the lock on that entire table. This can lead to hang situations from a user's point of view. Additionally, there may be more deadlock situations.

Description

The default value for this parameter is 100 pages. The range is from four pages to 524,288 pages.

Related parameters are:

- Maximum percent of lock list before escalation (maxlocks)
- Maximum number of active applications (maxappls)

Recommendations

If lock escalations are causing performance or hang problems, it is recommended to increase the value of this parameter.

Additional considerations that affect application design are:

- It is helpful to perform frequent COMMIT statements to release locks.
- When an application performs many updates, it is recommended to lock the entire table (using the SQL LOCK TABLE statement) before updating. This will use only one lock and keeps other applications from interfering with the updates, but does reduce concurrency of the data.
- The use of the Cursor Stability isolation level decreases the number of share locks held. If application integrity requirements are not compromised, it is recommended that you use Uncommitted Read instead of Cursor Stability to further decrease the amount of locking.

If many lock escalations are performed by the database manager, deadlocks between applications can occur, which will result in transactions being rolled back. Please refer to "Display the number of deadlocks and lock escalations" on page 463 for more information about monitoring deadlocks and lock escalations.

Consider rebinding applications after changing this parameter.

The database system monitor can be used to monitor lock usage by a given transaction

14.3.15 Maximum percent of lock list before escalation (maxlocks)

This parameter defines a percentage of the lock list held by an application that must be filled before the database manager performs escalation. When the number of locks held by any one application reaches this percentage of the total lock list size, lock escalation will occur for the locks held by that application.

The database manager determines which locks to escalate by looking through the lock list for the application and finding the table with the most row locks. If after replacing these with a single table lock, the maxlocks value is no longer exceeded, lock escalation will stop. If not, it will continue until the percentage of the lock list held is below the value of maxlocks. The maxlocks parameter multiplied by the maxappls parameter cannot be less than 100.

Description

The default value for this parameter is 10%. The range is from 1% to 100%.

Related parameters are:

- Maximum storage for lock list (locklist)
- Maximum number of active applications (maxappls)

Recommendations

When setting maxlocks, the following formula allows you to set maxlocks to allow an application to hold twice the average number of locks:

maxlocks = 2 * 100 / maxappls

Where 2 is used to achieve twice the average and 100 represents the largest percentage value allowed.

If you have only a few applications that run concurrently, you could use the following formula as an alternative to the first:

maxlocks = 2 * 100 / (average number of applications running concurrently)

One of the considerations when setting maxlocks is to use it in conjunction with locklist. The actual limit of the number of locks held by an application before lock escalation occurs is:

maxlocks * locklist * 4,096 / (100 * number of bytes per lock)

Where 4,096 is the number of bytes in a page and 100 is the largest percentage value allowed for maxlocks.

If maxlocks is set too low, lock escalation occurs when there is still enough lock space for other concurrent applications; too high, and a few applications can consume most of the lock space, causing other applications to perform lock escalation leading to poor concurrency.

14.3.16 Maximum query degree of parallelism (max_querydegree)

This database manager parameter specifies the maximum degree of intra-partition parallelism that is used for any SQL statement executing on this instance of the database manager. An SQL statement will not use more than this number of parallel operations within a partition when the statement is executed. The intra_parallel configuration parameter must be set to YES to enable the database partition to use intra-partition parallelism.

Description

The default value is -1, which means any value, and that the database system (optimizer) determines the value of this option. The range is from one to 32,767 as value for the degree.

Related parameters are:

- Default degree (dft_degree)
- Enable intra-partition parallelism (intra_parallel)

Recommendations

This parameter can be used to change the degree of parallelism for an SQL statement that was specified at statement compilation time using the CURRENT DEGREE special register or specified with the DEGREE bind option. It is useful on an SMP (or clustered SMP) database system only and should not exceed the number of CPUs of this system. Please refer to the *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-4821, which contains detailed information on query parallelism.

14.3.17 DB2MEMDISCLAIM and DB2MEMMAXFREE

Depending on the workload being executed and the pool agent's configuration, it is possible to run into a situation where the committed memory for each DB2 UDB agent will stay above 32 MB even when the agent is idle. This behavior is expected and usually results in good performance, as the memory is available for fast reuse. However, on a memory constrained system, this may not be a desirable side effect. The **db2set** command:

```
db2set DB2MEMDISCLAIM = yes
```

avoids this condition. This variable tells the AIX operating system to stop paging the area of memory so that it no longer occupies any real storage. This variable tells DB2 UDB to disclaim some or all memory once freed, depending on DB2MEMMAXFREE. This ensures that the memory is made readily available for other processes as soon as it is freed.

DB2MEMMAXFREE specifies the amount of free memory that is retained by each DB2 UDB agent. It is recommended to set this value to 8 MB by using:

```
db2set DB2MEMMAXFREE = 8000000
```

14.3.18 DB2_PARALLEL_IO

When reading data from, or writing data to, tablespace containers, the database manager may use parallel I/O for each table space value you specify.The degree of parallelism is determined by the prefetch size and extent size for the containers in the table space. For example, if the prefetch size is four times the extent size, then there are four extent-sized prefetch requests. The number of containers in the table space does not affect the number of prefetchers. To enable parallel I/O for all table spaces, use the wildcard character “*”. To enable parallel I/O for a subset of all table spaces, enter the list of table spaces. If there is more than one container, extent-size pieces of any full prefetch request are broken down into smaller requests executed in parallel based on the number of prefetchers.

When this variable is not enabled, the number of prefetch requests created is based on the number of containers in the table space.

14.4 Simulating through SYSSTAT views

The DB2 UDB optimizer is responsible for estimating and generating an optimal access plan for any SQL query statement. To achieve an access plan, it uses statistics of the database system. When optimizing SQL queries, the decisions made by the SQL compiler are heavily influenced by the optimizer's model of the database contents. This data model is used by the optimizer to estimate the costs of alternative access paths that could be used to resolve a particular query.

A key element in the data model is the set of statistics gathered about the data contained in the database and stored in the system catalog tables. This includes statistics for tables, nicknames, indexes, columns, and user-defined functions (UDFs). A change in the data statistics can result in a change in the choice of access plan selected as the most efficient method of accessing the desired data.

Examples of the statistics available that help define the data model to the optimizer include:

- The number of pages in a table and the number of pages that are not empty.
- The degree to which rows have been moved from their original page to other (overflow) pages.
- The number of rows in a table.

- The number of distinct values in a column.
- The degree of clustering of an index, that is, the extent to which the physical sequence of rows in a table follows an index.
- The number of index levels and the number of leaf pages in each index.
- The number of occurrences of frequently used column values.
- The distribution of column values across the range of values present in the column.
- Cost estimates for user-defined functions (UDFs).

Statistics for objects are updated in the system catalog tables only when explicitly requested. Some, or all, of the statistics may be updated by:

- Using the RUNSTATS utility (see “System catalog statistics” on page 341)
- Using LOAD with statistics collection options specified
- Coding SQL UPDATE statements that operate against a set of predefined catalog views

Tip: The SYSSTAT views should only be updated manually for modeling a production environment on a test system or for what-if analysis. Statistics should not be updated on production systems.

With SYSSTAT, the database administrator is able to simulate a non-existent database or to clone an existent database into a test database. To do this, they can create a new database on a test system and then change the contents of the SYSSTAT tables with SQL UPDATE statements so that the optimizer creates different access plans under different conditions. With the Explain utility, the database administrator can see which access plan the optimizer uses and what cost the optimizer estimates for a given SQL statement.

For example, to simulate the selection of rows from two large tables that do not really exist in this size, using the database described in Appendix D, “IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases” on page 481, the administrator first substitutes the entry for the CARD column in the SYSSTAT.TABLES with a large value.The DBA then changes the cardinality of table CUSTOMER from the current value to a fictitious value of 850,000 rows and for table ORDERS to a value of 5,000,000 rows with:

```
UPDATE SYSSTAT.TABLES SET CARD = 850000 WHERE TABNAME = 'CUSTOMER'
UPDATE SYSSTAT.TABLES SET CARD = 5000000 WHERE TABNAME = 'ORDERS'.
```

After that update, the administrator starts the SQL query and monitors its execution with the Explain tool. They can see how the optimizer changes the access plan and estimate the query cost. With this method, the administrator can

estimate how an increasing amount of data affects the performance of that given query. The administrator can also clone their production database to a test database and can simulate different performance strategies. The DB2 UDB tool, **db2look**, is designed to capture all table DDLs and statistics of the production database to replicate it to the test system.

15

Oracle tuning

In this chapter, we cover the important items to make your Oracle database run well on the AIX platform. Most of these tuning details are AIX specific, and we do not recommend using them on other platforms.

Historically, Oracle tuning has been the bane of DBAs. There was a large number of parameters to change, affecting each other, that some DBAs just install Oracle, configure a number of rollback segments, and forget about it until the first performance problem occurs. Oracle9i addresses this concern by taking off some of the most confusing tasks from the DBA. For example, once the DBA has decided how much memory he will allocate to SGA, Oracle will work with this memory, expanding and shrinking it as necessary.

This chapter covers:

15.1 Oracle tuning order

The *Oracle 8 Server Tuning* and *Oracle 9i Server Tuning* manuals recommend the following order for tuning:

1. Installing and configuring Oracle
2. Designing applications
3. Selecting Data Access Method (SQL and indexes)
4. Tuning memory allocation
5. Tuning disk I/O
6. Tuning CPU usage
7. Resolving resource contention

After each item from number 3 onwards, it is recommended that, if a change is made, the tuning starts again from the top. For example, if a change is made to the disk I/O, then the data access methods and memory allocation need to be re-checked. This is shown in a diagram form in Figure 15-1. Note that application design and SQL access method fall outside the scope of this book.

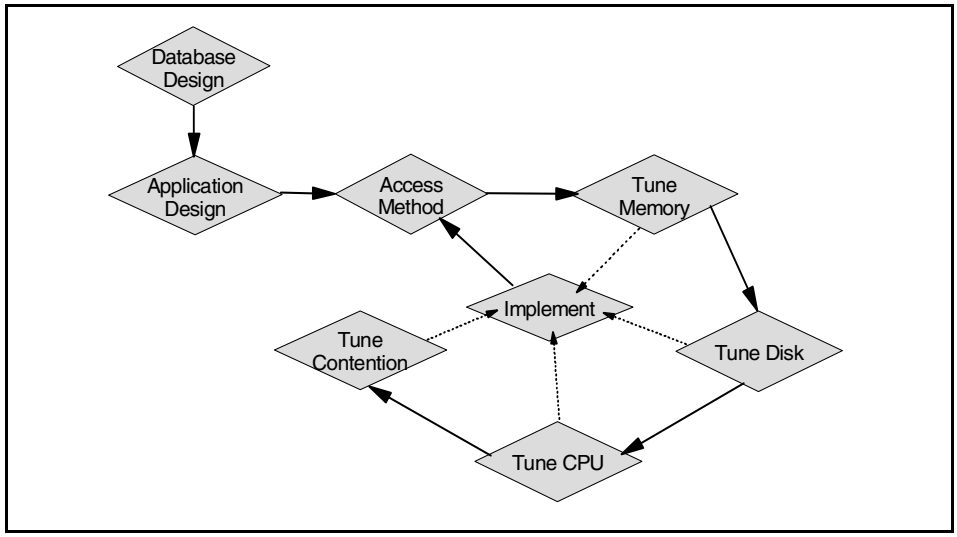

Figure 15-1 Oracle tuning sequence

This is clearly a database-centric view of a system. We recommend the same tuning order, but highlight:

- That once the memory is adjusted, it will affect the disk I/O performance enormously.

- The disk I/O is the main area that has a lot of options and opportunities for tuning.
- The CPU usage can be measured, but there is not much that can be done to tune it apart from tuning other resources to avoid using the CPU.
- Tuning contention is really tuning Oracle internals and requires detailed understandings of the Oracle structure and algorithms.

If we remove the two design phases and add in the change all at once approach, which attempts to fix the major performance issues in one step, the tuning approach is that which is shown in Figure 15-2.

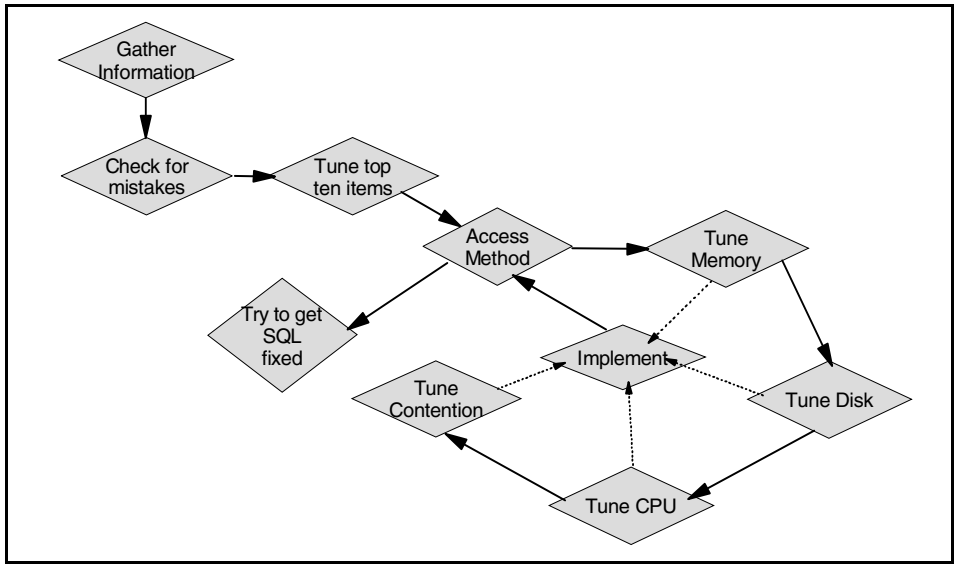

Figure 15-2 Change all at once plus practice tuning sequence

This practical sequence involves a number of stages:

- The first thing to do is gather all the information possible to build a picture of the machine and how it is behaving.
- Document the Oracle parameters. Use the DBA tools to output the Oracle parameters currently in use. This can be done in a number of ways:
  - On Oracle8i and earlier, use **`svrmgr`** and the **`show parameters`** command. On Oracle9i, use **`sqlplus`** and **`show parameters`** command. It is best to save the output to a file with the **`spool <filename>`** command and then check the details from the file. This action is shown in Example 15-1 on page 380.

Example 15-1 Getting Oracle parameters (Oracle 8i)

```
oracle@/u01> svrmgr
Oracle Server Manager Release 3.1.5.0.0 - Production
Oracle8i Enterprise Edition Release 8.1.5.0.0 - Production
SVRMGR> connect internal
Connected.
SVRMGR> spool para.txt
SVRMGR> show parameters
...
SVRMGR> spool off
```

– On Oracle9i, using the dbastudio from Oracle Enterprise Manager tools, issue the **oemapp dbastudio** command.

  Follow the screen instructions. After logging into the Oracle server, on the left tree panel, select **Configuration** and click on the **All Initialization Parameters** button. The screen in Figure 15-3 appears, which shows all of the parameters and allows you to change any of them or save a configuration file.

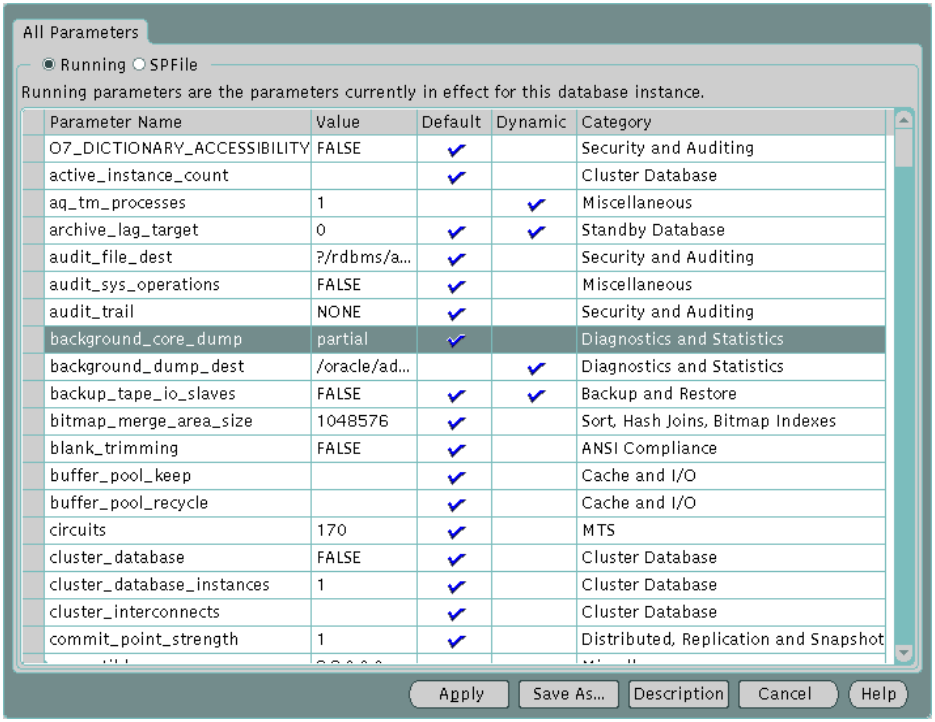

Figure 15-3 Oracle parameters screen

– The other option is running the SQL statements from SQLPlus, as shown in Example 15-2.

Example 15-2 Getting Oracle parameters from v$parameter table

```
SQL> spool para.txt
SQL> select name, value from v$parameter where isdefault = 'FALSE' order by
name;
SQL> spool off
```

- Check the Oracle alert logs. In typical installations, these are found in $ORACLE_HOME/rdbms/log. To find where it is located in your installation, you can use **show parameters dump** from SQLPlus and check for the background_dump_dest parameter. Oracle has a set of tools to aid in analyzing details. See 11.3.2, “Oracle monitoring tools” on page 271 for more information.
- Check for the obvious mistakes that ruin performance. See 15.2, “Check the most common Oracle mistakes” on page 382 for more information.
- The top Oracle parameters are checked next, as these need to be correct before further tuning is possible. See 15.3, “Evaluate the top Oracle parameters” on page 386 for more information.
- Then, enter the normal round of fine tuning the database and system for maximum performance. This involves tuning in the following order:
  - Access method
  - Memory
  - Disk and Disk I/O
  - CPU
  - Contention

  See 15.4, “Iterative fine tuning steps” on page 394 for more information.
- Finally, as System Administrators or Database Administrators, we rarely have control of the SQL being used on the system, but we can identify the worst offenders and highlight them to be fixed by others as soon as possible. This approach is explained in the remaining part of the chapter.

We have categorized these tuning hints in the following way to highlight the performance difference you might expect and the risks involved.

- Performance impact or benefit:

Low	A 5% or less improvement
Medium	Between 5% to 25% improvement
High	25% or more improvement

Very high	More than 100% improvement might be possible

- Performance risk: This is to cover the fact that some hints must be used with care, while others are only going to improve things and should always be used:

None	This is not expected to cause any problems.
Low	Safe change to make.
Medium	You need to check that this actually improves performance.
High	This can cause problems or reduce performance.

15.2 Check the most common Oracle mistakes

This section is to remind you of the common Oracle mistakes found on systems with a performance problem. Check these on your system before going into further time consuming fine tuning details. They are:

- 15.2.1, “Indexes” on page 382
- 15.2.2, “Basic Oracle parameters” on page 383
- 15.2.3, “Analyze database tables and indexes” on page 383

15.2.1 Indexes

Accidental removal of indexes and indexes being disabled, that the DBA has not noticed, are a common problem. For example, an index can get disabled when the SQL*Loader is used to directly load data, and the re-index failed. So, check the indexes for the following:

- Do all the indexes actually exist?
- Are the indexes valid (up to date and usable by the RDBMS)?
- Does the index have the right columns?
- Are all primary keys indexed (do not include trivially small tables)?

If an index is missing, there is nothing within the database to check on it. To detect a missing index, there must be a definitive list of required indexes, and the columns that should be in the index.

If there is an index problem, then fix it before tuning anything.

If indexes are missing, then use the Oracle parallel index creation feature to make the index in the shortest possible time. This works very well on SMP

machines, but you may want to restart the database with larger than normal SORT_AREA_SIZE to allow fast sorting of the resulting index.

15.2.2 Basic Oracle parameters

There are a limited number of all the Oracle parameters that have a large impact on performance. Without these being set correctly, Oracle cannot operate properly or give good performance. These need to be checked before further fine tuning. This is covered in detail in 15.3, “Evaluate the top Oracle parameters” on page 386. It is worth tuning the database further only if all these top parameters are okay.

15.2.3 Analyze database tables and indexes

Oracle has warned all customers that *rule based* optimization will be dropped in future releases. As the *cost based* optimizer is now likely to give the best performance in most cases, this should be used. The cost based optimizer needs data to decide the access plan, and this data is generated by the **`analyze`** command or the newer **`dbms_stats`** package. For Oracle 9i, *always* use **`dbms_stats`**.

Oracle depends on data about the tables and indexes. Without this data, the optimizer has to guess. It is worth checking that the optimizer has the following information:

- Have all tables been analyzed?
- Have all indexes been analyzed?
- Have they been analyzed after any recent changes to tables size or table structure?

Most parallel SQL statements, SQL hints, and many of the new performance features of Oracle, such as hash, star joins, and partitions, will only be available using the cost based optimizer. If the **`dbms_stats.get_table_stats`**, **`analyze`**, or **`dbms_utility.analyze_schema`** command is not run, and the SQL does not use *SQL hints*, the optimizer has to use rule based optimization and will not make the new performance feature available.

The optimization mode is set in the Oracle parameters using the init.ora file with the OPTIMIZER_MODE variable. While the parameter is usually set to CHOOSE or RULE, the possible values are:

- CHOOSE: This means that Oracle must choose if it will use the cost based optimizer (CBO) or the rule based optimizer (RBO). Oracle makes this choice based on the availability of statistical information for at least one of the tables in the query.

- RULE: Use the RBO.
- ALL_ROWS: This means the optimizer must always uses CBO, even if no statistics are available, but try to finish the query as soon as possible and maximize throughput (good for large batch queries).
- FIRST_ROWS: This means the same as ALL_ROWS, but try to supply the first row of the results as early as possible (good for small indexed queries). This optimizer hint may lead to performance degradation, and is now kept only for backward compatibility.
- FIRST_ROWS_N: This means the same as FIRST_ROWS, but try to optimize the response time to N rows. N may be 1, 10, 100, or 1000 rows.

It can also be set at the session level by using the OPTIMIZER_GOAL or OPTIMIZER_MODE options of the **`alter session`** command. We do not generally recommend setting this at the session level, but the syntax is:

```
ALTER SESSION SET OPTIMIZER_GOAL = RULE
```

or for Oracle 8.1.5 onwards:

```
ALTER SESSION SET OPTIMIZER_MODE = RULE
```

Setting the optimizer mode to CHOOSE in the init.ora file so that the cost based optimizer is used is highly recommended in most cases. The main exception to using the cost based optimizer is when an application has been manually tuned by developers for the rule based optimizer. Even this should be tested with the latest release of Oracle to check if the cost based optimizer can now improve on the older rule based query plans and performance.

To determine if a table is analyzed, check the AVG_ROW_LEN column of the USER_TABLES table. If it is non-zero, the **`analyze`** or **`dbms_stats`** command has been run at least once on this table.

To determine if an index is analyzed, check the COLUMN_LENGTH column of the USER_IND_COLUMNS table. If it is non-zero, the **`analyze`** or **`dbms_stats`** command has been run at least once on this index.

If you analyze a table, then its current indexes are automatically analyzed too. If you analyze a index, then the table is *not* analyzed.

For tables and indexes where the data is highly skewed, it is worth creating *histogram* statistics. The database usually assumes that there is an even spread of values between the highest and lowest value found in a column. If this is not true, the data is skewed. For example, in England, there are many people with surnames of Smith and Jones and hardly any starting with the letter Z. This means a surname column has skewed values. Another example might be a column containing the year's sales order. If a ten year old company is growing

rapidly, it might find that the last year includes 60% of sales orders; this is highly skewed. The command will be similar to:

```
ANALYZE TABLE orders COMPUTE STATISTICS FOR COLUMN release_date
```

or for Oracle 9i:

```
EXECUTE DBMS_STATS.GATHER_TABLE_STATS('scott', 'orders',METHOD_OPT=>'FOR COLUMN
SIZE 10 release_date')
```

The default number of the histogram buckets is 75. For table columns with a large ranges and large numbers of clustered values, having a higher number of buckets can be useful.

To investigate the histograms on the system, use the USER_HISTOGRAMS table. For example:

```
SELECT * FROM USER_HISTOGRAMS;
```

Collecting the full statistics using the **analyze table <name> compute statistics** command on large tables takes a lot of time and space in the system (roughly the cost of a full table scan and sort operation). For tables with an even distribution of data in the columns, this will yield little extra value over an estimated analysis using a sample of the rows. This is performed with the **analyze table <name> estimate statistics** command. We recommend an estimate of 5% of the rows as a minimum for large tables and their indexes. For example:

```
ANALYZE TABLE orders ESTMATE STATISTICS SAMPLE 5 PERCENT
```

or for Oracle 9i:

```
EXECUTE DBMS_STATS.GATHER_TABLE_STATS('scott', 'orders',
DBMS_STATS.AUTO_SAMPLE_SIZE)
```

With the cost based optimizer, there is a further choice to make about the way the database is requested to provide the results. If your application can make use of the first few rows of the SQL statement, for example, displaying them on the user's screen, then the OPTIMIZER_GOAL of FIRST_ROWS_N can make the application look faster to the user. This is set at the session level with:

```
ALTER SESSION SET OPTIMIZER_GOAL = FIRST_ROWS_100
```

In general, it is hard to code an application this way, so it is not common. Otherwise, the `OPTIMIZER_GOAL of ALL_ROWS` will finish the query in the shortest possible time. This changes the access method the optimizer will choose, as some techniques provide the first rows earlier than others. The default is to maximize throughput of the system. We recommend using the default unless early screen updates are coded into the application.

15.3 Evaluate the top Oracle parameters

The non-default Oracle parameter values are worth investigating. Of course, many of them have to be non-default for the system to run at all. For Oracle 8i, see “The UTLBSTAT/UTLESTAT monitoring tool” on page 273. For Oracle 9i, see “Statpack package” on page 275. Table 15-1 shows the summary of these top parameters.

Table 15-1 Top Oracle parameters

Hint	Benefit	Risk
15.3.1, “db_block_size” on page 387	Medium	None
15.3.2, “db_block_buffers or db_cache_size” on page 387	Very high	None
15.3.3, “disk_asynch_io” on page 389	Very high	None
15.3.4, “db_writer_processes and dbwr_io_slaves” on page 389	Medium	None
15.3.5, “shared_pool_size and sga_max_size” on page 390	Medium	None
15.3.6, “sort_area_size” on page 390	Medium	Low
15.3.7, “sql_trace” on page 391	Medium	None
15.3.8, “timed_statistics” on page 391	Medium	None
15.3.9, “optimizer_mode” on page 391	High	Low
15.3.10, “log_buffer” on page 391	Medium	None
15.3.11, “rollback_segments or undo_management” on page 392	Medium	None

The parameters that make the biggest difference (and should, therefore, be investigated in this order) are listed in the following sections. Several additional parameters with significant impact are given in 15.3.12, “Other key Oracle parameters” on page 392.

15.3.1 db_block_size

This cannot be changed after the database has been created. It is vital to get this correct before you start. As AIX does all I/O at a minimum of 4 KB, we do not recommend any sizes that are smaller than this, as it will be slower. There are reasons for using different block sizes:

- Smaller sizes
  - If the SQL statement needs just one row in a block, it is better to read a small block. If the blocks are larger, then unwanted data is read from disk, and this takes up additional memory.
- Larger blocks
  - If the typical SQL statement results in a full table scan, then larger blocks will read in more rows per disk I/O. This means more data is available for processing by the RDBMS. An 8 KB read only takes a little longer than a 4 KB read from disk.
  - A row has to fit inside a single data block. This means the end of each block has some wasted space (because a row will not fit in exactly). With larger blocks, there are less blocks and, therefore, less wasted space, for example, if the rows are 250 bytes and the last 200 bytes of a block cannot be used. With 4 KB blocks, there is 4.9% wasted, and with 32 KB blocks, only 0.6% wastage.

We recommend for the block size:

- For OLTP type workloads: 4 KB.
- For DSS workloads: 8 KB. Commonly, sites use 4 KB, 8 KB, or 16 KB.
- For very large databases (beyond 1 TB): 16 KB or 32 KB.
- For mixed workloads: 4 KB.

For more details, see 15.5.5, “Oracle block size” on page 401.

15.3.2 db_block_buffers or db_cache_size

This value is the number of disk blocks stored in the SGA. Prior to Oracle 9, it was called db_block_buffers; now it is called db_cache_size. This is the largest part of the SGA. The memory size allocated will be:

```
db_block_buffers * db_block_size
```

or

```
db_cache_size * db_block_size
```

Oracle 9i allows you to specify up to five different cache sizes. Use the different sizes to hold the non-standard block sizes. For example, if you want to specify a 32 MB cache of a 8 KB database block, alter the following initialization parameter:

```
db_8k_cache_size=32M
```

If you have no idea how large to set this parameter (which is typical on a new system until you start running tests), then set it so that the SGA is roughly 40% to 50% of memory.

If your database data is in a Journaled File system (JFS), then you will need to allocate space in real memory for the AIX buffer cache. The AIX buffer cache is dynamically controlled, but you should make sure sufficient memory is available for it. However, if your data is held on raw devices, then disk I/O does not use the AIX buffer cache, and, therefore, it does not need to be large, and more memory can be allocated to the Oracle buffers. Figure 15-4 shows this difference.

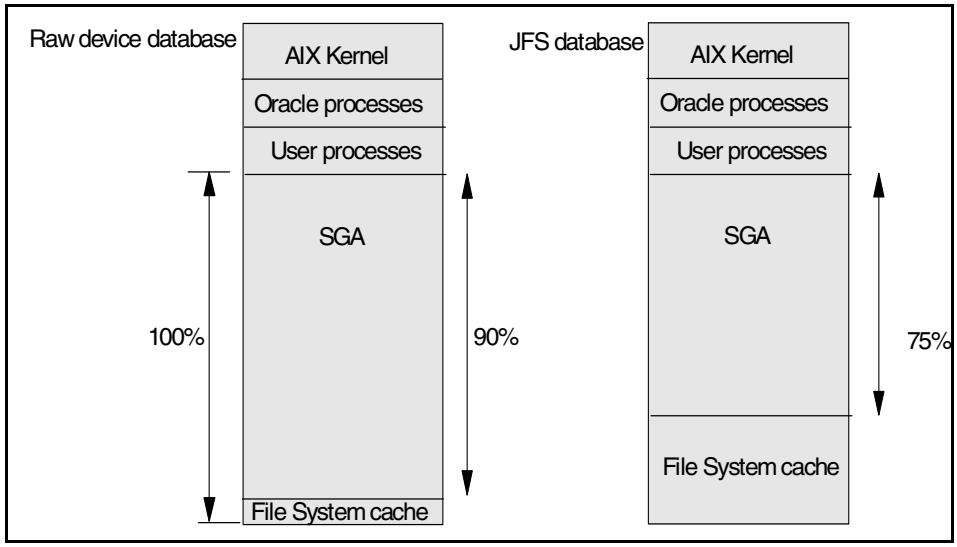

Figure 15-4 Different SGA buffer cache sizes for raw device and JFS databases

If you can estimate how much memory is left after allowing for:

- AIX (64 MB)
- The basic Oracle process
- The Oracle Servers
- The user application processes

then we recommend you allocate the following amount of the remaining memory:

- For JFS based databases: 75%
- For raw devices: 90%

Once the system is running, make sure it is not paging (in this case, reduce the SGA size) or that there is free memory (make the SGA larger). The aim with the number of buffers is to have a very high buffer cache hit ratio (greater than 95%).

The use of a nonstandard block_size may provide a great performance improvement for mixed workload environments. However, it may reduce performance if SGA have to be expanded, because this buffers are stolen memory from others. Also, it may cause I/O problems if tablespaces with different block sizes are placed on the same disk. Be careful when using this parameter to tune your database.

15.3.3 disk_asynch_io

AIX fully supports the asynchronous I/O for both JFS and raw devices. Many sites do not know this fact and fail to use this feature.

Set this parameter to TRUE, and your database will work faster, but note that the AIX asynchronous I/O feature must also be configured (see 13.3.1, “AIX asynchronous I/O” on page 325).

15.3.4 db_writer_processes and dbwr_io_slaves

These parameters decide how many database writer processes are used to update the database disks when disk block buffers in the SGA are modified. Multiple database writers are often used to get around the lack of asynchronous I/O in some operating systems, although it still works with operating systems that fully support asynchronous I/O, such as AIX.

We have recommended, in the previous section, that asynchronous I/O is used, so we recommend you use a single database writer to keep things simple. Therefore, set this parameter to 1 to reduce the database writer overhead.

The db_writer_processes parameter specifies the initial number of database writer processes for an instance. In most cases, one database writer process is enough, but it is recommended to use multiple processes to improve performance for a system that writes a lot of data. If the dbwr_io_slaves parameter is used, then only one database writer will be used, regardless of the setting for db_writer_processes. Therefore, set the db_writer_processes parameter to 1 to reduce the database writer overhead and leaving dbwr_io_slaves at the default value.

15.3.5 shared_pool_size and sga_max_size

The shared_pool_size parameter is very hard to determine before statistics are gathered about the actual use of the shared pool. The good news is that in Oracle 9i, it is dynamic, and the upper limit of shared pool size is controlled by the sga_max_size parameter. So, if you set the shared pool size for an initial value and discover that this value is very low, you can change it to a higher one, up to the limit of sga_max_size. Remember that the shared pool includes the data dictionary cache (the tables about the tables and indexes), the library cache (the SQL statements and execution plans), and also the session data if the multi-threaded server (MTS) is used. Thus, it is not difficult to run out of space. Its size can vary from a few MB to very large, such as 2 GB or more, depending on the applications' use of SQL statements. Many application vendors will give guidelines on the minimum size. It depends mostly on the number of tables in the databases; the data dictionary will be larger for a lot of tables and the number of the different SQL statements that are active or used regularly.

If you have no information, start using the following:

- For smaller systems (128 MB to 512 MB of memory): shared_pool_size = 3 MB and sga_max_size = 30% of real memory
- For system with more than 1 GB: shared_pool_size = 128 MB and sga_max_size = 30% of real memory

Note: ERP environments, like SAP, JEdwards, Peoplesoft, Oracle R11, and BAAN may have a huge amount of SGA. We have seen systems with up to 8 GB of SGA.

Starting with Oracle 9i, SGA managing is dynamic. It means the DBA just needs to set the maximum amount of memory available to Oracle (sga_max_size) and a initial value (shared_pool_size), and it will automatically grow or shrink as necessary. Also, we advise you to use the lock_sga parameter to lock the SGA in real memory when you have large amount of it.

The performance benefit is medium and needs tuning based on measured statistics (see 15.5.17, "Oracle shared pool size" on page 406).

15.3.6 sort_area_size

This parameter sets the size of memory used to do in-memory sorts. In OLTP environments, sorting is not common or does not involve large numbers of rows. In Batch and DSS workloads, this is a major task on the system, and larger in-memory sort areas are needed. Unlike the other parameters, this space is allocated in the PGA. This means that if 100 processes start a sort, then there is

100 times sort_area_size space allocated in memory, so you need to be careful, or you will run out of memory and start paging.

Set sort_area_size to be 200 KB on a small system with a lot of users, and at 2 MB on larger systems.

With Oracle 9's new self manageability features, you do not need to set this parameter as long as your database server is running the dedicated server option and has the working_set_policy to `automatic`.

The performance benefit is medium and needs tuning based on measured statistics.

15.3.7 sql_trace

This parameter makes Oracle collect information about performance. This creates an extra load on the system. Unless you require the information for tuning, this should be set to FALSE.

15.3.8 timed_statistics

This parameter makes Oracle collect timing information about response times. This creates an extra load on the system. Unless you require the information for tuning, this should be set to FALSE.

15.3.9 optimizer_mode

If the application provider recommends you set this to RULE, do so. Otherwise, you should set this to CHOOSE (which is the default for newer versions of Oracle). See 15.2.3, "Analyze database tables and indexes" on page 383 for more information.

15.3.10 log_buffer

The redo log buffer is used to store the information to be sent to the redo log disk. This buffer speeds up the database performance by allowing transactions to record the updates to the database but not send nearly empty log records to the redo log disk. If there are many transactions added to the log buffer faster than they can be written to disk, then the buffer can get filled up. This is very bad for performance.

We recommend a minimum of 128 KB, but many DBAs just set this to 1 MB to make it extremely unlikely to ever fill up.

15.3.11 rollback_segments or undo_management

If you are using Oracle 9i, we strongly recommend that the undo_management parameter be set to `automatic`. In doing so, you allow Oracle to manage undo space. For more information on automatic undo management, see 15.5.20, “Automatic undo” on page 407.

For Oracle 8i or before, you need to specify rollback segments. This is an odd Oracle parameter because it is a comma separated list of the rollback segment names. The rollback segments contain the original contents of blocks that are updated during of a transaction. There are two aspects to rollback segments:

- The number of rollback segments: Listed in this parameter
- The size of each rollback segment defined when the rollback segment was created: Not listed in this or any other parameter

For good OLTP workload performance, rollback segments are vital.

For DSS workloads:

- Large read only queries do not really use rollback segments, so they are unimportant.
- Updates to summary tables or updates during data loading the rollback segments are important.

A transaction has to place all the information into a single roll back. The roll backs can be shared between transactions, but if too many transactions share a roll back, there can be locking problems.

We recommend a lot of small roll backs. For systems with less that 32 active concurrent transactions at one time updating rows, create eight rollback segments. However, working out the number of transactions in advance is nearly impossible. If you have higher numbers of active transactions, then Oracle recommends one rollback segment per four transactions, but do not go higher than 50 rollback segments.

Once the system is running, you can monitor roll back contention (see 15.5.19, “Number of Oracle rollback segments” on page 406).

Often, a special large roll back is used for large batch type transactions that update large quantities of rows.

15.3.12 Other key Oracle parameters

If the above parameters are correct, then it is worth noting and investigating the below parameters in further detail. We do not intend to explain what all these

parameters do in detail (unless they are covered in a later tuning section). These parameters are listed because they are the ones proven to make useful performance improvement out of the hundreds that are available.

db_file_multiblock_read_count	Encourages read-ahead on sequential reads
dml_locks	Logical resources within Oracle
enqueue_resources	Logical resources within Oracle
hash_area_size	Similar to sort_area_size
log_archive_start	Archiver process, saves the redo log files to disk or tape
log_archive_dest	Where to copy the log to
log_checkpoint_interval	When to force disk up-to-date, based on activity
log_checkpoint_timeout	When to force disk up-to-date, based on time
mts_*	Many multi-threaded server options
open_cursors	A limit on cursors
parallel_server	Parallel query option
parallel_max_servers	Parallel query option
parallel_min_servers	Parallel query option
processes	A limit on processes
recovery_parallelism	Speeds up cache recovery
sessions	A limit on sessions
sort_area_retain_size	Reduces sort area dynamic resizing
timed_os_statistics	More performance information
transactions	A limit on open transactions

There are further Oracle parameters that could be investigated, but the majority of them are for special cases. These cases are when the RDBMS is not being used for a typical workload, and the standard parameters do not work well. If you suspect this is the true for your database, then you have to read the documentation in great detail before making changes, and it is wise to have some repeatable test to determine if the parameter improved performance. We do not advise changing from the default values unless you have a verifiable performance effect.

If you work through all of these parameters, there is a total of 301 undocumented parameters in Oracle 8i from a total of 504 parameters, while Oracle 9i has a larger number of parameters, 436 undocumented and a total of 687.

15.4 Iterative fine tuning steps

In this section, we follow the Oracle guidelines for the order of fine tuning the database. In the initial checking of the database, we should have already eliminated many possible causes of problems and poor performance. However, tuning is an iterative process, so for fine tuning, for example, the memory used might affect disk I/O. This means these steps have to be rechecked on each iteration.

15.4.1 Access method tuning

The first step is to understand the SQL statements running on the RDBMS. Tuning this can have the largest impact on performance once all the common mistakes have been removed by the previous stages of tuning. Without knowing the SQL running on the system, you are tuning in the dark.

Tuning SQL

Although we have explicitly excluded the tuning of SQL statements from this redbook, this is the tuning step at which it should be attempted. The tools covered in 11.3.2, “Oracle monitoring tools” on page 271 give an overview of how to investigate SQL statements. In addition, the TKPROF facility along with EXPLAIN PLAN can help isolate the worst SQL statements in the system.

Attention: To use TKPROF, the trace options SQL_TRACE and TIMED_STATISTICS have to be enabled, and this can have a large impact on the performance of the database in terms of CPU utilization to capture the data and disk I/O to write the trace files to disk. So, remember to set these to false once tuning is complete.

Please refer to the Oracle manuals and the various books on tuning SQL for further explanations of TKPROF, EXPLAIN PLAN, UTLBSTAT/UTLESTAT, and Statpack.

Transaction rates

There is a simple way to find the transaction rate of the system that seems to be hard to find in the manuals and books. The *v$sysstat* table includes the total count of commits and roll backs the database has performed since startup. So,

periodically saving the counts will allow the calculation of the transaction rates. Use the SQL statement from “Oracle number of transactions” on page 463.

Parallelization for large query sorts and indexing

Both of these operations benefit from parallelization, provided there is space and capacity on the machine. This is particularly likely on SMP machines. Large queries can be parallelized using SQL hints or parallelization set on the tables. The index parallelization is set on the CREATE INDEX SQL statement, and often large indexes are created at off-peak times when the whole power of the machine is available.

Please refer to the Oracle reference material for further explanations of SQL hints and the CREATE INDEX command.

CREATE TABLE AS SELECT with unrecoverable option

This CREATE TABLE AS SELECT SQL statement is often referred to a *CTAS*. Oracle allows parallelization of the SELECT and of the CREATE TABLE SQL statements. This is an excellent way to generate one table from another at high speed.

Please refer to the Oracle reference manuals for further explanations of the CREATE TABLE AS SELECT command.

15.4.2 Memory tuning

Once the access methods have been investigated (see 15.4.1, “Access method tuning” on page 394), the tuning of memory is next. This involves checking the sizes and use of memory. Starting with Oracle 9, IBM and Oracle strongly recommend the use of dynamic SGA features to decrease memory performance problems.

Paging

Check that the system is not paging. See 13.3.8, “AIX paging rate” on page 330 for more details.

SGA db_block_buffers

This Oracle parameter decides the size of the largest part of the Oracle SGA. It is the most important parameter for Oracle performance.

See 15.5.6, “Oracle SGA size” on page 401 for SGA size and 15.5.8, “Oracle buffer cache hit ratio tuning” on page 402 for setting this parameter. There is also a discussion about this in 7.4.3, “RDBMS cache and structures” on page 142.

SGA redo log buffers

Check to see if the size of the redo log buffer is sufficient by checking the redo log space request row of the v$sysstat table. See 15.5.16, “Oracle redo buffer size” on page 405 for details.

SGA shared pool

This is really an internal scratch pad area of Oracle, but it can cause problems. If it is not sufficiently large, it will cause poor performance. If it is far too large, it wastes space that the buffer cache could use. See 15.5.17, “Oracle shared pool size” on page 406 for more details.

The dictionary cache and library cache are parts of the shared pool.

15.4.3 Disk I/O tuning

Use the standard AIX tools, such as **iostat**, to monitor disk activity or advanced tools, such as **filemon** or the graphical Performance Toolbox/6000, for tuning data. Alternatively, use one of the unsupported but useful tools, such as **nmon** (see “Online monitor: nmon” on page 448).

Redo log

In systems with more than a handful of disks plus high insert and update rates to the database (which means most databases), it is recommended to dedicate a disk for the redo log.

See 15.5.10, “Oracle redo log should have a dedicated disk” on page 403 for more details.

Balanced disks and hot Oracle files

Disks are the biggest area of tuning because there are a lot of options. If you have followed the advice of this redbook, you should have avoided the majority of performance problems with disks. The following are areas to check and correct once the system is running with a real workload:

- Which method of disk balancing is in use (see 13.3.2, “AIX Logical Volume Manager or database files” on page 325).
- If a hot disk is detected, how to reduce the impact (see 13.3.9, “Hot disk removal” on page 331).
- To never have one hot disk (see 13.3.10, “Disk sets for hot disk avoidance” on page 332).
- To see Oracle’s view of hot files in the system, see the output from UTLBSTAT and UTLESTAT (see “The UTLBSTAT/UTLESTAT monitoring tool” on page 273). For new versions, see the Statspack output.

RAID 5

If it turns out that the there is a lot more write to disk than expected, RAID 5 performance can be an issue if the fast-write cache option is not used.

Double check asynchronous I/O

It is worth double checking the asynchronous I/O if it is in use.

To enable asynchronous I/O on Oracle:

```
disk_asynch_io = true
```

See 13.3.1, “AIX asynchronous I/O” on page 325 and 15.5.7, “Oracle database writers” on page 402 for more information.

Fragmentation on extents and tablespaces

As databases get bigger, the extents, tablespaces, and files get bigger. The extent fragmentation problem has become much less important.

For a detailed output of the extents in the database, use the sample script in “Oracle report on extents” on page 468.

Starting with Oracle 8i, the diagnostic and tuning packs introduced the tablespace map, and reorg wizard, which allow online monitoring and reorganization of databases’ objects.

Use raw devices

If the database is JFS based, and there are still disk I/O issues, it is worth considering moving to raw devices. See 13.3.4, “AIX JFS or raw devices” on page 328 for more information.

15.4.4 CPU tuning

Next, there are some things that can be checked and tried to reduce CPU problems. Also, note that reducing disk I/O saves CPU power because the disk device drivers are called less; this is why CPU tuning is after disk tuning.

Balanced SMP

Check that all the CPUs on SMP machines are actually being used. See 13.3.11, “SMP balanced CPU utilization” on page 332 for more information.

Parallelism

Overuse of parallelization can cause large CPU problems. See 15.5.22, “Oracle parallelization” on page 408 for more details.

Time slice

Altering the time slice of the machine can help by reducing the CPU cycles required to reschedule processes. See 13.4.5, “AIX process time slice” on page 335 for more information.

Balance the users

One approach that is often missed out is trying to organize the users and tasks of the system better. Ask these questions:

- Can the users spread out their workload during the day to avoid high peaks in computer workload?
- Can they request reports overnight or at low priority?
- Can reports be generated from a queue to stop them flooding the system?
- Are there better ways to look up customer accounts and avoid full table searches?

These question require that user behavior is observed and careful suggestions are made. Surprisingly, many users are willing to participate, give ideas, and change work patterns if this might help them to avoid waiting for the computer and make their working day more pleasant.

Processor affinity

On an SMP machine, the processes are scheduled to run on the next available CPU. If possible, they run on the same CPU, as this increases performance because the CPU level 1 and level 2 caches already contain code and data for that process. This results in less calls to load from main memory. Improved scheduling algorithms mean the chances of running on the same CPU are increased. The alternative is forcing the process to always run on a particular CPU.

See 13.4.4, “AIX processor binding on SMP” on page 334 for more information.

Move the application

Oracle is fully client server enabled, so to reduce the CPU used on the database server, some applications can be moved to other, existing systems, or a new machine can be used. This can be effective if:

- The application is implemented on AIX (rather than directly on the PC).
- The PC version of the application can be used instead.
- The application is a batch process that can be moved to a new machine.

Moving to client/server may mean slower performance for the application, but the database server should run faster.

15.4.5 Contention tuning

Contention is the result of processes fighting for resources. This can simply be called an internal Oracle problem. Fortunately, there are Oracle tuning options to allow this to be monitored and controlled.

Contention is hard to spot on a system, but is typically highlighted by poor performance when the machine does not really look or feel particularly busy. This means that tasks are being serialized rather than being concurrent, or processes are waiting for each other and relying on timeouts to resolve the problem.

The UTLBSTAT and UTLESTAT scripts or Statpack tools report the important information from the v$system_event table (see “The UTLBSTAT/UTLESTAT monitoring tool” on page 273 or “Statpack package” on page 275 for more information). See the Oracle manuals and *Oracle 9i Performance Guide* for more details. A few of the important contention areas are covered in the following sections.

Roll back contention

Restriction: This section is kept for backward compatibility, because Oracle now allows for automatic undo management.

Roll backs contain the before images of rows while a transaction is running. There can be problems with these roll backs when too many processes try to access them. See 15.5.19, “Number of Oracle rollback segments” on page 406 for more information.

Redo log buffer latch contention

The redo log buffer holds the information to be written out to the redo log disk, but if many transactions are trying to add details at the same time, this can cause a bottleneck. See 15.5.15, “Oracle redo buffer latch” on page 405 for more information.

Parallel query server contention

If the database is using the parallel query option, then it is possible to either run out of parallel query servers or overdo the parallelization and try to run too many processes. See 15.5.22, “Oracle parallelization” on page 408 for more details.

Spin count

When Oracle has to wait for a resource, it can either go to sleep and be restarted when the resource is free, or it can just keep retrying repeatedly, but this takes up CPU time. Retrying only makes sense on SMP machines and assumes the

resource is locked for very short periods of time and it is worth waiting. The spin count is the number of retries before sleeping.

15.5 Oracle tuning hints

This section contains tuning hints for Oracle specifically running on AIX.

15.5.1 Oracle installed according to Optimal Flexible Architecture

Oracle has defined a standard way to install Oracle on UNIX systems and how to layout the directory structure. This is called the Optimal Flexible Architecture (OFA). This should be followed closely. It has been developed from a great deal of experience. Many DBA tasks are simplified by using this standard, and it will help anyone joining the team to understand where everything is placed.

The performance benefit is medium, and there are no risks.

15.5.2 Oracle ARCHIVEMODE

Never ever run your database in NOARCHIVEMODE, as it cannot be recovered. The performance benefit is none. It is a recovery issue, and there are no risks.

15.5.3 Oracle control files

Always have three control files on different disks. This might be a case for having one of them on the AIX operating system disk just to make sure you always have one available for emergencies.

Performance benefit is none, as it is a recovery issue, and there are no risks.

15.5.4 Oracle post-wait kernel extension for AIX

This reduces the overhead of semaphore operations for interprocess communication and locking resources internally to Oracle processes. This is mandatory, or Oracle will not even start. The extension is loaded as part of the AIX initialization at boot time and is loaded using the /etc/inittab file and the init process.

Make sure the correct version is installed, that is, the one supplied with your current version of Oracle and not from a older version of Oracle or the one found on the machine. This file is placed in the oracle lib directory with the name $ORACLE_BASE/lib/pw-syscall.

The performance benefit is high, and it is mandatory.

15.5.5 Oracle block size

The block size is set at create database time and cannot be altered at a later date without exporting the entire database, re-creating it, and reloading the database.

We recommend the following Oracle block sizes:

Oracle block size of 4096 for:

- Small databases (less than 10 GB)
- JFS based databases (because AIX does 4 KB pages)
- OLTP workloads where you typically only want one row in the block and reading an extra block would not help
- Mixed workload (OLTP and DSS) databases to assist OLTP performance

Oracle block size of 8192 for:

- Large database
- DSS workload where reading more rows in one go can help
- Large rows where most of the rows of the database are large, and you will get less wastage at the end of blocks with larger blocks
- Databases with batch workloads where the dominant database load involves using large table scans (and not indexed single row accesses)

An Oracle block size of 16384 is for very large databases with DSS workloads.

The use of non-standard block size is allowed in Oracle 9i. It must be well planned, because if the different values are mixed in the same disk, it can degrade performance. The performance benefit is medium, and there are no risks.

15.5.6 Oracle SGA size

The Oracle SGA is a group of shared memory structures that contain the database buffer cache, the shared pool, the log buffer, and the data dictionary. The Oracle SGA cache size parameters (db_cache_size and db_cache_*n*K_size, shared_pool_size and sga_max_size) are the most critical parameters in the Oracle system. They set the sizes on the important caches within the Oracle SGA. These caches make a large contribution to the RDBMS performance by saving the machine from having to do disk I/O and from having to work out how to perform a particular SQL statement more than once.

The golden rule is that the SGA must not be paged or swapped out. The amount of memory that can be allocated to the SGA depends on:

- The number of users. High numbers of users need more SGA, but also require memory for their processes.
- The actual memory available.
- If the machine is a DB server or stand-alone.

Set the Oracle init.ora parameters:

- db_cache_size and similar
- shared_pool_size
- sga_max_size

For example, as a rough guide for initial sizing, see Table 15-2.

Table 15-2 SGA memory sizes

System type	Stand-alone percent of memory	Server only percent of memory
OLTP	30%	40% to 60%
DSS	40% to 70%	50% to 80%

On Oracle 9, these parameters are dynamic. So if you, after the tests, reach the conclusion that SGA parameters must be resized, you can do it online by using the **`alter system`** command.

The performance benefit is high, and there is no risk.

15.5.7 Oracle database writers

In the AIX hint for asynchronous I/O, it is recommended that this is switched on, but then you should set the Oracle parameters to:

```
dbwr_io_slaves=1
```

Please refer to 15.3.4, “db_writer_processes and dbwr_io_slaves” on page 389 for more information.

The performance benefit is medium, and there is no risk.

15.5.8 Oracle buffer cache hit ratio tuning

To tune the Oracle SGA buffer cache, you need to know the buffer cache hit ratio. This can be determined by using the utlbstat.sql and utlestat.sql scripts or

Statpack. See 11.3.2, “Oracle monitoring tools” on page 271 for more information. Within the report.txt file, you will find all the statistics needed.

Then, calculate the hit ratio as:

```
1 - (physicalreads/(db block gets + consistent gets)) *100
```

As an alternative to the utlbstat and utlestat scripts to just get the statistics needed to do this calculation, use the SQL statement found in “Buffer cache hit ratio: Manual” on page 464.

If you want to get Oracle to do the mathematics for you, run the SQL statement found in “Buffer cache hit ratio: Automatic” on page 464.

To change the size of the buffer cache, change the db_cache_size Oracle parameter. For Oracle 9, this parameter is dynamic, but for prior versions it is static, and Oracle must be restarted.

If the cache hit ratio is low (below 80%), then increasing the buffers should increase performance.

The report.txt file also includes estimates on the effect of changes to the buffer cache.

Some DSS databases that read vast quantities of data into the cache may never have high cache hit ratios. Using the sort_direct_writes, sort_write_buffers, and sort_write_buffer_size parameters can help increase the hit ratio.

The performance benefit is high, and there is no risk.

15.5.9 Split the database disks from the AIX disks

The disk access patterns of a database, and that of the various parts of the AIX operating system, are very different. If they share disks, the database performance will slow down for unexpected reasons, such as users copying files or some paging taking place. If a disk contains both AIX and the database files, it also makes it much harder to identify the cause of a problem, and more advanced tools will be needed.

The performance benefit is high, and there is no risk.

15.5.10 Oracle redo log should have a dedicated disk

For databases that update and insert a large number of records, the redo log can rapidly become the bottleneck. The redo log is unique in the database, because it is only a serial write I/O activity (the rest of the database tends to do random

read and write). The log benefits from having a dedicated disk so that the disk heads are always at the right place.

The performance benefit is high, and there is no risk.

15.5.11 Mirror the redo log or use RAID 5 fast-write cache option

The redo log is vital for recovery of the database in the case of a disk failure but is, in itself, a single point of failure, unless it has some sort of disk protection. It is write only. This is not suitable for a RAID 5 without the fast-write cache option. The other alternative is a disk mirror.

The performance benefit is high and no risk.

15.5.12 Oracle redo log groups or AIX mirrors

There are two methods of protecting the redo log for recovery purposes.

The first, historically, is using Oracle redo log groups. Oracle saves the log data to two or three different logs. Each log is identical, but this works on any Oracle supported platform. If one redo log disk fails, the other is available for recovery. See the *Oracle 8 Server Concepts* manual for the full details.

The other way is to just use one redo log group (so Oracle only outputs one log), but protect this with AIX mirroring for recovery purposes.

Some sites use both, for example, three redo log groups, each of which are mirrored. This results in six copies of the log, which seems like overkill and paranoia. This can be the result of physical layout policies that do not make sense for advanced operating systems, such as AIX. The argument is it protects from corruption from both Oracle and AIX, but, in most cases, the corruption would be found in all six copies.

We recommend only using AIX mirroring to protect the redo log. Using the Oracle redo log groups results in Oracle making multiple write system calls (one for each redo log group), which is less efficient.

The performance benefit is low, both methods work fine, and there are no risks.

15.5.13 Oracle parallel recovery

In the Oracle init.ora configuration file, set:

```
recovery_parallelism=[number of processors but not less than 2]
```

This means that the recovery, as the result of a system or Oracle failure, will be faster, as it will make use of all the processors on an SMP machine.

The performance benefit during recovery is high, and there is no risk.

15.5.14 Oracle db_file_multiblock_read_count parameter

This feature is used by Oracle to read-ahead blocks when it is doing a sequential read through a file, such as full table scans. For example, if the file has one table in it or is within a range of blocks on the disk (the table was loaded that way), then a full table scan does sequential reads. AIX will also attempt read-ahead for JFS based files but not for raw device.

For OLTP type workloads that do random read and write disk I/O, this parameter will have no effect and is best left at the default value.

In the Oracle init.ora configuration file, set:

```
db_file_multiblock_read_count = [1..512]
```

Values larger than 16 are not suitable to OLTP environments, but may be a good choice for DSS.

This should be set so that db_block_size * db_file_multiblock_read_count is greater than the LVM stripe size.

The performance benefit is medium, and there is no risk.

15.5.15 Oracle redo buffer latch

Setting the following parameter is not recommend by Oracle, hence it is now a system internal parameter, but it can help diminish redo buffer latching:

```
_log_simultaneous_copies=[3 times the number of processors]
```

The performance benefit is medium, and there is no risk.

15.5.16 Oracle redo buffer size

Use the utlbstat and utlestat scripts or Statspack to determine if the redo buffer has filled up and transactions have to wait for free space. See “The UTLBSTAT/UTLESTAT monitoring tool” on page 273.

Look for the line with `redo log space requests`. If it is not there, then the value is zero, and the size is large enough. If this is more then 10, then it is important to increase the buffer size.

Alternatively, run the SQL statement in “Redo log buffer too small” on page 464.

The performance benefit is low unless the buffer is too small, and there is no risk.

15.5.17 Oracle shared pool size

Run the SQL statement in “Shared pool free memory” on page 464 and check the amount of shared pool free memory in the SGA. Often, the shared_pool is too large, as DBAs like to play it safe.

If it is zero, then the dictionary cache and library cache hit ratios need to be determined. The library cache and dictionary cache are part of the shared pool, and the statistics are reported in the utlbstat and utlestat scripts (see 11.3.2, “Oracle monitoring tools” on page 271).

Understanding these ratios is complex, and the best reference is the *Oracle 8 Server Tuning* manual and *Oracle 9 Performance Guide*. If in doubt, make the shared pool size larger.

The performance benefit is medium and medium risk.

15.5.18 Oracle tablespace and table creation

Always create the tablespaces and tables with the optional storage options and, in particular, the INITIAL and NEXT options.

Always set the PCTINCREASE option to zero to stop new extents from being created with ever bigger sizes. Otherwise, this will eventually both waste disk space and make the next extent size so large it will not fit in the tablespace and cause a transaction insert to fail or data loads to fail unexpectedly.

Old rumors about keeping the number of extents to one or a low number for performance reasons are no longer true (within reason). Anything below 100 extents for large files (512 MB or more) is fine.

The performance benefit is medium, and there is no risk.

15.5.19 Number of Oracle rollback segments

Important: Rollbacks are not the recommended way to manage database consistency and transaction in Oracle 9i. Please refer to 15.5.20, “Automatic undo” on page 407 for more information.

For OLTP systems, each transaction has to have an allocated rollback segment space to hold older copies of rows for database consistency during the transaction and to roll back the transaction if it aborts. Investigate the roll back with the SQL statement in “Rollback segment” on page 464.

This details the active transactions using the roll back (XACTS) and the number of waits (WAITS) that the transactions have had to endure.

Zero WAITS is the goal. This would mean no transaction have been blocked due to this resource. WAITS higher than zero indicates there are not enough rollback segments.The active transactions help you to decide if they are overused. Just one user is great, up to four is okay, but over that, it is likely to cause more problems.

Deciding the number of rollback segments to create is difficult. See 15.3.11, “rollback_segments or undo_management” on page 392 for more information.

The performance benefit is medium, and there is no risk.

15.5.20 Automatic undo

Oracle 9 has introduced a new way to track changes in the database: the automatic undo. The benefits of using automatic undo are various. We quote the most important ones:

- There is no more need to spend a lot of time sizing and resizing rollback segments.
- There are no more “Snapshot too old” errors.
- Oracle will automatically manage the using of undo tablespace.
- I/O performance is boosted, because Oracle uses empirical data to size the undo segments inside the undo tablespace.

To use automatic undo, create an undo tablespace and set the following parameters:

```
undo_tablespace=’UNDOTBS’ -- this is the name of your tablespace
undo_retention= 100
undo_management=auto
```

For more information on undo tablespace, refer to the *Oracle 9i Database Administrator’s Guide*.

15.5.21 Temporary tablespace

Temporary tablespace are useful to optimize disk sort performance, because it does not use the ST-enqueue to manage space store and all processes using disk sorts reuse sort extents in the sort segments, avoiding constant reallocations.

When creating a temporary tablespace keep in mind that:

- The PCTINCREASE must be set to 0.
- The INITIAL and NEXT must be the same size and a factor of the sort_area_size.

Refer to Oracle 9i Performance Guide and Reference.

15.5.22 Oracle parallelization

High parallelization and high numbers of users can cause a major bottleneck in the system, as too many processes are all requiring CPU, memory, and disk I/O. If parallel queries are being used, then the amount of parallelization has to be predetermined and decided at the table or SQL level. However, when running, the effect can be monitored. If it is:

- Too low

  This results in the CPU and disks not reaching high utilization, and the response times are longer than necessary.

  When users are making peak use of parallel queries, check the CPU usage to determine if there is spare capacity and increase parallel_max_servers to suit.

- About right

  Look for nicely balanced system utilization. All the CPUs are 70% busy, no or little paging occurs, and the disks are less than 40% busy.

- Too high

  This results in the CPU being 100% utilized or disks above 60% utilized, poor response times for other work, and running out of parallel servers.

  The numbers of parallel servers is controlled with the parallel_min_servers and parallel_max_servers init.ora parameters.

  Check the use of parallel query servers with the following SQL:

  ```
  select *
  from v$pq_sysstat;
  ```

  If the `Servers Busy` value is the same as parallel_max_servers, then this needs tuning. In this case, the amount of parallelization needs to be reduced.

The performance benefit is medium, and the risks are low.

15.5.23 Oracle archiver buffers

The _log_archive_buffer_size affects the performance of the archiver, which is used to copy log files to other resources, so redo log space can be reused later. Set the Oracle init.ora file parameters:

```
_log_archive_buffer_size=[upto 128]
_log_archive_buffers=[default of 4]
```

If the archive process uses large, and many, buffers, then its speed can be increased, but it can then take large amounts of CPU, memory, and disk I/O. This may affect the online user response time, so be careful and monitor the effect of the archiver on performance of the system as a whole. This may give up to 20% better performance of the archiver.

The performance benefit is medium, and the risks are low.

15.5.24 Oracle use TRUNCATE rather than DELETE all rows

If you need to remove all the rows from a table, it can take a long time to do this as part of a transaction with the DELETE statement. Oracle has the TRUNCATE statement that does this by removing all the extents from the table, which is an extremely efficient and fast way to remove the rows.

The performance benefit is large, and there are no risks.

15.5.25 Oracle marking and batch deleting rows

Many databases do not remove rows from the database, as this historical information can be useful, for example, for further sales and marketing analysis. Deleting rows can result in a database full of blocks that are not full of data any longer (a form of fragmentation).

One technique is not to remove rows at all but to have an extra column that signifies the row is no longer needed. Some databases use a deleted date and a column for who deleted it or why it should be deleted. Then, a batch job runs later to remove or archive the data.

The performance benefit using this technique is small, and there are no risks.

15.5.26 Oracle SQL*Loader I/O buffers

While loading data with SQL*Loader, it ends up waiting for the disk I/O to complete. Increasing the SQL*Loader BUFFERS parameter will greatly improve load performance.

The performance benefit is high, and there are no risks.

15.6 Other tuning hints

This section includes a few further tuning hints for networking and compiling.

15.6.1 Network TCP/IP

Oracle Net Services uses a session user data buffer to cache data before it is sent by network. The size of this buffer ranges from 512 bytes to 32 KB with a default of 2 KB. The packet size can be changed with Net connection string parameters.

The performance benefit is medium, and the risks are high.

15.6.2 Compiling programs with embedded Oracle SQL

When compiling programs with embedded SQL statements (for example, Pro*C), use the best optimization level provided by the compiler. For AIX and the C compiler, use -O. This is the same as the -O2 optimization level. Although -O3 is available, it can make small code order changes and requires extra detailed application testing.

If you are compiling an application on one machine to run on that same machine or identical machines at the same AIX and Oracle version, we recommend you use the default compiler options. If, however, you are compiling for many different IBM @server pSeries machines (which may not be under your control), we recommend compiling for common mode. Use:

- -qarch=COM for common mode (this will run all IBM @server pSeries)

Only use the following if you need that last 2% in performance and know that the code will never run on alternative hardware:

- -qarch=PWR for POWER only machines
- -qarch=PWRX for POWER2 only machines
- -qarch=PPC for POWERPC only machines

The performance benefit is medium, and the risks are low.

15.7 Books for Oracle database administration and tuning

The aim of this section is to give you some comments on the Oracle books that are listed in the bibliography.

- *Oracle 8 Server Concepts* explains Oracle well.
- *Oracle 8 Server Tuning* from Oracle Corporation, is a good start in tuning Oracle, but is very theoretical and general.
- *Oracle Performance Tuning: Tips and Techniques*, by Rich Niemic, et al, has excellent coverage, a lot of hands-on examples, and includes Oracle 8.
- *Oracle 8 & UNIX Performance Tuning* by Ahmed Alomari is a good hands-on tuning book with large OLTP and DSS tuning sections, but does not cover AIX.
- *Oracle Performance Tuning* by Peter Corrigan, et al, is a good book covering application tuning.
- *Oracle Backup and Recovery Handbook* by Rama Velpuri is all you need to know about the subject.
- *OCP Training Guide: Oracle DBA* by Willard Baird II is a good all around coverage of DBA roles, including performance tuning.
- *Oracle 9i Database Performance Tuning Guide and Reference* provides excellent information about Oracle 9i tuning.
- *Oracle 9i Administrator's Reference for Unix* is a must read for all Oracle DBAs.

16

IBM Informix Dynamic Server tuning

The goal of the tuning process for the Informix Dynamic Server (IDS) is to get the maximum throughput and the minimum response time. In order to achieve this goal, you must fully understand the steps to fine tune the IDS environment. This chapter helps you to understand the principles of Informix tuning and provides information about changes that you can make in the tuning process.

- 16.1, “General tuning elements” on page 414 discusses common tuning elements for Informix.
- 16.2, “Tuning your Informix Dynamic Server” on page 416 discusses tuning information for an Informix server.
- 16.3, “More information” on page 435 provides some reference information on Informix tuning.

16.1 General tuning elements

The following sections provide a short description of some tuning elements of a Informix DS RDBMS.

16.1.1 Operational performance considerations

These considerations are about how to improve the operational performance by analyzing the performance indicators collected at runtime, such as:

- The database administrator is responsible for maintaining a stable and well tuned RDBMS in order to achieve an excellent operational performance.
- Operating system configuration parameters, such as SHMMAX and SHMSIZE, database server configuration parameters, such as SHMTOTAL and SHMADD, which may be tuned by the database or system administrator.
- A number of factors exist that can impact the run-time performance of an application, such as concurrency, locking, or stored procedures. Application developers have to pay attention to the two first factors during application development. Application designers must carefully measure the gains of using stored procedures for all SQL processing.

16.1.2 Statistics and optimizer

Informix uses a cost-based optimizer to execute the queries issued to databases. The cost of a query is based on different factors, like the number of pages it will need to read, the number of rows, the existence or not of an index on the queried columns, and the existence of updated statistics information. Statistics tables store information about distribution of keys in an index or table, the number of rows in that table or index, and selectivity of columns.

These statistics are very important, because if they do not exist, the optimizer has to guess these information and may not generate the best path for a query. For example, you create a table with 1,000,000 rows, created the indexes, but never got the statistics for this table. Then you issue a query to return some columns from it. Without the statistics, the optimizer cannot know the number of rows in the table or the distribution of these rows through it. It can opt for an index range scan instead of a index seek, or an table scan instead of using the index.

Informix implements a cost-based optimizer (CBO), that works on statistical basis to compile the SQLs and generate the execution or access plan to each of them. To estimate the best plan at the lower cost, the CBO uses the following factors:

- Updated statistics on the table and indexes
- Number of I/Os to be performed
- Parallelism and memory allocated to parallel queries
- CPU resources to enforce the filters
- Resources needed to sort and grouping operations

Also, statistics must kept up to date. In our example, if you gathered the statistics at the first moment, make a large number of DML operations on the table, but do not update the statistical information, once again, the optimizer can generate a bad plan for you query and performance will suffer.

Informix statistics are gathered by using the UPDATE STATISTICS command.

16.1.3 Server sizing

Correct sizing of the server machine is essential to get the best performance from your Informix Dynamic Server. Remember that, if the size of your machine is not enough to the increasing workload of your business, more resources must be bought, and the tuning process must start again. All hardware components should be able to respond at the maximum to the demands of the business workload. For example, if you have a POWER4 CPU, but the disk subsystem is not able to process at the same rate as the CPU, then you probably will get CPU high usage, caused by a poor disk response. To correct sizing of your system, follow the hints we gave in the Chapter 7, “Sizing a database system” on page 133.

16.1.4 Memory grant manager

The memory grant manager (MGM) component can highly improve DSS database performance, because it will manage the resource distribution and usage by decision support queries. As long as decision support queries may need lot of resource at a time to finish their work, a bottleneck can be reached on any of these resources. The MGM helps prevent this situation.

MGM uses the values of some IDS parameters (those starting with DS_) to calculate the amount of resource it will allow a query to use. For example, based on the value of these parameters, MGM will automatically allocate the number of scan threads, processing threads, and DS memory size, serving the requests by decision support queries.

On heavy loaded OLTP sites, you might find it useful to limit the DS resources, allowing more from these resource to be allocated to OLTP operations. To monitor the amount of resources allocated to decision support queries, use the **`onstat -g mgm`** command.

16.2 Tuning your Informix Dynamic Server

Once you have your database server installed and running, it is time to start the tuning. There are four main components in a database system that need to be tuned:

- CPU usage
- Memory usage
- Disk I/O
- Network traffic

The following sections show the parameters that you can change to get optimal performance for each of these components. These sections discusses some ways to get better performance by changing Informix parameters. Before proceeding, it is important that you make a copy of your ONCONFIG file as a possible fallback. Also, try to not change more than one value at time, except when they interoperate, because you cannot define what parameter really has improved the performance.

If you are analyzing the performance of a production server, take a BACKUP. We cannot stress enough the need for a database backup. But, in the case of changed parameters that can prevent your database from starting, a machine backup is advisable. Yes, it takes time. But, you can spend more time explaining to your boss or customer that the database was lost and needs to be rebuilt from the last good backup.

At last, there are some ways to change the parameters discussed in the following sections:

- Direct editing of onconfig file in the vi editor.
- By using the Informix Server Administrator (ISA) editing facility, as shown in the Figure 16-1 on page 417.

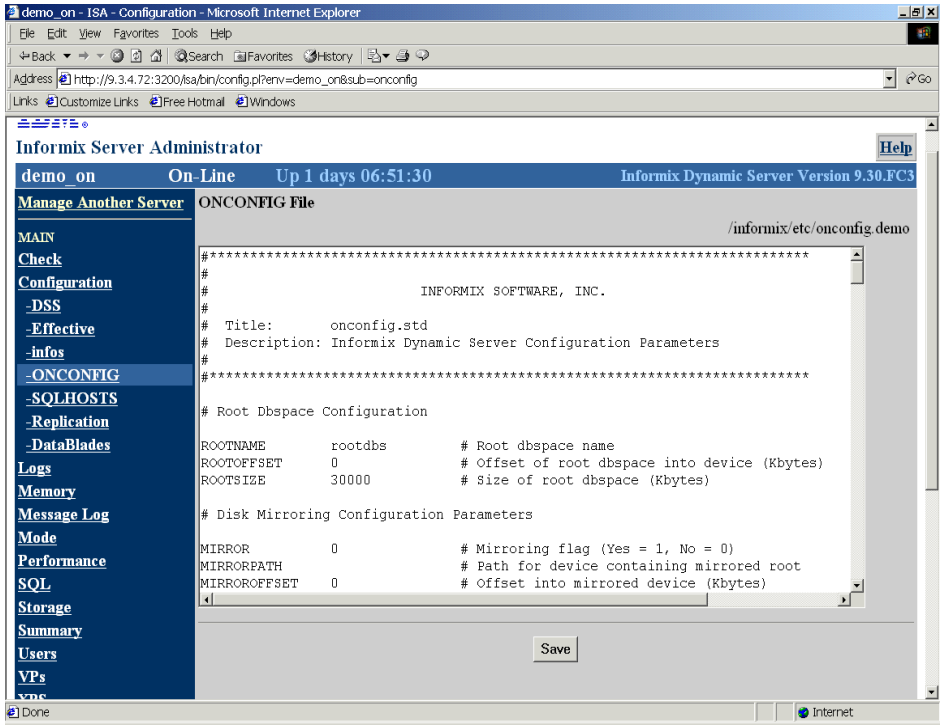

Figure 16-1 ISA onconfig editing facility

In general, you have to restart the IDS for the changes to become effective. The parameters that you can change to improve the overall performance of your IDS are shown in the Table 16-1 and are discussed in the following sections.

Table 16-1 Informix Dynamic Server parameters

Parameter	Description	Performance impact
VPCLASS	Controls Virtual Processing numbers	High
MULTIPROCESSOR	Enable/disable Multiprocessor support	High
SINGLE_CPU_VP	Sets the single processor support	Medium
DS_MAX_QUERIES	Controls the number of concurrent decision support (DS) queries	High in DSS Medium in OLTP

Parameter	Description	Performance impact
DS_MAX_SCANS	Controls the number of scan threads per DS query	High in DSS Medium in OLTP
MAX_PDQ_PRIORITY	Sets the maximum parallelism priority	High
BUFFERS	The number of buffers in IDS memory	High
DS_TOTAL_MEMORY	The memory available for DS queries	High in DS Medium in OLTP
LOGBUFF	Size of log buffer	Medium
PHYSBUFF	Size of physical buffer	Medium
RESIDENT	Enabled Forced Residency	Medium
STACKSIZE	Private user thread stack size	Low
LOCKS	Initial number of locks	High
SHMTOTAL	The total shared memory	Medium
SHMADD	Size of memory segment to be attached on memory increase	Medium
SHMVIRTSIZE	Initial size of virtual shared memory	High
DBSPACETEMP	Specifies the temporary space to sort operations	High
RA_PAGES	Number of pages to be read ahead	Medium
RA_THRESHOLD	Minimum of pages to start a new read ahead operation	Low
CLEANERS	Number of page cleaner threads	High
LRUS	Number of LRU queues pair	High
LRU_MAX_DIRTY	Maximum percentage of dirty pages in the LRU queue	High
LRU_MIN_DIRTY	Minimum percentage of dirty pages in the LRU queue	Low
CKPTINTVL	Sets the interval between fuzzy checkpoints	Medium

Parameter	Description	Performance impact
LOGSIZE	Size of each logical log file	Medium
LOGFILES	Number of logical log files	Medium
DYNAMIC_LOGS	Dynamic log allocation and management	Medium
PHYSFILE	Size of the physical log files	Medium
PSORT_NPROCS	Number of threads in parallel sort operations	High
IFX_NET_BUF_SIZE	Size of the network buffers	High
IFX_NETBUF_PVT_POOL	Size of private network buffers	High
NETTYPE	Configures the protocols and the number of connection per protocol	High

16.2.1 Tuning CPU usage

As all system processing is performed by the CPU, it is the most important component in a database server. If your CPU is not performing well, all your system performance will suffer. Unfortunately, CPU tuning is not a trivial work. In fact, CPU tuning is much more a question of well balanced resources and a right-sized server than anything else. The following section shows some parameters that affect the Informix usage of CPU.

vpclass

Informix uses threads called virtual processors (VP) to answer the requests of user processes. Each VP manages a kind of processing called classes. This multithread architecture helps to prevent CPU contention, inasmuch the VPs try to balance the work between all the CPUs available to it. So, is very important to define the number of VPs Informix will use. To set the number of VPs serving a specific class, you adjust the VPCLASS parameter in the onconfig file:

```
VPCLASS class,num=n
```

or use the command below, if the server is running:

```
onmode -p +n class
```

where class is the VP class name and n is the number of VPs you want.

The most important classes that directly affect CPU usage are cpu, aio, and net. These classes define the number of virtual processors available to processing and for asynchronous I/O.

The cpu VP is responsible for running user threads, like SQL requests and some internal threads. The optimal response time depends on the right allocation of cpu VPs. Follow these hints to set the number of CPU VPs:

- On UP machines, set the number of CPUs VPs to 1.
- On SMP machines, set the number of CPUs VPs to the number of CPUs available to Informix minus 1. This configuration will allow other processes to run without contending for CPU resources with Informix's virtual processors. To get the best performance from queries on tables that are fragmented, try to use a number of cpu VPs that is a factor of the number of scan threads to that query. You can get the number of scan threads for a session using the **`onstat -g ses`** command.

  If your machine has only two CPUs, first set CPU VPCLASS to 1 and test if your Informix DS is performing well. If not, add a new CPU VP at runtime, using the commands above. We recommend dual-processor machines to be treated as UP, because the overhead of locking the structures necessary to multiprocessor usage may not be acceptable at production servers.

The aio VP is responsible for performing all asynchronous I/O operations on systems that do not implements raw devices or kernel asynchronous I/O (KAIO). AIX 5L fully implements both, allowing the I/O operations to run faster than if file systems were used. However, even on AIX 5L, you can use the aio VP to set the number of VPs working on file systems, if you don't want work with raw devices on small development databases. To not generate CPU contention, a rule of thumb is to set the number of aio classes as two times the number of active dbspaces using file systems. Even if you do not add an aio VP, because your system is on raw devices and KAIO is enabled, Informix will start one aio VP to service internal I/O requests.

The net class processes all listen threads requests. It is responsible for handling the client/server communication. This class must be set in conjunction with the NETTYPE parameter. As a rule of thumb, if IDS is not running on a large SMP system, it is recommended that you do not create net VPs, because poll thread will run faster in the cpu VPs. Also, in general, set one poll thread per net/cpu VP for each network interface that you have. However, if you have more than 200 users and a large SMP system, you can configure more net VPs to service network requests. The optimal poll thread/VP/Network interface depends mainly on how fast your processors and network cards are. You should get careful measurements on setting the correct relation to your system.

Keep in mind that the OS can lower the priority of processes running for a long time. This feature is called priority aging, and can degrade the database performance over the time. However, AIX 5L allows you to disable this feature for the processes running on it. In the Informix DS, to disable the priority aging for a specific VP, set the noage option in the VPCLASS parameter creating this VP.

On large SMP configurations, you can manually distribute that VP's processing through the available processors and reserve some others for specific working. AIX 5L gives the possibility to do it by means of *processor affinity*. As Informix is fully integrated to AIX 5L, it can makes use of this feature and bind a VP to a processor. To enable affinity for a VP, just set the aff option of the VPCLASS parameter. For example, you can decide that the processors 2, 3, and 4 in your machine will be used only to net VPs. To do that, you specify the VPCLASS to the net VP as follows:

```
VPCLASS net,num=3,max=6,noage,aff=2-4
```

MULTIPROCESSOR

If Informix is running on SMP systems, the MULTIPROCESSOR parameter should be set to 1, which causes Informix to adapt the lock mechanism to minimize CPU contention.

SINGLE_CPU_VP

On UP, or when Informix is running only with one cpu VP, it is advisable to set this parameter to 1. With this value, Informix will not use the SMP lock mechanism and the overhead involved in it.

DS_MAX_QUERIES and DS_MAX_SCANS

The DS_MAX_QUERIES sets the maximum number of decision support queries running at a time. DS_MAX_SCANS specify the number of scan threads that can run concurrently. Use these parameters to control the resources available to decision support queries. Setting the DS_MAX_QUERIES and DS_MAX_SCANS can help minimize the impact of complex queries on the CPU.

The optimum value for DS_MAX_QUERIES can be derived from the use of PDQ priority in the system. The bigger the number of queries that have a low PDQ priority, the bigger the number you can use in the DS_MAX_QUERIES parameter. The bigger the number of queries with a high PDQ priority, the lower the number of DS_MAX_QUERIES. For example, if your system is dedicated to DSS, you would like the maximum number of queries to be able to run at one time, but with a high PDQ priority too. This situation can be handled by allowing up to 20% of your DSS queries to running at a time, and specify a medium to high PDQ priority.

To set the number for DS_MAX_SCANS, use the formula in Example 16-1 to calculate the number scan threads these values would allow to be allocated to a specific query and check if these threads are enough to get the query running at optimum performance.

Example 16-1 Estimating the number of scan thread by query

```
scan threads = min (number of fragments, (DS_MAX_SCANS * (PDQPRIORITY for the
query)/ 100 * MAX_PDQPRIORITY / 100))
```

The higher the number of scan threads serving a query, the lower the scan time, and the better the response time. So, if you find that you have more fragments than scan threads, you have to multiply the response time by the factor of scan threads / fragments.

MAX_PDQ_PRIORITY

Intensive use of parallelism can help improve the response time of queries. But this improvement has a cost that is measured in terms of resource consumption. To limit the amount of resource a PDQ query can obtain at a time, the database administrator sets the MAX_PDQ_PRIORITY to a value between 0 and 100, specifying the percentage of each PDQ resource a query can get.

For example, if the developer sets the PDQPRIORITY of a specific query to 60, but you configured the MAX_PDQ_PRIORITY to 40, the resource manager will only allow 50% of the request PDQPRIORITY, or 30%, to this query.

The use of this parameter helps reduce the impact of large and complex queries running on the system. To set the value for this parameter, you should evaluate the main workload type on your system.

- If it is a OLTP system, with some occasional DSS queries, reduce this value. But, if you are running complete ERP solutions, then you can leave it at 100%, because ERP can use huge queries to generate departmental or corporative reports and batch processing. Otherwise, a value of 40-60% will be fine.
- If it is a DSS system, increase this value.

16.2.2 Tuning memory usage

Memory can lead to many performance problems. If your initial memory is not enough to support all the processing that it is supposed to, all server processing will experience performance degradation. On the other side, if memory is oversized for Informix processes, all other processes in the machine will have to page, and performance for these processes will degrade as well. So, right memory allocation to Informix is essential to get optimal performance. For more

details on how to calculate the memory for your IDS, refer to “Informix memory requirements” on page 168.

Also, remember that one of the main roles of memory is to store data read from disk, so its size must be carefully set. A wrong decision may lead to excessive paging, and bad response times, because pages have to be read from disk over and over.

As described in 6.1.1, “Memory structures” on page 112, Informix memory is split into three different regions:

- Resident
- Virtual
- Message

There are a number of parameters that affect these memory portions. The following sections describe the most important ones and give general guideline to set their values.

BUFFERS

The BUFFERS parameter specifies the number of data buffers available to IDS. Data buffers are stored in the resident portion of IDS memory, and have an important role in maximizing the I/O throughput. The bigger the buffers available to keep data pages in memory, the smaller the need to read the pages from disk. But if you oversize the BUFFER parameters, your system may experience excessive paging. The total amount of memory allocated for the buffer pool of Informix is the number of buffers * the page size. Thus, if you set BUFFERS for 1000 and your page size is 4 KB, the buffer pool size of your system will be 4 MB.

For OLTP sites, a good value for this parameter in AIX 5L, because of its 64-bit architecture, will range from 25-35% of the physical memory in megabytes. For example, if your system has 4 GB of memory, and a page size of 4 KB, you can set this parameter to 262,000, which will allocate about 1.7 GB for buffer pools, or 25%. For DSS sites, you may have better performance by allocating a small buffer pool size and increase the DS_TOTAL _MEMORY parameter. But remember that normal operations like index building needs to read data through the buffer pool, so you should increase the BUFFER parameter.

If you are using smart large objects, you should carefully calculate the extra memory that it will require from the buffer pool. Example 16-2 on page 424 show the formula to calculate this overhead.

Example 16-2 Smart object buffer overhead calculation

```
Additional_mem = max concurrent open LOB * (number of bytes to be buffered /
page size)
```

If the use of smart objects is rare and these objects are greater than 8080 bytes in size, you can use lightweight I/O. This means that the smart objects will not be buffered when an user thread requests it. To use lightweight I/O, when creating the sbspace, use the BUFFERING tag in the -Df option of the **onspaces -c -S** command. But remember that for frequently accessed smart objects, the use of lightweight I/O can degrade performance, because data needs to be read on every user request.

DS_TOTAL_MEMORY

If your system makes use of large, complex queries, you can limit the total amount of memory these queries can get by setting the DS_TOTAL_MEMORY parameter. The drawback of using this parameter is that queries with huge read and write will take longer to finish. But the good news is that if you miscalculate this parameter, IDS will fix it, based on a number of factors and the actual workload type on your system.

Before to set this parameter, try to play with the Informix default values. If you find that you can get better performance by changing it, follow the following general rules:

- For OLTP systems, a good value ranges from 20 to 25% of SHMTOTAL memory in KB.
- In DSS systems, it can be from 50 to 90%, depending on if your system is hybrid with most of the queries performing DSS or if it is a dedicated DSS system.

In any case, take careful measures to check if your system has achieved good performance with no or little paging.

LOGBUFF

Each Informix database server has at least three cyclical log buffers to hold the logical record of operations performed on the database. The size of each of these three logs is specified by the LOGBUFF parameter. This parameter is important not only to memory tuning, but for disk and CPU tuning as well. The larger the memory space allocated to them, the smaller the number of times it has to be flushed to disk. So, if you set this size to a very small value, then your system may spend time, and waste resources, in flushing quite often.

A OLTP system can use a value of 32 KB up to 64 KB depending on how heavy its workload is. Monitor the `pages/io` value of the **onstat -l** command output to

determine the correct value. If this value is lesser than 76% of the bufsize, reduce the LOGBUFF; if it is greater than 95% of bufsize, increase the LOGBUFF. On DSS systems, a value of 32 KB is recommended.

PHYSBUFF

Physical buffers contain a before image of the records being updated. As with the logical log, it is held in memory until filled. When it fills up, the buffers are flushed to disk. The amount of memory available to physical logging is specified by the PHYSBUFF parameter.

Start with a value of 16 * page size for OLTP systems, or 32 KB for DSS. Then check the `page/io` column in the **`onstat -l`** command output, to ensure that I/O activity is not too high. If so, try to increase the amount of memory available to physical logging by increasing this parameter by an value that is an even increment of the page size.

RESIDENT

This parameter allows the resident portion of IDS memory to be pinned. This forced residency can improve performance, because buffers are held in memory for its time life. Unfortunately, this option is not available on AIX 5L.

STACKSIZE

This parameter controls the initial size of the stack available to store the private data necessary to ensure that user threads run efficiently. These stacks are allocated from the virtual memory, and can be overridden at function creation by using the STACK option of the CREATE FUNCTION statement.

When calculating the STACKSIZE value, remember that, if you miscalculate it, IDS will have to add memory segments more often, and it can lead the system to paging. Also, remember to add the total amount of stack to be initially allocated from memory to the SHMVIRTSIZE parameter. To calculate the initial amount of memory to be allocated to stacks, use the formula presented in Example 16-3.

Example 16-3 Stack total size

```
stack total size = STACKSIZE * average number of threads
```

To get the average number of threads, estimate some value between 60 and 70% of the total connection weighted to your system.

LOCKS

In older versions of IDS, the LOCKS parameter was used to set an upper absolute limit to the number of locks in the server. Starting with IDS 9.30, the LOCKS parameter specifies the initial number of locks to be allocated to the

instance. After time, if the Dynamic Server verifies that this value is not enough to hold all the locks required by sessions, it will double the size of the internal locks table. This doubling operation can be performed up to 15 times. So, now the DBA can think of LOCKS more rationally, and try not to guess the worst scenario.

The default initial value for this parameter is 2,000, and the maximum value is 8,000,000 plus 15 dynamic allocations of 100,000, that is, 9,500,000. If you want increase this default value, use the following guidelines:

- Each lock entry is 44 bytes large. So, remember to keep the total amount of memory after the dynamic allocations to an acceptable value. For example, if you initially allocate 100,000 locks (we know, it is a large value, but some ERP systems make huge use of locks and you can run out of this value), then the initial memory amount for the locks table will be about 4 MB, which is a tiny value for the system running today. But after the 15 times increase, this value will be 15 times bigger, or over 60 MB! So, the rule of thumb is to think about the future allocations than the initial ones.
- As a general rule, consider 1 lock value for each query in your database, and multiply the total amount for the number of concurrent users running these queries. It will give you a approximate value to the LOCKS parameter. Again, if your system is a complete ERP solution, and you have a huge number of users running its modules, you have to increase the LOCKS parameters. But remember, regardless of your initial value, Informix will allocate only 100,000 entries for the lock table each time it needs to do so, and up to 15 times. After the 15th time, applications requesting locks will receive an error, and applications holding locks will have to release locks.

SHMTOTAL

The total memory available to Informix is configured by the SHMTOTAL parameter. Setting this parameter is important, as it allows some memory to go towards the operating system, which reduces paging. By default, Informix will use all the virtual memory available in the machine. There will be problems if your machine is not a dedicated database server machine.

If your machine is dedicated, however, it is a good idea to leave this parameter in 0 and allow Informix to manage the total memory it will take. If not, you should sum all the memory the other processes need, add 64 to 128 MB to AIX 5L, and subtract that total from the total server memory. The result should be allocated to Informix and the system monitored for paging. If there is excessive paging, then you can diminish the SHMTOTAL memory, and take new measurements until you find the optimal value for your server.

SHMADD

This parameter is the size of the segment that Informix will add to the virtual shared memory each time it is needed up to the SHMTOTAL value. The size of the memory segment that Informix will attach each time plays a important role both in CPU tuning and memory tuning:

- For CPU tuning, the process of adding a memory segment takes CPU cycles.
- For memory, the larger the segment added, the greater the likelihood that memory paging occurs, because other processes may need memory that Informix is using. Small segments will need to attach more often, taking more CPU cycles.

As a general rule, Informix recommends that this parameter be configured based on the size of your physical memory:

- For memory sizes lesser than 256 MB, leave the default value, which is 8,192 KB.
- For memory sizes between 256 and 512 MB, double the default value, which is 16,384 KB.
- For memory sizes larger than 512 MB, set this value to 32,768.

Also, the SHMMAX and SHMMIN operating system parameters should be set to the same value as the SHMADD.

SHMVIRTSIZE

This parameter sets the initial size of the virtual memory portion of shared memory. The size of the virtual portion can be calculated by adding the size of all the shared memory components and allowing a small overflow. Example 16-4 shows the formula to calculate the size of the virtual memory portion.

Example 16-4 Calculating the initial virtual size memory

```
Virt_size = fixed overhead
+ shared structures
+ (maximum concurrent connections * private structures)
+ other buffers
```

Another way to calculate the value for this parameter is set it to the larger of the these two values:

- connections * 350
- 8000

The connections value is the sum of all connections allowed on each NETTYPE parameter.

Setting a well dimensioned initial virtual size is important, because the server will take more time to attach a new memory segment, which is a time-consuming operation. Also, the SHMVIRTSIZE puts a lower limit on the segment being freed as a result of the **onmode -F** command.

After the server has been placed under the real workload, you can reduce or increase the size of the SHMVIRTSIZE.

16.2.3 Tuning disk usage

The disk system set is a critical factor in performance enhancements. A disk subsystem, where the response time is bad, will cause the entire system to suffer performance degradation. So, the first aspect in tuning the disk subsystem is choosing the best disk subsystem configuration for your environment. It involves:

- Disk size and speed
- RAID configuration
- Use of raw devices or JFS
- Data and index location
- Disk layout
- Tuning Informix parameters

The first three items were covered in Chapter 9, “Designing a disk subsystem” on page 187. As an addendum to the third item, Informix on UNIX always uses raw devices. You have the option to use a file system, but this is not the best option for production environments. Informix data reading functions are highly optimized to use raw devices and asynchronous kernel I/O (KAIO).

The fourth item depends largely on the first two, because if you are using a high speed storage solution like the IBM ESS, sometimes you can choose to let index and data be in the same dbspace, that is, in the same set of chunks. However, a better approach is to put data and the index on separate disks, or logical volumes, even on the IBM ESS. On IBM ESS, try to define the data disks on one machine and the index disks on the other machine in the internal ESS cluster.

The fifth item is important, because the layout of the chunks may help improve performance. Some hints on how to lay out your disk system to achieve better performance are given in the next section.

The last item is the last not only in the list, but is the last you have to change. Only after all the first five items are OK should you change any parameters. Some parameters that you can change to boost the performance of your IDS are described in the following sections.

Disk layout considerations

Informix use raw devices to boost disk access performance. These raw partitions are created on a disk that has to move its read head to answer the system and database requests. If data is created on regions far from the center of the disk platter, the read head has to make more larger movements to get that data. These excessive movements can increase the seek time and the response time. On a heavy loaded system, it can lead to performance problems.

On AIX, you can reduce this problem by place highly used tables on chunks created on the inner part of disks. For details on how to create the raw devices on the most inner part on disk, see 13.3.5, “AIX disk geometry considerations” on page 329.

Also, highly used tables should be isolated from the other tables, in order to improve performance. So if you have a table that receives massive requests, it is advisable to place it in a different disk, because the database server can use more threads to read this table without a great effect on the performance of other database objects.

For a heavy system, physical logs should be separated from logical-log, avoiding contention. Also, optimally, there would be no other dbspace on the same disk as the physical or logical logs.

A last, but not least piece of advice is to use fragmentation strategies to spread huge tables or medium to large tables with massive access across the disks in your system. The use of fragmentation can help reduce the response time, because various I/O threads can work in parallel to read from or write to the chunks.

A good fragmentation strategy can lead to high performance improvement, but a bad one can lead to disk contention, or hot disks. If you can, use expression based fragmentation, because it allows Informix to know where the data is located and to eliminate unnecessary fragments from a query plan. The drawback is that you need a good knowledge of the distribution schema, and have to rebalance the data manually over time.

DBSPACETEMP

The IDS makes use of temporary dbspace for sort operations, temporary tables, and operations that cannot be fitted in memory. These temporary areas are created with the **`onspaces -t`** command on raw disks for better performance. If you do not use temporary space for temp tables and sort operations, Informix will use your local dbspace or the root dbspace. This situation may present a heavy impact in performance, because normal I/O operations must struggle with the I/O intensive sort operations. Also, if your are using mirroring of the root dbspace, the impact on I/O performance will be doubled.

To achieve better performance from the dbspacetemp, follow these hints:

- Create only one dbspacetemp per disk.
- Create at least two dbspacetemp, in order to balance the load and enable parallel operations.
- For OLTP systems, use a size for temporary areas equal to at least 10% of the size of temp tables involved in the operations.
- For DSS systems, allocate up to 50% of the size of the temp tables.

RA_PAGES

Informix can use read-ahead to improve the reading of data or index pages from disk to buffer pools in a single I/O operation. To use this feature, just set the RA_PAGES parameter to the number of pages you want the database server to try to read at a time. This feature can reduce drastically the time necessary to read the number of pages a query requests, because the time wasted to seek the correct start point in the disk is diminished.

You can set this value to 125, as an initial guess, and use the formula in Example 16-5 to calculate the correct value to RA_PAGES parameter.

Example 16-5 Estimating the number of pages to be read ahead

```
RA_PAGES = ((BUFFERS * buffer pool factor) / (2 * large queries)) + 2
```

RA_THRESHOLD

This parameter sets the lower limit to read ahead operations. When this value is reached, the IDS will request a new set of pages to be read from disk. It operates with the RA_PAGES to indicate the range of read ahead operations. To set the value for this parameter, use the formula in the Example 16-6.

Example 16-6 Estimating the value for RA_THRESHOLD

```
RA_THRESHOLD = ((BUFFERS * buffer pool factor) / (2 * large queries)) - 2
```

CLEANERS

As IDS keeps dirty pages in memory, the buffers will become full, and need to be cleaned. This page-cleaning service is performed by the page-cleaner threads, and the number of threads is set by the CLEANERS parameter. The larger the number of cleaners, the smaller the cleaning operation time. As a general rule, set this parameter to the number of disks used by your database server or a minimum of 6. If your system supports more than 20 disks and up to 100, you can use two CLEANERS per disk. For larger systems, use four CLEANERS per disk.

LRUS, LRU_MAX_DIRTY, and LRU_MIN_DIRTY

These parameters control the number and the behavior of LRU queues in the Informix database server. The LRUS parameter sets the number OS queues and the LRU_MAX_DIRTY and LRU_MIN_DIRTY set the maximum and minimum threshold for these queues. The LRU_MAX_DIRTY threshold sets the upper limit percent of dirty pages to keep in memory buffers pools before a page cleaning operation takes place. The LRU_MIN_DIRTY specifies the lower limit percent of pages to be kept in those buffers.

These parameters also control how often page cleaning operations occur. If you set the LRUS to a small number, these queues can become full quickly, forcing a page cleaning operation. Also, if you set the LRU_MAX_DIRTY to a small percentage, this limit can be reached very fast and the page cleaning operation will be triggered. The LRU_MAX_DIRTY is useful for informing you when a page cleaning thread should stop its processing, preventing it to run forever, consuming CPU cycles, and forcing excessive disk movement.

To get the correct value for this parameter in your system, issue a **`onstat -R`** command and check the number of dirty pages. If it is consistently greater than LRU_MAX_DIRTY, you have to increase the number of LRUS or CLEANERS. As a initial guess, use 4 times the number of CPUs in your server for the LRUS. Then monitor the number of dirty pages with the **`onstat -R`** command. If the number of dirty pages does not decrease, the system can experience performance degradation, because threads needing a page cannot find free pages and have to start a foreground write and wait for a page. To reduce the number of foreground writes, increase the LRUS, CLEANERS, or set the LRU_MAX_DIRTY to a lower value. You can monitor the frequency of foreground writes with the **`onstat -F`** command.

CKPTINTVL

The CKPTINTVL parameter sets the interval between fuzzy checkpoints. Checkpoint is the process of flushing the modified data buffers from memory buffers to disk. Informix can use two kinds of checkpoints: full or fuzzy.

When a full checkpoint occurs, then operations on the database must be frozen, in order to achieve page consistency after the checkpoint. On a full checkpoint, all modified pages will be flushed to disk, MRU queues are emptied, and the database is said to be in a consistent state. Full checkpoints are not controlled by CKPTINTVL, but will happen whenever one of the following situations occurs:

- As the first step in the **`onmode -ky`** command.
- As a response to the **`onstat -c`** command or ISA checkpoint option.
- When upgrading or downgrading the database.
- When you perform a backup or restore operation.

- After a full or fast recovery.
- Just before the database switches to the next logical-log.

Fuzzy checkpoints are faster than full checkpoints, because it flushes only non-fuzzy modified pages. Non-fuzzy operations are:

- Operations on LOB columns
- Table modification operations
- Index creation operations

Fuzzy operations are DML operations like insert, delete, and update.

Pages containing non-fuzzy operations are all flushed to disk, even on a fuzzy checkpoint.

The following events will trigger a fuzzy checkpoint:

- The CKPTINTVL interval has elapsed and there are modifications in the database.
- The physical log become 75% full.
- The next logical-log contains most recent logical records.
- You add or drop a chunk or a dbspace.

A small value for this parameter is not necessary, because IDS will automatically start a checkpoint operation, whenever it is necessary. But a large value can slow the recovery time. IBM recommends a interval of 3 to 5 minutes for the initial value, which may increase up to 10 minutes, depending on your stable workload.

LOGSIZE, LOGFILES, and DYNAMIC_LOGS

The LOGSIZE parameter controls the size of the logical-log files, and LOGFILES controls the number of logical-logs available to Informix logical logging. The DYNAMIC_LOGS parameter enables the automatic log management for a Informix DS.

The value of LOGSIZE and the number of log files available affect the checkpoint frequency and the use of CPU and disk I/O. If the size of a log file is small, it will fill up quickly, forcing checkpoints to take place more often. You can set the LOGSIZE parameter to an initial value of 1500 for medium system and 10000 for large ones, or use the formula in the Example 16-7 on page 433.

Example 16-7 Estimating the LOGSIZE

```
LOGSIZE = ((connections * max rows to be updated in a single transaction *
average row size) / 1024) / LOGFILES
```

Also, if the number of LOGFILES available is not enough for the amount of logging required, a checkpoint will occurs. We recommend at least at least 10 logical log files for small systems and 700 or more to huge ERP installations.

The DYNAMIC_LOGS feature can help prevent frequent checkpoints, because IDS will automatically add a new logical-log file whenever it is necessary. We strongly recommend that you turn this feature on, because it will reduce drastically the possibility of your server running out of logical-log space.

PHYSFILE

Like the LOGSIZE parameter, the PHYSSIZE parameter affects checkpoint frequency, because if it become 75% free, a fuzzy checkpoint will be triggered. To set the value for the PHYSFILE parameter, use the formula in Example 16-8.

Example 16-8 Estimating the PHYSFILE parameter

```
PHYSFILE = (maximum number of users* (5 for no R-Tree index | 10 for R-Tree
index)* 4 * pagesize) / 1024
```

PSORT_NPROCS

The PSORT_NPROCS environment variable sets the number of threads to be used in parallel sort operations. If your system has large queries that use sort operations, as in an complex DSS environment or a complete OLTP system, you can improve the query processing by set this variable to a number greater than 1. A rule of thumb is to set this value to the larger of the following two values:

- 2
- Number of CPUs minus 1

After changing this value, check if the CPU activity is lower than I/O activity. If so, then increase the value and take new measures.

16.2.4 Tuning network usage

Informix uses the standard TCP protocol for client/server communications. The connections communications are managed by net virtual processors. Messages to be exchanged between the client and the server are held in the in TCP buffers. The default size of these buffers is 4 KB.

IFX_NETBUF_SIZE variable

You can improve your network throughput by increasing the size of the TCP buffers, using the IFX_NETBUF_SIZE environment variable. By using a larger buffer, applications may exchange larger blocks of data with the server. It will be particularly good in load operations, or in DSS or ERP solutions that demand a large amount of data to be processed at a time.

IFX_NETBUF_PVTPOOL_SIZE

Use this environment variable with the IFX_NETBUF_SIZE to improve the throughput of your database communication. The IFX_NETBUF_PVTPOOL_SIZE specifies the size of the private network buffers for a session. These buffers can help reduce network contention and CPU utilization.

NETTYPE

The NETTYPE parameter configure the protocols that your Informix will use for client/server communication. Use this parameter to set the number of poll threads and the number of connections each thread will handle. For example, to enable TCP communication using five poll threads, which will service 30 connections each, set:

```
NETTYPE onsoctcp,5,30,NET
```

In this example, the total number of connections allowed on the TCP protocol will be 150, and the poll threads will be managed by the **net** virtual processor. Remember that for small number of users, you may have gains in performance, if using the cpu virtual processor.

Tuning a database server is a constant task. In general, IDS performs very well with its default parameters. Of course, on huge ERP systems, and massive DSS environments, a lot of adjustments need to be made. This is the task for the DBA. We have pointed out some of the main parameters to change when tuning a Informix Dynamic Server. However, a number of other parameters exists and you can take a look on it. These parameters are:

- DD_HASHSIZE: Number of buckets in the dictionary cache
- DD_HASHMAX: Maximum of tables to be stored on bucket
- DS_HASHSIZE: Number of buckets in the distribution cache
- DS_POOLSIZE: Total column distribution statistics in the distribution cache
- STMT_CACHE: Enable/Disable the SQL cache
- STMT_CACHE_HITS: Threshold
- STMT_CACHE_NOLIMIT: Does not allow new entries when the cache is over

- STMT_CACHE_NUMPOOL: Number of memory SQL pools
- STMT_CACHE_SIZE: Size of cache in kilobytes
- PC_POOLSIZE: Total number of UDR in cache
- PC_HASHSIZE: Number of buckets in the UDR cache

16.3 More information

This section lists some sources of useful information about Informix and Informix tuning.

Books and papers

- *Performance Guide for Informix Dynamic Server 2000*, G251-0340 is the primary source on Informix tuning.
- *IBM Informix Administrator's Reference: Informix Extended Parallel Server*, G251-0369 has the syntax for all Informix parameters.
- *Administrator's Guide for IBM Informix Dynamic Server, Version 9.2*, G251-0332 is obligatory reading for Informix administrators.
- *ArcSDE for Informix Administration*, by Mark Harris, et al, is a good reference.
- *Tuning Informix for OLTP Workloads*, by Denis Sheahan is useful for OLTP specific information.
- *Informix Performance Tuning 2nd Edition,* by Elizabeth Suto is specific and well written.

Internet resources

- http://www.ibm.com/software/data/informix is the official Informix site.
- http://www.iiug.org is the site of the Informix International Users Group, a comprehensive site for Informix resources.
- http://www.oninit.com has plenty of useful information on tuning Informix.

Part 4

Appendixes

A

AIX performance tools summary

This appendix is a summary, meant as a quick reference, of the most important AIX commands that can help in monitoring and tuning RDBMS performance on AIX. Many of these commands, including the commands that update AIX parameters, require *root* permission to run. Only the most commonly used options are provided for each command. Please consult the following references for more detailed information related to monitoring AIX system performance:

- *AIX 5L Version 5.2 Commands Reference Volumes 1 to 6*
- *AIX 5L Version 5.2 Performance Management Guide*
- *AIX 5L Version 5.2 Performance Tools Guide and Reference*
- *AIX 5L Performance Tools Handbook,* SG24-6039
- *Understanding IBM @server pSeries Performance and Sizing*, SG24-4810

AIX standard documentation, can be found at:

`http://techsupport.services.ibm.com/server/library`

IBM Redbooks can be found at:

`http://www.redbooks.ibm.com`

Summary of performance bottlenecks

The guidelines contained in Table A-1 can be used to determine potential bottlenecks on your system and the referenced tools can be used to determine the current values of the thresholds. If the values are over one of the listed thresholds, it is possibly a feature of your configuration or application, so do not assume that a performance problem exists. The most reliable input on system response times most often comes from the users of the system.

Table A-1 Performance bottleneck thresholds

Bottleneck	Threshold
CPU bound	When %user + %sys is greater than 80% (**vmstat**).
Disk I/O bound	When %iowait is greater than 40%[1] (AIX 4.3.3 or later) (**vmstat**).
Application disk bound	When %tm_act is greater than 70% (**iostat**).
Paging space low	When paging space is greater than 70% active (**lsps -a**).
Paging bound	When paging logical volumes %tm_act is greater than 30% of the I/O (**iostat**) and paging activity is greater than 10 * the number of CPUs (**vmstat**).
Thrashing	Rising page outs, CPU wait, and run queue high (**vmstat** and **sar**).
[1] Advanced performance tools like **filemon** should be used in order to determine if the system is really I/O bound.	

File I/O monitor: filemon

The **filemon** command is used to monitor the performance of the file system and report the I/O activity on behalf of files, virtual memory segments, logical volumes, and physical volumes. The global reports list the most active files, segments, logical volumes, and physical volumes during the measured interval. They are shown at the beginning of the filemon report. By default, the logical file and virtual memory reports are limited to the 20 most active files and segments, respectively, as measured by the total amount of data transferred. If the -v flag has been specified, activity for all files and segments is reported. All information in the reports is listed from top to bottom as most active to least active. Note that **filemon** can also process off-line trace files.

Syntax

```
filemon -i file -o file -d -Tn -P -v _O levels
```

Example

The **`filemon -O all -o file.out`** command will start the tracing to file file.out. Start the workload (in a production system, workload is usually already present) and then stop trace activity with **`trcstop`**.

Reports

The reports in the file are:

- In the most active files report, the columns of the report are:

  #MBS Total number of megabytes transferred to/from file. The rows are sorted by this field, in decreasing order.

  #opns Number of times the file was opened during the measurement period.

  #rds Number of read system calls made against the file.

  #wrs Number of write system calls made against the file.

  file Name of the file (the full path name is in the detailed report).

  volume:inode Name of the logical volume that contains the file, and the file's i-node number. This field can be used to associate a file with its corresponding persistent segment, shown in the virtual memory I/O reports. This field may be blank, for example, for temporary files that are created and deleted during execution.

- In the most active segments report, the columns of the report are:

  #MBS Total number of megabytes transferred to/from segment. The rows are sorted by this field, in decreasing order.

  #rpgs Number of 4096-byte pages read into segment from disk (page-in).

  #wpgs Number of 4096-byte pages written from segment to disk (page-out).

  segid Internal ID of segment.

  segtype Type of segment: Working segment, persistent segment (local file), client segment (remote file), page table segment, system segment, or special persistent segments containing file system data (log, root

directory, .inode, .inodemap, .inodex, .inodexmap, .indirect, and .diskmap).

volume:inode For persistent segments, name of logical volume that contains the associated file and the file's inode number. This field can be used to associate a persistent segment with its corresponding file, shown in the file I/O reports. This field is blank for non-persistent segments.

Important: The virtual memory analysis tool **svmon** can be used to display more information about a segment, given its segment ID (segid), as follows:

```
svmon -S <segid>
```

- In the most active logical volumes report, the columns are:

  util Utilization of the volume (fraction of time busy). The rows are sorted by this field, in decreasing order.

  #rblk Number of 512-byte blocks read from the volume.

  #wblk Number of 512-byte blocks written to the volume.

  KB/sec Total transfer throughput, in kilobytes per second.

  volume Name of volume.

  description Contents of volume: Either a file system name or logical volume type (paging, jfslog, boot, or sysdump). Also, indicates if the file system is fragmented or compressed.

- In the most active physical volumes report, the columns are:

  util Utilization of the volume (fraction of time busy). The rows are sorted by this field, in decreasing order.

  #rblk Number of 512-byte blocks read from the volume.

  #wblk Number of 512-byte blocks written to the volume.

  KB/sec Total volume throughput, in kilobytes per second.

  volume Name of volume.

  description Type of volume, for example, 120 MB disk, 355 MB SCSI, or CD-ROM SCSI.

Disk I/O statistics: iostat

The **iostat** command is used to report CPU and I/O statistics for TTY devices, disks, and CD-ROMs. It is used to generate reports that can be used to change the system configuration to better balance the input/output load between physical disks.

Syntax

```
iostat interval count
```

Parameters

interval	Number of second between outputs
count	Number of times to output
-s flag	Adds summary line of all activity on the system
-a flag	Adds adapter summary lines

Example

The **iostat 10 20** command produces 20 lines output with 10 seconds between each.

Report

The report contains the following columns:

%tm_act	Percentage of time active
Kbps	Kilobytes per second transferred
tps	Transfers per second
msps	Milliseconds per seek (if available)
Kb_read	Total kilobytes read (likewise for write)

List attributes: lsattr

The **lsattr** command lists the attributes of AIX resources. The sys0 resource includes performance statistics. The output details AIX parameters including minpout and maxpout

Syntax

```
lsattr -El sys0
```

List configuration: lscfg

The **lscfg** command lists the details of the machine.

Syntax

```
lscfg [-v]
```

Parameter

-v	Shows details configuration of the machine, including part numbers and levels

List devices: lsdev

The **lsdev** command lists the details of the devices in the machine.

Syntax

```
lsdev -C
lsdev -Cc class
```

Parameters

-C or -Cc	Shows details for all devices or a specific device
class	Particular class (memory, disk, tape, and so on)

List licensed program product: lslpp

The **lslpp** command lists the packages, filesets, and files loaded in the AIX system.

Syntax

```
lslpp [-lLa <fileset>] [-f <fileset>] [-w <filename>]
```

Parameters

-l <fileset>	Outputs the most recent levels of the fileset
-La <fileset>	Outputs the full details and updates of the fileset
-f <fileset>	Outputs the files within a fileset
-w <file>	Outputs the fileset the file belongs too

Examples

`lslpp -l “bos.rte.*”`	Outputs levels of this fileset
`lslpp -La “bos.rte*”`	Outputs above, plus update information
`lslpp -f  “bos.rte”`	Outputs the files of this fileset
`lslpp -w “/usr/bin/vi”`	Outputs the fileset this file belongs too
`lslpp -w “*installp*”`	Outputs the files that contain any file name that includes the directory or filename installp

List logical volume: lslv

The **lslv** command lists the details of the logical volume and their placement on the disks.

Syntax

```
lslv [-l] <volume group name>
```

Parameter

-l	Shows placement on disk

Example

`lslv lv00`	Outputs details of the logical volume
`lslv -l lv00`	Outputs the placement of the logical volume on disks (physical volumes)

List paging space: lsps

The **lsps** command displays the characteristics of paging spaces, such as the paging space name, physical volume name, volume group name, size, percentage of the paging space used, and whether the space is active or inactive.

Syntax

```
lsps -a -s [paging space]
```

Parameters

-a	Displays all paging spaces
-s	Displays summary of all paging spaces

Example

lsps -a	Lists the characteristics of all paging spaces

List physical volume: lspv

The **lspv** command lists the details and contents of physical volumes (disks).

Syntax

```
lsvg [-p] [-l] <hdisk name>
```

Parameters

-p	Outputs contents and placement
-l	Outputs contents of the physical volume

Examples

lspv hdisk0	Outputs volume group names only
lsvg -l hdisk22	Outputs details about disk hdisk22
lsvg -p hdisk22	Outputs more details about disk hdisk22

List volume group: lsvg

The **lsvg** command lists the names of the volume group, their contents, and their details.

Syntax

```
lsvg [-i] [-l] <volume group name>
```

Parameters

-i	Takes volume group names from standard input
-l	Outputs the details of a volume group

Examples

lsvg	Outputs volume group names only
lsvg rootvg	Outputs the details of the volume group called rootvg
lsvg -l rootvg	Outputs details of volume group called rootvg

Logical volume manager statistic: lvmstat

The **lvmstat** command helps you identify and remedy hot-spot logical partitions (LPs) within your logical volumes. The gathering of statistics has to be enabled first with the **lvmstat** command for either a logical volume or an entire volume group. Once identified, use **migratelp** to move those hot-spot LPs elsewhere. Table A-2 lists the flag for the **lvmstat** command.

Table A-2 Parameters for lvmstat command

Flag	Meaning
-e	Enables the gathering of statistics about the logical volume.
-d	Disables the gathering of statistics
-l	Identifies the target logical volume
-v	Specifies the target volume group
-F	Specifies colon separated output

Inode check: ncheck

The **ncheck** command is used to display the i-node numbers and path names for file system files.

Syntax

```
ncheck [-a][-i inodenumber...] [-s] [filesystem]
```

Parameters

-a Lists all file systems, including those starting with '.' and '..'

-i inode Finds the file(s) with these inode numbers

-s Lists special and set UID files

Examples

ncheck -a / Lists all files in the '/' file system

ncheck -i 2194 /tmp Finds the name for inode 2194 in /tmp

Network monitor: netpmon

The **netpmon** command is used to monitor and report on network activities and network related CPU usage. It uses the AIX *system trace* to gather information. Trace activity can then be stopped with the **trcstop** command. Note that **netpmon** can also process off-line trace files.

Syntax

```
netpmon -o file -Tn -P -v -O report-type
```

Parameters

-o outputfile	Puts the output to a file, not stdout
-T n	Sets the output buffer size (default 64000)
-P	Forces the monitor process into pinned memory
-v	Verbose (default only top 20 processes)
-O	Allows the selection of one of the following options: cpu, dd (device driver), so (socket), nfs, or all

Example

```
netpmon -O all -o net.out
```

Network filesystem statistics: nfsstat

The **nfsstat** command lists the NFS statistic details.

Syntax

```
nfsstat
```

Online monitor: nmon

The **nmon** command is used to display all the AIX statistics on one screen and updates them every two seconds. When running, type `h` for further help on the options or type `q` to quit. An alternative mode saves the same data to a file that can be loaded into a spreadsheet.

Syntax

```
nmon [-?][-fdt]
```

Parameters

-?	Outputs help information on running **nmon**
-fdt	Runs in file output mode, including disk and top process statistics

Note: This tool is not supported by IBM and no warranty is given or implied by including this tool in this redbook. It is available to IBM at http://w3.aixncc.uk.ibm.com and to IBM Business Partners using PartnerInfo.

Network options: no

The **no** command lists the details of the network options.

Syntax

```
no -a
```

Parameter

-a	Outputs all options

Example

no -a	Outputs all network options

Process state: ps

The **ps** command is used to display the status of currently active processes.

Syntax

```
ps -a -e -f -l -p plist -u user -x
```

Parameters

-a	Writes information about all processes, except the session leaders and processes not associated with a terminal to standard output
-e	Lists every user's process
-f	Full listing
-l	Long listing
-p pid	Lists the process number N

-u user	Lists the specified user's processes (-u fred)

Examples

`ps -fu jim`	Lists user jim's processes in full
`ps -lt 04`	List all processes on terminal tty04
`ps -fe`	List all processes

Report

The following are the column headings:

PID/PPID	Process Identity and Parent Process Identity
S	State = Running, Sleeping, Waiting, Zombie, Terminating, Kernel, Intermediate
UID/USER	User Identity/User name
C	CPU recent use value (part of priority)
STIME	Start time of process
PRI	Priority (higher means less priority)
NI	Nice value (part of priority) default 20
ADDR	Address of stack (segment number)
SZ	Size of process in 1 KB pages
CMD	Command the user typed (-f to display more)
WCHAN	Event awaited for (kernel address)
TTY	Terminal processes connected to (- = none)
TIME	Minutes and seconds of CPU time consumed by the process
SSIZ	Size of kernel stack
PGIN	Number of pages paged in
SIZE	Virtual size of data section in 1 KB segments
RSS	Real memory (resident set) size of process 1 KB segments
LIM	Soft limit on memory xx=none
TSIZ	Size of text (shared text program) image
TRS	Size of resident set (real memory)
%CPU	Percentage of CPU used since started
%MEM	Percentage of real memory used

Reduced memory system simulator: rmss

The **rmss** command is used to simulate a system with various sizes of real memory that are smaller than the actual amount of physical memory installed on the machine.

Syntax

```
rmss -p -c M -r
```

Parameters

-p	Prints the current value
-c M	Changes to size M (in MB)
-r	Restores all memory to use

Examples

rmss -c 32	Changes available memory to 32 MB
rmss -r	Undo the above

System activity reporter: sar

The **sar** command is a standard UNIX command, used to gather statistical data about the system.

Syntax

```
sar -A -o savefile -f savefile -i secs -s HH[:MM[:SS]] -e HH[:MM[:SS]] -P ALL
interval number
```

Parameters

-A	All stats to be collected/reported
-o savefile	Collect stats to binary file
-f savefile	Report stats from binary file
-i secs	Report at secs interval from binary file
-s and -e	Report stats only between these times
-P ALL	Report on all CPU stats

Report outputs

- CPU related output

  %usr %sys Percent of time in user/kernel mode

  %wio %idle Percent of time waiting for disk I/O/idle

- Buffer Cache related output

  bread/s bwrit/s Block I/O per second

  lread/s lwrit/s Logical I/O per second

  pread/s pwrit/s Raw disk I/O (not buffer cached)

  %rcache %wcache Percentage hit on cache

- Kernel related output
  - exec/s fork/s sread/s swrite/s rchar/s wchars/s scall/s

    Calls of these system calls per second. exec and fork are used for process creation. sread/swrite system calls (files, raw, tty or network). rchar/wchar the numbers of characters transferred. scall is the total number of system calls per second.
  - msg/s sema/s

    Inter-process communication (IPC) for messages and semaphores.
  - kexit/s ksched/s kproc-ov/s

    Process exits, process switches, and process overload (hit proc thresholds).
  - runq-sz

    Average process on run queue.
  - %runocc

    Percentage of time with process on queue.
  - swap-sz

    Average process waiting for page in.
  - %swap-occ

    Percentage of time with process on queue.
  - cycles/s

    Number of page replace searches of all pages.
  - faults/s

    Number of page faults.

– slots

  Number of free pages on paging spaces.

– odio/s

  Number of non-paging disk I/Os per second.

– file-ov, proc-ov

  Number of times these tables overflow per second.

– file-sz inode-sz proc-sz

  Entries in the tables.

– pswch/s

  Process switches per second.

– canch/s outch/s rawch/s

  Characters per second on terminal lines.

– rcvin/s xmtin/s

  Receive and transmit interrupts per second.

Examples

sar 10 100	Reports now at 10 second intervals
sar -A -o fred 10 6	Collects data into fred
sar -A -f fred	Reports on the data
sar -A -f fred -s 10:30 -e 10:45	Reports for 15 minutes starting at 10:30 a.m.
sar -A -f fred -i60	Reports on a one minute interval rather that 10 seconds as collected
sar -P ALL 1 10	Reports on each CPU or the next 10 seconds

Process scheduling tuning: schedtune

The **schedtune** command is used to set the parameters for the CPU scheduler and Virtual Memory Manager processing.

Syntax

```
schedtune -h sys -p proc -w wait -m multi -e grace -f ticks -t time_slice -D
```

This is the default.

Parameters

-h 6	Sets system wide criteria for when process suspension begins and ends (thrashing)
-p 4	Sets per-process criteria for determining process suspension beginning and end
-w 1	Seconds to wait before trashing ended
-e 2	Seconds exempt after suspension
-f 10	Clock tick waited after fork failure
-t 0	Clock tick interrupts before dispatcher called
-D	Restore default values

Examples

`schedtune -t5`	Sets time slice to 50 ticks
`schedtune`	Reports current settings

System virtual memory monitor: svmon

The **`svmon`** command is used to capture and analyze a snapshot of virtual memory.

Syntax

```
svmon -G -Pnsa pid... -Pnsa[upg][count] -S sid... -i secs count
```

Parameters

-G	Global report.
-P[nsa] pid..	Process report: n=non-sys, s=system, or a=all (both).
-S[nsa][upg][x]	Segment report nsa as above, plus u = real memory, p = pinned, g = paging, and x = top x items.
-S sid...	Segment report on particular segments.
-i secs count	Repeats report at interval second and count times.
-D sid...	Detailed report.
-W	Used to collect statistics for either an entire superclass or only a specific subclass.
-e	Reports the statistics for the subclass of a superclass. It only applies to superclasses or tiers.
-T	Reports the statistics of all the classes in a tier.

-Tx	Reports all the superclasses segment statistics of the specific tier.

Report

The following are the column headings of the report:

size	In pages (4096)
inuse	In use
free	Not in use (including rmss pages)
pin	Pinned (locked by application)
work	Pages in working segments
pers	Pages in persistent segments
clnt	Pages in client segments
pg space	Paging space

Examples

`svmon -G`	Global/General statistics
`svmon -Pa 215`	Processes report for process 215
`svmon -Ssu 10`	Top ten system segments in real-mem order
`svmon -D 340d`	Detailed report on a particular segment

topas

The **`topas`** command is a real-time performance monitoring tool. It has the following flags:

-d	Specifies the number of disks to monitor
-h	Displays help info
-i	Sets monitoring interval in seconds
-n	Specifies the number of hot network interfaces to monitor
-p	Specifies the number of hot processes to monitor
-w	Specifies the number of WLM classes to monitor
-c	Specifies the number of hot CPUs to monitor
-P	For full-screen process display
-W	For full-screen WLM class display

Virtual memory management statistics: vmstat

The **vmstat** command is used to report statistics about kernel threads in the run and wait queues, memory, paging, disks, interrupts, system calls, context switches, and CPU activity. If the **vmstat** command is used without any options or only with the interval and optionally, the count parameter, like **vmstat 2**, then the first line of numbers is an average since system reboot.

Syntax

```
vmstat interval count
```

Parameters

interval	Number of seconds between outputs.
count	Number of times to output.
-i	Outputs a report with the new columns fi and fo; these columns indicate the number of file pages in (fi) and out (fo). In this report, the re and y columns are not displayed. A new p column displays the number of threads waiting for a physical I/O operation.
-t	Shows a time stamp at the end of each line.

Report

The column headings in the report are:

r	Number of processes on run queue per second
b	Number of processes awaiting paging in per second
avm	Active virtual memory pages in paging space
fre	Real memory pages on the free list
re	Page reclaims; free, but claimed before being reused
pi	Paged in (per second)
po	Paged out (per second)
fr	Pages freed (page replacement per second)
sr	Pages per second scanned for replacement
cy	Complete scans of page table
in	Device interrupts per second
sy	System calls per second
cs	CPU context switches per second

us	User CPU time percentage
sys	System CPU time percentage
id	CPU idle percentage (nothing to do)
wa	CPU waiting for pending local Disk I/O

Example

`vmstat 10 20`	20 lines output with 10 seconds between each

Special consideration

There are special considerations about **`vmstat`** on AIX Version 4.3.2 and earlier versions and AIX Version 4.3.3.

AIX Version 4.3.3 contains an enhancement to the method used to compute the percentage of CPU time spent waiting on disk I/O (wio time). The method used in AIX Version 4.3.2 and earlier versions of AIX can give an inflated view of wio time on SMPs in some circumstances. The wio time is reported by the commands **`sar`** (%wio), **`vmstat`** (wa), and **`iostat`** (%iowait).

Method used in AIX Version 4.3.2 and earlier AIX versions

At each clock interrupt on each processor (100 times a second in AIX), a determination is made as to which of four categories (usr/sys/wio/idle) to place the last 10 ms of time. If the CPU was busy in usr mode at the time of the clock interrupt, then usr gets the clock tick added into its category. If the CPU was busy in kernel mode at the time of the clock interrupt, then the sys category gets the tick. If the CPU was *not* busy, then a check is made to see if *any* I/O to disk is in progress. If any disk I/O is in progress, then the wio category is incremented. If *no* disk I/O is in progress and the CPU is not busy, then the idl category gets the tick. The inflated view of *wio* time results from all idle CPUs being categorized as wio, regardless of the number of threads waiting on I/O. For example, IBM @server pSeries with just one thread doing I/O could report over 90% wio time regardless of the number of CPUs it has.

Method used in AIX Version 4.3.3

The change in AIX Version 4.3.3 is to only mark an idle CPU as wio if an outstanding I/O was started on that CPU. This method can report much lower wio times when just a few threads are doing I/O and the system is otherwise idle. For example, an IBM @server pSeries with four CPUs and one thread doing I/O will report a maximum of 25% of wio time. An IBM @server pSeries with 12 CPUs and one thread doing I/O will report a maximum of 8.3% wio time.

Virtual memory tuning: vmtune

The **vmtune** command is used to modify the AIX Virtual Memory Manager (VMM) parameters for the purpose of changing the behavior of the memory management subsystem.

Syntax

```
vmtune -p min -P max -f min -F max -r min -R max
```

Parameters

-p min	Min percentage of memory reserved for file pages (default is 20%)
-P max	Max percentage of memory reserved for file pages (default is 80%)
-f min	Number of pages on free list, below which page stealing Starts (Default Is 120)
-f Max	Number of pages on free list, above which page stealing stops (default is 128)
-r min	Min number of pages to be read ahead after sequential access is detected
-R max	Max number of pages to be read ahead after sequential access is detected

B

Vital monitoring SQLs and commands

This appendix contains a list of vital DB2 UDB, Oracle, and IBM Informix SQL statements and commands that commonly used on a day-by-day monitoring task. These commands do not represent all the possible combinations, but they suggest the easiest way to collect the basic information on an RDBMS.

The sections are:

DB2 UDB

DB2 UDB provides several commands that query the catalog tables and the control files in order to retrieve a fast and valuable information output for the database administrator. There are five ways of obtaining this information:

- Command line querying, for example, using LIST or GET SNAPSHOT
- Snapshot monitor SQL table functions
- Using the snapshot monitor Application Programming Interface
- Using the GUI tools, for example, Health Centre and Memory Visualizer
- Event Monitor

The rest of this section provides examples of the first two methods. For further detailed information on all of the methods outlined above, refer to the *IBM DB2 Universal Database System Monitor Guide and Reference*, SC09-4847.

List the existing tables on a database

```
list tables for all
```

or

```
Select substr(tabschema,1,8) as "Qualified Name",
substr(tabname,1,50) as "Table name",
CASE type
             WHEN 'A' THEN 'Alias'
             WHEN 'H' THEN 'Hierarchy Table'
             WHEN 'N' THEN 'Nickname'
             WHEN 'S' THEN 'Summary Table'
             WHEN 'T' THEN 'Table'
             WHEN 'U' THEN 'Typed Table'
             WHEN 'V' THEN 'View'
             WHEN 'W' THEN 'Typed View'
END as "Table Type",
CASE status
             WHEN 'N' THEN 'Normal'
             WHEN 'C' THEN 'Check Pending'
             WHEN 'X' THEN 'Inoperative'
END as "Table Status"
from syscat.tables
```

or

```
select from table(snapshot_table('sample',-1)) as snapshot_table
```

Describe the structure of the columns in a table

```
describe table schema.table_name show detail
```

Describe the indexes defined in a table and their structure

```
describe indexes for table schema.table_name show detail
```

Describe structure of the columns within a SELECT statement

```
describe select column1, column2,..., columnX from schema.table_name
```

List all the tablespaces of a database

```
list tablespaces
```

or

```
Select tbspace as "Table Space Name",
tbspaceid as "Identifier",
CASE tbspacetype
             WHEN 'S' THEN 'System Managed Space'
             WHEN 'D' THEN 'Database Managed Space'
             END as "Table Space Type",
CASE datatype
WHEN 'A' THEN 'Permanent Data'
WHEN 'L' THEN 'Long Data'
WHEN 'T' THEN 'Temporary Table'
END as "Type of Data Stored"
 from syscat.tablespaces
```

or

```
select * from table(snapshot_tbs(‘sample’,-1)) as snapshot_tbs
```

List tablespace name, ID number, size, and space consumption

```
list tablespaces show detail
```

List the tablespace containers

```
list tablespace containers for tablespace_id show detail
```

Enable all monitor switches

```
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING bufferpool on;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING lock on;
```

```
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING sort on;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING statement on;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING table on;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING uow on;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING timestamp on;
```

Disable all monitor switches

```
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING bufferpool off;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING lock off;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING sort off;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING statement off;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING table off;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING uow off;
UPDATE MONITOR SWITCHES USING timestamp on;
```

Check the monitor status

```
get monitor switches
```

or

```
select * from table(snapshot_switches('sample',-1)) as snapshot_switches
```

Reset the monitor counters for a specific database

```
reset monitor for database database_name
```

Show the locks existing on a database

```
get snapshot for locks on database_name
```

or

```
select * from table(snapshot_lock('sample',-1)) as snapshot_lock
```

List application number, status, idle time, and AIX processes

```
db2 get snapshot for application on database_name | grep -E
"handle|thread|idle|status"
```

or

```
list applications show detail
```

(Lists the application number, the current status, the idle time, and the associated AIX processes.)

or

```
select * from table (snapshot_appl('sample',-1)) as snapshot_appl
```

List connected and effectively executing users

Lists the users that are connected to a database and that are effectively executing:

```
db2 get snapshot for database manager | grep connections
```

Display the amount of memory being used for sort operations

```
db2 get snapshot for database manager | grep Sort
```

Display the number of deadlocks and lock escalations

Displays the number of deadlock and lock escalations for each application.

```
db2 get snapshot for applications on database_name | grep -E "Application
Handle|Deadlock|escalation"
```

Display the number of attempted SQL COMMIT statements

```
db2 get snapshot for all on database_name | grep "Commit statements attempted"
```

Oracle

Oracle SQL commands can be issued directly using Server Manager or SQLPlus, or SQLWorksheet in Oracle 8i and the SQLPlus and SQLWorksheet in Oracle 9i. Another way is to use predefined input files that generate reports that make the output easier to read and understand, and thus facilitate the monitoring process.

Oracle number of transactions

This query gives you the number of transaction commits/aborts and other useful data from this well hidden internal Oracle table.

```
SELECT value,name
FROM v$sysstat
WHERE statistic# <7 ;
```

Buffer cache hit ratio: Manual

```
select name, value
from v$sysstat
where name in ('db block gets', 'consistent gets', 'physical reads');
```

Then calculate hit ratio as:

```
1 - ( physicalreads/(db block gets + consistent gets)) *100
```

Buffer cache hit ratio: Automatic

This outputs the hit ratio directly, but please use a script to run this SQL statement, as it is complex and hard to type in correctly:

```
select (1 - ( sum(decode(name, 'physical reads', value, 0))/
( sum(decode(name, 'db block gets', value, 0)) +
sum(decode(name, 'consistent gets', value, 0)))))
* 100 "Hit Ratio"
from v$sysstat;
```

Shared pool free memory

This outputs used memory from the shared pool, so compare it to the shared_pool_size init.ora parameters:

```
select *
from v$sgastat
where name = 'free memory';
```

Redo log buffer too small

This outputs the number of times the redo log buffer was found to be full and the transaction waited for free space:

```
select name, value
from v$sysstat
where name = 'redo log space requests';
```

Rollback segment

This outputs the number of extents, their size, and the usage of the rollback segments. If WAITS is more than one, then more rollback segments are needed. XACTS is the number of transactions actually using the rollback.

```
select name, extents, rssize, xacts, waits, gets, optsize, status, status
from v$rollname a, v$rollstat b
where a.usn = b.usn;
```

Oracle nested explain plan

```
select lpad(' ',2*level)||operation||' '||options||' '||object_name  query_plan
from plan_table where statement_id = 'xx'
connect by prior id = parent_id and statement_id = 'xx'
start with id =1;
```

Oracle report on tablespaces

```
spool tablespace.lst
set pagesize 999;

ttitle center 'TableSpaces' skip 1 -
       center '===========' skip 2;
column tablespace_name heading 'TableSpace' format A12;
column initial_extent heading 'Initial|Extent' format 999,999,999;
column next_extent heading 'Next|Extent' format 999,999,999;
column min_extents heading 'Min|Extent' format 999;
column max_extents heading 'Max|Extent' format 999;
column pct_increase heading '%|Increase' format 999;
column status heading 'Status' format A8;

select
 TABLESPACE_NAME,
 INITIAL_EXTENT,
 NEXT_EXTENT,
 MIN_EXTENTS,
 MAX_EXTENTS,
 PCT_INCREASE,
 STATUS
from user_tablespaces;
ttitle off;

ttitle center 'TableSpaces Sizes' skip 1 -
       center '=================' skip 2;
select TABLESPACE_NAME,sum(BYTES) from dba_data_files group by TABLESPACE_NAME;
```

Oracle report on tables

```
spool table.lst
set pagesize 999;

ttitle center 'Table Sizes' skip 1 -
       center '===========' skip 2;
column table_name heading 'Table' format A18;
column tablespace_name heading 'TableSpace' format A10;
column initial_extent heading 'Initial|Extent' format 999,999,999;
column next_extent heading 'Next|Extent' format 999,999,999;
```

```
column NUM_ROWS heading 'Num_rows' format 9,999,999,999;
column AVG_ROW_LEN heading 'Avg-Len' format 99,999;
column BLOCKS heading 'Blocks' format 99,999,999;
column EMPTY_BLOCKS heading 'Empties' format 999,999;
column DEGREE heading 'Degree' format A10;
column INSTANCES heading 'Instances' format A10;
column min_extents heading 'Min|Extent' format 999;
column max_extents heading 'Max|Extent' format 999;
column pct_increase heading '%|Increase' format 999;
column status heading 'Status' format A8;

select
 TABLE_NAME,
 TABLESPACE_NAME,
 NUM_ROWS,
 BLOCKS,
 EMPTY_BLOCKS,
 AVG_ROW_LEN
from user_tables;
ttitle off;

ttitle center 'Tables Defaults' skip 1 -
       center '===============' skip 2;
select
 TABLE_NAME,
 DEGREE,
 INSTANCES,
 INITIAL_EXTENT,
 NEXT_EXTENT
from user_tables;
ttitle off;
```

Oracle report on indexes

```
spool index.lst
set pagesize 999;

column index_name heading 'Index' format A20;
column table_owner heading 'Owner' format A10;
column table_name heading 'Table' format A18;
column table_type heading 'TableType' format A18;
column tablespace_name heading 'TableSpace' format A12;
column Uniqueness heading 'Unique' format A10;
column Blevel heading 'Blevel' format 999;
column Leaf_blocks heading 'Leaf|blocks' format 99999999;
column distinct_keys heading 'Distinct|Keys' format 9999999999;
column Status heading 'Status' format A8;
column column_name heading 'Column' format A18;
```

```
column column_position heading 'Position' format 999;
column column_length heading 'Length' format 999;

ttitle center 'Indexes - Info' skip 1 -
       center '==============' skip 2;
select INDEX_NAME,
-- TABLE_OWNER,
   TABLE_NAME,
   TABLE_TYPE,
   TABLESPACE_NAME
from user_indexes
order by TABLE_NAME;

ttitle center 'Indexes - Sizes' skip 1 -
       center '===============' skip 2;
select INDEX_NAME,
   BLEVEL,
   UNIQUENESS,
   LEAF_BLOCKS,
   DISTINCT_KEYS,
   STATUS
from user_indexes
order by TABLE_NAME;

ttitle center 'Indexes - Columns' skip 1 -
       center '=================' skip 2;
select
 INDEX_NAME,
 TABLE_NAME,
 COLUMN_NAME,
 COLUMN_POSITION,
 COLUMN_LENGTH
from user_ind_columns
order by TABLE_NAME,index_name,COLUMN_POSITION;
ttitle off;
```

Oracle report on database files

```
spool file.lst
set pagesize 999;

ttitle center 'Database Files' skip 1 -
       center '==============' skip 2;
column tablespace_name heading 'TableSpace' format A12;
column file_name heading 'File' format A30;
column bytes heading 'Bytes' format 999,999,999,999;
column blocks heading 'Blocks' format 999,999,999;
column status heading 'Status' format A12;
```

```
select
 TABLESPACE_NAME, FILE_NAME, BYTES, STATUS
  FROM DBA_DATA_FILES
  ORDER BY TABLESPACE_NAME;
ttitle off;
```

Oracle report on extents

```
spool extents.lst
set pagesize 999;

ttitle center 'Tablespace Extents' skip 1 -
       center '==================' skip 2;
column tablespace_name heading 'TableSpace' format A12;
column segment_name heading 'Segment|Name' format A20;
column segment_type heading 'Seg.|Type' format A9;
column extent_id heading 'ID' format 999;
column bytes heading 'Bytes' format 9999999999;
column blocks heading 'Blocks' format 999999;

select
 TABLESPACE_NAME,
 SEGMENT_NAME,
 SEGMENT_TYPE,
 EXTENT_ID,
 BYTES,
 BLOCKS
from user_extents
order by TABLESPACE_NAME;
ttitle off;
```

Oracle report on parameters

```
spool parameter.lst
set pagesize 999;

ttitle center 'Non-Default Parameters' skip 1 -
       center '======================' skip 2;
col num format 9999 head 'Param#'
col name format a45 head 'Name' wrap
col type form 9999 head 'Type'
col value form a45 wrap head 'Value'
col isdefault form a9 head 'Default?'

select name, value
from v$parameter where isdefault = 'FALSE'
order by name;
```

```
ttitle off;
```

Oracle report on free space

```
spool free.lst
set pagesize 999;

ttitle center 'Free Space' skip 1 -
       center '==========' skip 2;
column tablespace_name heading 'TableSpace' format A12;
column file_id heading 'File|id' format 999999;
column block_id heading 'Block|id' format 999999;
column bytes heading 'Bytes' format 999,999,999,999;
column sum(bytes) heading 'Bytes' format 999,999,999,999;
column blocks heading 'Blocks' format 999,999,999;
column sum(blocks) heading 'Blocks' format 999,999,999;

select
 TABLESPACE_NAME,
 sum(BYTES),
 sum(BLOCKS)
from user_free_space
group by TABLESPACE_NAME;
ttitle off;

rem Full details but could be a large output
select
TABLESPACE_NAME,
FILE_ID,
BLOCK_ID,
BYTES,
BLOCKS
from user_free_space;
```

IBM Informix

Informix SQL commands can be issued using the DBAccess, ISA, or Server Studio JE utilities. These utilities allow you get a large number of information on the status of the database. Also, Informix provides a easy way to get information by using the command line utilities like **onstat**, **onmode**, **oncheck**, and so on.

List all the users connected

```
onstat -u
```

Monitor a specific session

```
onstat -g ses <pid>
```

Monitor locks

onstat -k, onstat -X

or use the following query:

```
select tabname, owner, waiter from syslocks where waiter is not null;
```

How long an user is connected

```
select sid, username, hostname,
extend(current - connected units second, hour to second)
from syssessions;
```

Statistics on Virtual Processors

```
select vpid, txt, usecs_user, usecs_sys, num_ready
from sysvplst, flags_text
where sysvplst.flags != 6
and sysvplst.class = flags_text.flags
and flags_text.tabname = "sysvplst";
```

Tables in temporary dbspaces

```
select dbsname,tabname
from sysptprof, sysdbspaces
where dbsnum = trunc(partnum/1048576)
and name = "TEMPDBS"
order by 1
```

List the busiest tables

```
select fname, name, dbsname, tabname, pagreads+pagwrites pagtots
from sysptprof, syschunks, sysdbspaces, sysptnhdr
where trunc(hex(sysptprof.partnum)/1048576) = chknum
and syschunks.dbsnum = sysdbspaces.dbsnum
and sysptprof.partnum = sysptnhdr.partnum
and (pagreads+pagwrites) != 0
order by 5 desc
```

Get the disk I/O for a table

```
select dbsname, tabname, sum(pagreads), sum(pagwrites)
from sysptprof
where tabname = “TABNAME”
group by dbsname, tabname
```

Get the disk I/O for a session

```
select syssesprof.sid, isreads, iswrites, isrewrites, isdeletes
from syssesprof, syssessions
where syssesprof.sid = syssessions.sid
```

Get the disk I/O for a chunk

```
onstat -D
```

or

```
select name, chknum, "Primary", reads, writes, pagesread, pageswritten
from syschktab, sysdbstab
where syschktab.dbsnum = sysdbstab.dbsnum
union all
select name, chknum, "Mirror", reads, writes, pagesread, pageswritten
from sysmchktab, sysdbstab
where sysmchktab.dbsnum = sysdbstab.dbsnum
order by 1,2
```

Get the space left in a chunk

```
onstat -d
```

or

```
select name, syschfree.chknum, syschfree.extnum, syschfree.start,
syschfree.leng
from sysdbspaces, syschunks, syschfree
where sysdbspaces.dbsnum = syschunks.dbsnum
and syschunks.chknum = syschfree.chknum
order by 1,2
```

Get the space left in a dbspace

```
onstat -d
```

or

```
select name, sum(chksize) pages, sum(nfree) free
```

```
from sysdbspaces, syschunks
where sysdbspaces.dbsnum = syschunks.dbsnum
group by 1
```

Get the total size of dbspaces

```
select name, count(*) chunks, sum(chksize), sum(nfree)
from syschunks, sysdbspaces
where syschunks.dbsnum = sysdbspaces.dbsnum
group by 1
```

Get the total size of the database

```
select sum(ti_nptotal), sum(ti_npused)
from systabnames, systabinfo
where partnum = ti_partnum
order by 1
```

Get the page size

```
onstat -b
```

Get the blobpage size

```
select prtpage/<PAGESIZE>
from sysdbstab
where bitval(flags,'0x10') = 1
```

Get information about the log files

```
select number ,uniqid ,size ,used ,
bitval(syslogfil.flags ,'0x1' ) is_used,
bitval(syslogfil.flags ,'0x2' ) is_current,
bitval(syslogfil.flags ,'0x4' ) is_backed_up,
bitval(syslogfil.flags ,'0x8' ) is_new,
bitval(syslogfil.flags ,'0x10' ) is_archived,
bitval(syslogfil.flags ,'0x20' ) is_temp,
syslogfil.flags,name
from syslogfil,syschunks,sysdbstab where (syslogfil.number > 0)
and trunc((hex(physloc)/1048576))=chknum
and syschunks.dbsnum = sysdbstab.dbsnum
```

C

Reporting performance problems

In this chapter, we detail what to do in case of a performance problem that you cannot solve or you think is not going to be solved by performance tuning of the IBM @server pSeries hardware, the AIX operating system, the database, or the application. The structure is as follows:

- "Perfpmr: The performance data collection tool" on page 474 discusses how to get and use **perfpmr** to collect performance data.
- "Before you have a problem" on page 475 shows what you can do today in order to drastically reduce the time it will take to resolve a performance problem.
- "Raising a Problem Management Record (PMR)" on page 476 gives information about how to raise a PMR in the most effective way.
- "Common sources of database performance PMRs" on page 479 lists common issues that cause problems.
- "Avoiding the next performance crisis" on page 480 aims to reduce the chances of a problem and to get the problem resolved sooner.

Note: This chapter assumes you have a support contract with IBM or an IBM Business Partner, so that you can open a Problem Management Record (PMR) to resolve the problem.

Perfpmr: The performance data collection tool

As most performance problems are complex, support will want a lot of information to allow them to check all the likely causes. To help in this task, AIX has a tool used to collect this data called perfpmr. Until AIX Version 4.3.2, this was supplied with your copy of AIX and can be found in the bos.perf.pmr fileset. Improvements are made to this tool regularly, based on experience of tracking down performance problems. From AIX 4.3.3 onwards, perfpmr has to be obtained from the ftp site as described in the following section.

Get the latest version of perfpmr

To get the latest copy of perfpmr, go to the following URL:

`ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/aix/tools/perftools/perfpmr/`

Then take the link to the version of AIX that is on the machine with the problem. Read the readme file and print it. Then download the perfpmr package; it is roughly 150 KB in size. Copy it to the problem machine and follow the instructions in the readme file.

Some parts of the perfpmr data collection will only work if the bos.adt.samples and perfagent.tools filesets are loaded onto the machine. If these are missing (check with **`lslpp -l bos.adt.samples perfagent.tools`**), then less information will be collected. This fileset can be found on your AIX media and can be installed using **`smitty installp`**. We recommend loading this fileset.

If you are running the version from the ftp site, place the downloaded file in a sensible directory as the root user before running **`perfpmr`**. Uncompress the file with the **`uncompress`** command, unpack the files with the **`tar`** command, and add that directory to your PATH variable. Also, note that this version is executed with the **`perfpmr.sh`** command and the output goes into the current directory.

A simple collect for 10 minutes (600 seconds) would need the following:

```
mkdir /tmp/perfdata
cd /tmp/prefdata
perfpmr.sh 600
```

Please make sure that there is enough space in the file system where you collect the performance data (in our example, it would be /tmp). Trace outputs can get huge, particularly on busy SMP systems. Allow a minimum of 25 MB up to 50 MB. On very large and busy systems, you might need to allow more space.

Once finished, it is worth looking in the *.sum files, as these are the summary of the configuration and performance data. The config.sum file has the configuration details and can be useful in disaster recovery, as it has all the file

systems, volume group, and logical volume details. The monitor.sum file contains a summary of the performance data.

AIX media supplied version

If you are using the AIX media supplied version, then do the following as the root user before running **perfpmr**:

```
export PATH=$PATH:/usr/sbin/perf/pmr
```

This version is executed using the **perfpmr** command and will place the results in /var/tmp/perf.

However, it is not recommended to use this version of perfpmr, because it collects less data than the latest version from the ftp server. The shipment of the bos.perf.pmr fileset is discontinued with AIX Version 4.3.3 and further releases.

Before you have a problem

One of the hardest issues in resolving a performance problem is determining what has changed on the machine that has caused the problem. This can be made simple by comparing the configuration and performance data of the machine with and without the problem. This can only be achieved when you have captured the performance data before the problem arises.

The Austin Performance team therefore recommends that customers collect perfpmr data before and after making changes to the system. Any change to the following can affect performance:

- Hardware configuration: Adding, removing, or changing things, such as how the disks are connected
- AIX: Installing or updating a fileset, installing PTFs, and changing parameters
- Database: Installing new versions and fixes
- Database: Configuration or changing data placement
- Database tuning
- Application changes
- Tuning options in AIX, RDBMS, or applications

One option is to run **perfpmr** before and after each change. The alternative is running **perfpmr** at regular intervals like once a month and saving the output. When a problem is found, the previous capture can be used for comparison. It is worth collecting a series of perfpmr outputs in order to support the diagnostics of a possible performance problem.

The Austin Performance team also recommends collecting perfpmr data for various periods of the working day, week, or month when performance is likely to be an issue. For example, you may have workload peaks:

- In the middle of the mornings for online users
- During a late night batch run
- During the end of month processing
- During major data loads.

Collect perfpmr data for each of these peaks in workload, as a performance problem might only cause problems during one of these periods and not during other times.

Raising a Problem Management Record (PMR)

If you are going to raise a problem using your support channel, then it is worth preparing, in advance, the information that you will be asked to supply to allow the problem to be investigated. Your local support people will attempt to solve your performance problem directly with you and quickly. But if it is a complex problem (and performance problems frequently are), then it will eventually be escalated to IBM Austin, the home of the IBM @server pSeries and AIX development.

First, note that PMRs will be given a severity:

Severity 1	The production system is not available and someone, for example, the system administrator, has to be available for assistance 24 hours a day.
Severity 2	The system has reduced function and someone will be available during the day.
Severity 3	All other problems.
Severity 4	Requests for information.

So only request a Severity 1 problem if you are willing to have people available 24 hours a day to assist the gathering of information and implementing tools and a solution. Also make sure that you supply:

- The name of the technical person working on this problem who has root access to the machine involved
- The telephone number
- An e-mail address
- FTP access to the Internet for downloading updates

- Access to fixdist for downloading PTFs

Next, get the latest version of perfpmr (see “Perfpmr: The performance data collection tool” on page 474) and collect the performance information. You can then supply this data when requested and even volunteer to provide this information when opening the PMR in order to save time. Often, support will ask you to ftp the **perfpmr** output to them.

Three further ways you can help to get the problem resolved faster are:

1. Provide a clear written statement of the problem but be sure to separate the symptoms and facts from the theories, ideas, and your own conclusions. PMRs that report "the system is slow" are going to require a lot further investigation to simply work out what you mean by *slow*, how it is measured, and what is acceptable performance.

   You should try to provide all the information detailed in Table C-1 at the start. This will save a great deal of time.
2. Confess immediately everything that has changed on the system in the weeks before the problem; missing something that changed will block possible directions for the team to investigate and will only delay finding a resolution. Do not hide facts because you think they should not affect performance until later. If all the facts are available, the performance team can eliminate the unimportant ones quickly.
3. Supply information on the correct machine. In very large sites, it is easy to accidentally collect the data on the wrong machine; this makes it very hard to investigate the problem.

16.3.1 PMR information

This table is to help you gather all the information about the machine, configuration, and performance to allow the experts to investigate the problem without spending time asking lots of questions. You might want to photocopy this table and fill in the answers.

Table C-1 PMR basic information

Area	Details	Your answers
IBM @server pSeries basics	Model.	
	RAM.	
	Number and type of disks (include any documentation you have on the disk layout).	

Area	Details	Your answers
Versions	AIX.	
	Database.	
	Application.	
Workload type	OLTP, DSS, Batch, Web, or other.	
Network	Number and type of networks.	
Symptoms	System error log entries.	
	Database error log entries.	
	Error messages.	
	Original response time and current response time.	
	Is everything slow or just some things?	
	Does the slow behavior also occur when the system is idle?	
	Original throughput and current throughput.	
	Do processes hang?	
	Does the system hang or did it crash? How did you recover from this situation?	
Can the problem be demonstrated with the execution of a specific command or sequence of events? If client/server, can the problem be demonstrated when run just locally on the server?		
System dump	Set up a system dump or even have one available.	
Normal behavior	State what you normally expect.	
Performance	CPU percent busy.	
	SMP: Are all CPUs used?	
	Disks average percent busy.	
	Disks top disk percent busy.	

Area	Details	Your answers
Actions	What you have tried?	
	Anything you changed?	
	Any ideas you have.	
	Anything unusual you have seen.	
	Does rebooting the system make the problem disappear for a while?	

Common sources of database performance PMRs

Below are the causes of the most common issues raised as database performance PMRs to the IBM Austin team. We include this list to help you avoid one of these problems:

- Maximize the database's use of real memory but do not cause paging on the system. Also, lowering the AIX file system buffer cache maximum size can help.
- Incremental upgrades and changes allow the quickest diagnosis.
  - Do not upgrade AIX, the database, and the application all at once.
  - Do not change software at the same time you change hardware configurations, such as the disk layout.
  - Do not change software at the same time you change database parameters or data placement.
- AIX databases generally benefit from using raw devices, if this does not cause backup problems.
- SSA disks are not faster than SCSI disks. The SSA subsystem supports more disks, are easier to configure and manage, and the interface allows more throughput, but the disks are the same.
- RAID 5 frequently has poor write performance but may be difficult to notice initially because the write cache on the device might help for a certain amount of updates. However, this problem is solved to a large extent if the latest SSA Advanced RAID adapters with the fast-write cache option are used.
- SMP systems allow higher capacity, but single threaded transactions will run no faster than one processor allows. To make use of SMP systems, single

large tasks need to be broken down into parts that can be executed concurrently to make use of the whole machine.

Avoiding the next performance crisis

Once the problem is resolved, try to think of a way in which this situation can be avoided next time.

For example:

- Use a test system to check software combinations and tuning options.
- Use a better regression test after loading new versions, features or bug fixes.
- The means to quickly remove a change to the system.
- Use extra disk space to allow two versions to co-exist.
- Use better change control procedures.
- Collecting before and after performance data (see “Before you have a problem” on page 475).
- Get further education and training to enhance skills.

D

IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases

This appendix provides an overview of the IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases. The following topics are covered:

- "Tivoli systems management products" on page 482 shows how Tivoli systems management products are categorized.
- "Product requirements and prerequisites" on page 486 lists some prerequisites for implementing IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases.
- "Resource models" on page 487 describes the monitoring functions for IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases product.
- "Operational tasks" on page 488 describes the operational tasks for IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases product.

Tivoli systems management products

Tivoli provides an end-to-end systems management solution for the whole enterprise. Tivoli products are organized into categories, as shown in Figure D-1.

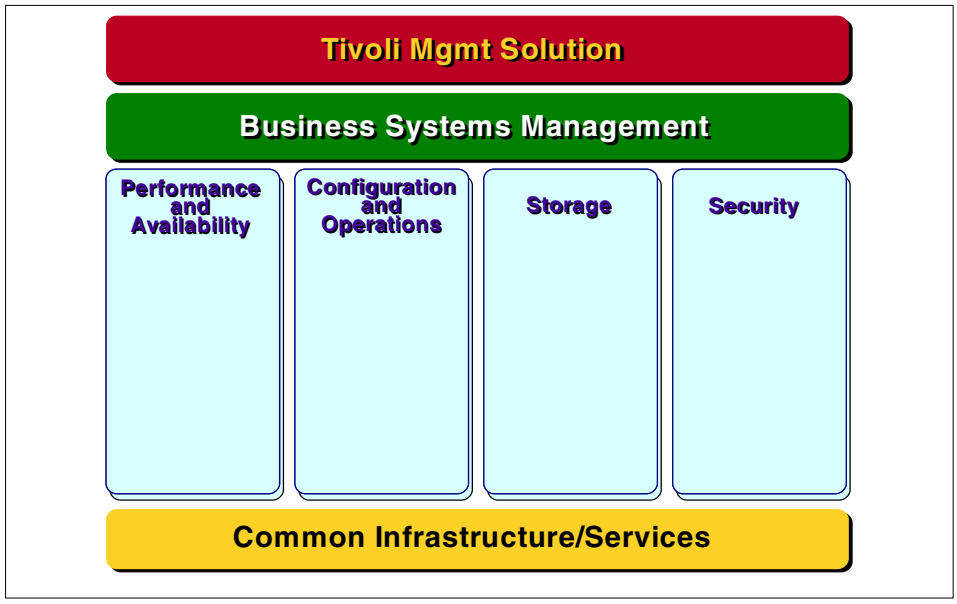

Figure D-1 Tivoli product categories

Underlying the Tivoli solution set is a group of common services and infrastructure that provide consistency across Tivoli management applications, as well as enabling integration.

Within the Tivoli product family, there are specific solutions that target four primary disciplines of systems management:

- Performance and Availability
- Configuration and Operation
- Storage Management
- Security

Products within each of these areas have been made available over the years, and though they continue to be enhanced, have become accepted solutions in enterprises around the world. With these core capabilities in place, IBM has been able to focus on building applications that take advantage of these pillars to provide true business systems' management solutions. A typical business application depends not only on the hardware and networking, but also on

software ranging from the operating systems to middleware such as databases, Web servers, and messaging to the application themselves. Providing a suite of solutions, such as the IBM Tivoli Monitoring components, allows an IT department to provide management of the entire business system in a consistent way from a central site using an integrated set of tools. By providing an end-to-end set of solutions built on a common foundation, enterprises can manage the ever increasing complexity of their IT infrastructure with reduced staff and increasing efficiency.

Within the performance and availability pillar in Figure D-1 on page 482, the Tivoli product suite is structured as shown in Figure D-2.

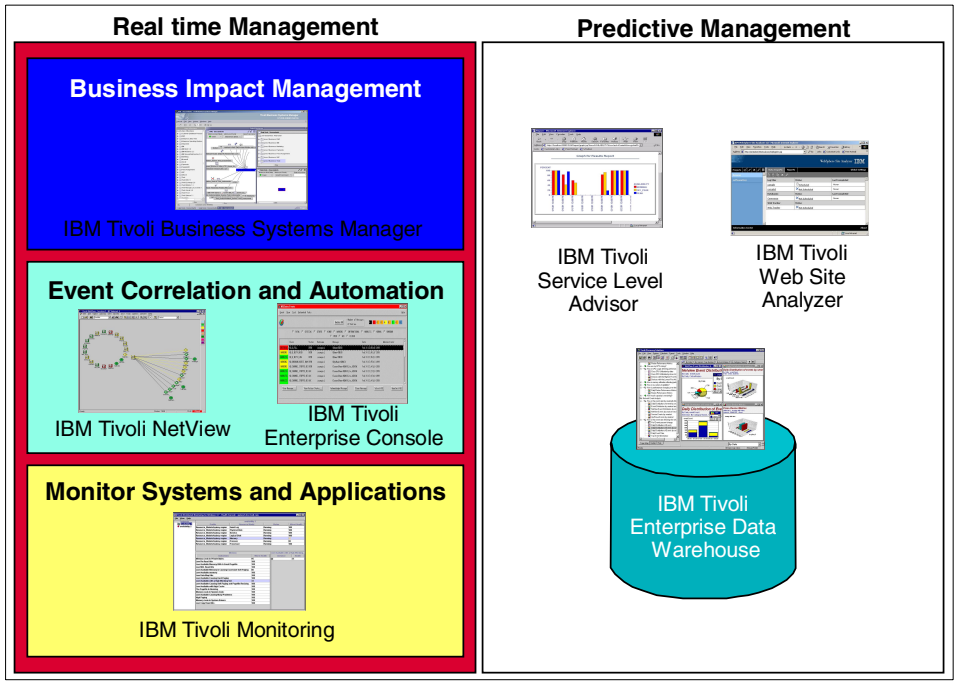

Figure D-2 Tivoli performance and availability monitoring application structure

In Figure D-2, we see that the performance and availability application can be grouped in the way they process data, such as:

- Real-time management: The applications that provide real-time status of resources. These applications are mainly used by IT operation personnel to quickly and proactively resolve an outage.
- Predictive management: The applications that collect information and generate historical reports. These applications are mainly used by IT

management and capacity planner to evaluate the performance and capacity of resources and also predict the growth of resource usage.

The applications can also be seen by the level of aggregation they provide. This mainly concerns the real-time monitoring, although some level of aggregation is also present in the historical analysis. The following levels exist:

- Monitoring systems: Applications that monitor, and possibly automate, a resolution of a single event from resources. Basic correlation can be performed at this level, but mostly only relates to a single resource instance. This level is very useful in testing and feeding a higher level of monitoring. This level does not allow operation personnel to prioritize their work based on the importance of the event, nor does it gives operational width of how other related functions are performing.
- Event correlation and automation: Applications that correlate and automate events from multiple resources and can provide an list of relevant outages and perform a preliminary cause-effect analysis. This level is useful in most production environments where operation personnel need to fix all problems fast. They will have a list of open issues, where the system filters the unnecessary events. However, this level of monitoring does not show how an outage affects the business or which functions are impacted by the outage.
- Business impact management: Applications that aggregate individual events and show areas of business or functions' status. This level provides both details of single events, and you can also immediately see which functions are affected. Based on the affected functions, operation personnel can act to resolve outages that have the most impact on the business first.

As shown in Figure D-2 on page 483, the IBM Tivoli Monitoring products fits in the device monitoring category for real-time monitoring. It feeds the data into the historical monitoring system for reporting and service level analysis. It also provides information for the higher level of monitoring represented using the Tivoli Enterprise Console and Tivoli Business Systems Manager.

IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases is one of a family of solutions based on the IBM Tivoli Monitoring product. IBM Tivoli Monitoring evolved from the Tivoli Distributed Monitoring product. With its new architecture based on resource models, IBM Tivoli Monitoring provides a solid foundation for the development of management solutions addressing the complex needs of today's IT infrastructures. A set of modules built on top of IBM Tivoli Monitoring provide a comprehensive set of solutions for companies facing the challenge of becoming e-businesses. These modules are delivered through a set of offerings that currently include:

- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Applications
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Business Integration

- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Messaging and Collaboration
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Web Infrastructure

The IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases comes with the following modules:

- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases: DB2, which support DB2 Version 7.*
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases: Oracle, which support Oracle Version 8.1.7 and 9.0.1
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases: Informix, which support Informix version 7.31, 9.21 and 9.30

These modules help to ensure the availability and performance of critical applications in an integrated e-business environment. Their capabilities include:

- Auto-discovery of the resources to be monitored
- Problem identification, notification, and correction
- Automated best practices for management and operations
- Historical reporting through a centralized data warehouse

IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases provides enhanced capabilities over the predecessor products Tivoli Manager for DB2 and Tivoli Manager for Oracle.

Each module comes with a set of publications. They are:

- Release Notes, which provides the important information about IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases, such as version and level supported, software prerequisites, and so on
- Installation and Setup Guide, which provides the tasks needed to implement the IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases
- User's Guide, which explains the day-to-day tasks of using the IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases products
- Reference Guide, which provides detailed information for resource model, task, and role within IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases
- Limitation and Workarounds Supplement, which provides last minute information on known problems and how to overcome them.

Product requirements and prerequisites

IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases relies on several components for it to work properly. Primarily, it relies on:

- Tivoli Framework: As a Framework based application that is deployed on the endpoints, it relies heavily Tivoli Framework facility, such as Endpoint level, MDist distribution, and Task library structure.
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring Advanced Edition: IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases uses the latest monitoring technology that is available with the IBM Tivoli Monitoring. It uses resource model based monitors that allow local analysis and correlation on the endpoint level to facilitate more accurate monitoring scheme.
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring Component Services: Establishes basic utilities for application management, including the necessary executable tools and object properties. This component replaces the Tivoli Application Services and Tivoli Application Proxy Services.

On the endpoints, the resource model deployed with the IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases monitors are written in JavaScript. This requires that Java Runtime Environment (JRE) Version 1.3.0 is installed on all endpoints to be managed. The following links are the image of the JRE that we use; these links need you to register to the IBM developerWorks community.

- For AIX, we use the JRE from the IBM developerWorks:

  `http://www6.software.ibm.com/dl/dka/priv/dka-h?S_PKG=dka130ww`

- For Windows, we use JRE from the WebSphere technology preview:

  `http://www6.software.ibm.com/dl/wspt/priv/wspt-h?S_PKG=pretechww`

Important: Since we were running a beta version of the software, check the latest software and hardware prerequisites from the Release Notes publication before you install the product. Also, review the Limitations and Workarounds Supplement manuals from the product documentation.

Apart from the above requirements, other Tivoli software can be integrated to the IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases to perform additional functions:

- Tivoli Enterprise Console Version 3.7.1
- Tivoli Business Systems Manager Distributed Edition installed with the Event Enablement feature
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring Extension for Enterprise Data Warehouse installed from the IBM Tivoli Monitoring Version 5.1.1 CD-ROM

Resource models

The resource model is a monitoring model that contains the program scheme necessary to determine what data is to be accessed from an endpoint at runtime and how this data is to be handled. In other words, the resource model is an equivalent implementation of monitors from previous editions of Tivoli Distributed Monitoring, albeit in a different way, using the object oriented modeling approach and integration with CIM. Each resource model obtains resource data from the endpoint it is distributed to, performs root cause analysis using a built-in algorithm, and reacts accordingly in the form of built-in actions or user-defined tasks.

This section discusses the specific resource models that are supplied by the IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases products. The following sub-sections lists the available resource models by module and provide a brief description of each. For more information on the resource models, refer to the reference manuals of the IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases.

We categorized database monitoring resource models into the following groups:

- Process monitoring: This is the basic measurement of the database availability. This monitors whether a specified database server process exists or not.
- Memory usage monitoring: Relational database systems use memory to buffer or cache a lot of information to minimize the need to access the data from the disk. The memory usage needs to be monitored to ensure that there is always enough space and that it has a high hit ratio (the data that is searched is found in memory).
- Activity monitors: Monitors the activity of the database, the number of connections, CPU utilization, I/O rate, and number of applications. These need to be monitored to ensure that there is no sudden change of load and to predict future growth.
- Disk space usage monitors: The actual data of a database is stored in the disk for persistence. Disk space needs to be monitored to ensure availability to insert more data, and disk organization needs to be monitored to ensure performance when accessing data in the disk.
- Locking monitors: Data is locked in memory before transactions are committed. Some of these transactions may lock data for a long time or lock contention may occur. While locks guarantee the data integrity, it may possibly defer access to data and even, in the case of deadlocks, disable access to data.
- Log monitors: All updates to data in memory are logged, and these logs are necessary to ensure that data can be recovered. Some transactions may

perform a lot of updates before committing them, causing a large chunk of needed logs.

- Replication monitors: Monitors the status of data replication activities. These resource models only apply to DB2 and Informix.
- Others: Each database servers has its own special monitors for functions that are unique for the database systems.

Operational tasks

This section discusses the available operational tasks from IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases. The tasks supplied with IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases are categorized into:

- Product implementation tasks: These tasks help in installing and configuring the IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases software.
- Administration tasks: These tasks start and stop subsystems and instances of the database engine.
- Other tasks: These tasks perform specialized functions for the related database.

Most of the supplied tasks for IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Databases relate to the product implementation and administration.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACID	Atomic, Consistent, Independent and Durable
ADSM	ADstar Storage Manager
AIX	Advanced Interactive Executive
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
API	Application Programming Interface
AS/400	Application System/400
ASCII	American National Standard Code for Information Exchange
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BI	Business Intelligence
BPS	Bufferpool Services
CICS	Customer Information and Control Program
CLP	Command Line Processor
CPU	Central Processing Unit
CWS	Control Workstation
DARI	Database Application Remote Interface
DASD	Direct Access Storage Device
DAT	Digital Audio Tape
DB	Database
DBA	Database Administrator
DBIA	Dynamic Bit-Mapped Indexing Anding
DBM	Database Manager
DDL	Data Definition Language
DLM	Distributed Lock Manager
DML	Data Manipulation Language
DMS	Database Managed Space
DSS	Decision Support System
EE	Enterprise Edition
EEE	Enterprise-Extended Edition
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ESE	Enterprise Server Edition
FAStT	Fibre Array Storage Technology
FCAL	Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop
FCM	Fast Communication Manager
FDDI	Fibre Distributed Data Interface
GB	Gigabyte
GCS	Global Cache Services
GES	Global Enqueue Services
GUI	Graphic User Interface
HACMP	High Availability Clustered Multiple Processing
HAGEO	HACMP for Large Geographies
HPS	High Performance Switch
HW	Hardware

IBM	International Business Machines Corporation
IDS	Informix Dynamic Server
ISA	Informix Server Administrator
IT	Information Technology
ITSO	International Technical Support Organization
I/O	Input/Output
IPC	Inter-Process Communication
ISO	International Standards Organization
JBOD	Just a Bunch Of Disks
JDBC	Java Database Connectivity
JFS	Journaled File System
JM	Joao Marcos
KB	Kilobyte
LAN	Local Area Network
LMS	Lock Manager Services
LOB	Large Object
LPAR	Logical Partition
LPP	Licensed Program Product
LRU	Least Recently Used
LTG	Logical Track Group
LUN	Logical Unit Number
LV	Logical Volume
LVM	Logical Volume Manager
MB	Megabyte
MCA	Micro Channel Architecture
MPP	Massively Parallel Processors
MTS	Multi-Threaded Server
MWC	Mirrored Write Consistency
NVS	Non-Volatile Storage
OEM	Oracle Enterprise Manager
OFA	Optimal Flexible Architecture
OLAP	Online Analytical Processing
OLTP	Online Transaction Processing
OPQ	Oracle Parallel Query
OPS	Oracle Parallel Server
OS	Operating System
PC	Personal Computer
PCI	Peripheral Component Interconnect
PGA	Program Global Area
PL/SQL	Procedural Language for SQL
PMR	Problem Management Record
PP	Physical Partition
PSSP	Parallel System Support Programs
PTF	Program Temporary Fix
PV	Physical Volume
RAC	Real Application Cluster
RAID	Redundant Array of Independent Disks
RDBMS	Relational Database Management System
SA	System Administrator
SAT	SATisfy itself (SSA token)
SCN	System Change Number

SCSI	Small Computer System Interface
SGA	System Global Area
SID	System Identifier
SMIT	System Management Interface Tool
SMP	Symmetric Multi Processor
SMS	System Managed Space
SP	Scalable Parallel
SPL	Stored Procedure Language
SQL	Structured Query Language
SQL/PSM	SQL/Persistent Storage Method
SQLJ	SQL Java
SSA	Serial Storage Architecture
SW	Software
TCP/IP	Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol
TPC-C	Transaction Processing Council - for Online Transaction Processing
TPC-D	Transaction Processing Council - for Decision Support Systems
TPC-H	Transaction Processing Council - for ad-Hoc Queries
TPC-R	Transaction Processing Council - for Reporting Queries
TTY	Teletype Terminal
UDB	Universal Database
UDF	User Defined Functions
UOW	Unit of Work
UP	Uniprocessor
UPS	Uninterruptible Power Supply
VG	Volume Group
VLDB	Very Large Database
VMM	Virtual Memory Manager
VSD	Virtual Shared Disk
VSS	Versatile Storage Server
XA	eXtended Agent
XPS	eXtended Parallel Server

Related publications

The publications listed in this section are considered particularly suitable for a more detailed discussion of the topics covered in this redbook.

IBM Redbooks

For information on ordering these publications, see “How to get IBM Redbooks” on page 497.

- *AIX 5L Differences Guide Version 5.2 Edition*, SG24-5765
- *AIX 5L Performance Tools Handbook*, SG24-6039
- *AIX Logical Volume Manager, from A to Z: Introduction and Concepts*, SG24-5432
- *AIX Logical Volume Manager, from A to Z: Troubleshooting and Commands*, SG24-5433
- *Data Modeling Techniques for Data Warehousing*, SG24-2238
- *DB2 UDB Version 7.1 Performance Tuning Guide*, SG24-6012
- *Designing and Optimizing an IBM Storage Area Network*, SG24-6419
- *Fibre Array Storage Technology: A FAStT Introduction*, SG24-6246
- *IBM ESS and IBM DB2 Working Together*, SG24-6262
- *IBM SAN Survival Guide*, SG24-6143
- *IBM TotalStorage Enterprise Storage Server Model 800*, SG24-6424
- *IBM TotalStorage FAStT700 and Copy Services*, SG24-6808
- *IP Storage Networking: IBM NAS and iSCSI Solutions*, SG24-6240
- *The IBM TotalStorage Solutions Handbook*, SG24-5250
- *From Multiplatform Operational Data to Data Warehousing and Business Intelligence*, SG24-5174
- *A Practical Guide to Serial Storage Architecture for AIX*, SG24-4599
- *RS/6000 Performance Tools in Focus*, SG24-4989
- *Understanding IBM @server pSeries Performance and Sizing*, SG24-4810
- *Using iSCSI Solutions: Planning and Implementation*, SG24-6291

Other resources

These publications are also relevant as further information sources:

- DB2 publications, which can be found at:

  http://www-3.ibm.com/cgi-bin/db2www/data/db2/udb/winos2unix/support/v8pubs.d2w/en_main

  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Implementation*, SC09-4820
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Performance*, SC09-4821
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database Administration Guide: Planning*, SC09-4822
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database Application Development Guide: Programming Server Applications*, SC09-4827
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database Command Reference*, SC09-4828
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database Data Recovery and High Availability Guide and Reference*, SC09-4831
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database Guide to GUI Tools for Administration and Development*, SC09-4851
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database Message Reference, Volume 1*, GC09-4840
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database Message Reference, Volume 2*, GC09-4841
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database SQL Reference, Volume 1*, SC09-4844
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database SQL Reference, Volume 2*, SC09-4845
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database System Monitor Guide and Reference*, SC09-4847
  - *IBM DB2 Universal Database What's New*, SC09-4848
- Oracle publications, which can be downloaded from the Oracle Technology Network web site:

  http://otn.oracle.com

  - *Oracle 8 Server Concepts*
  - *Oracle 8 Server Tuning*
  - *Oracle9i Administrator's Reference for UNIX*, A97297-01
  - *Oracle9i Backup and Recovery Concepts*, A96519-01
  - *Oracle9i Database Administrator's Guide*, A96521-01
  - *Oracle9i Database Concepts*, A96524-01
  - *Oracle9i Database Performance Planning*, A96532-01

- *Oracle9i Database Performance Tuning Guide and Reference*, A96533-02
- *Oracle 9i Performance Guide*
- *Oracle9i Real Applications Clusters Concepts*, A96597-01
- *Oracle 9i Server Tuning*

- Informix publications
  - *Administrator's Guide for Informix Dynamic Server, Version 9.2*, G251-0332
  - *Archive and Backup Guide for Informix Dynamic Server, Version 9.2*, G251-0333
  - *Getting Started with Informix Dynamic Server, Version 9.2*, G251-0335
  - *Guide to the High Performance Loader, Version 7.21*, G251-0528
  - *Informix Administrator's Reference, Informix Extended Parallel Server*, G251-0369
  - *Informix Backup and Restore Guide*, G251-0370
  - *Informix Guide to Database Design and Implementation*, G251-0372
  - *Informix Guide to SQL: Reference*, G251-0373
  - *Informix Guide to SQL: Syntax*, G251-0374
  - *Informix Storage Manager Administrator's Guide*, G251-0378
  - *Performance Guide for Informix Dynamic Server.2000, Version 9.2*, G251-0340
- Database related publication
  - Alomari, *Oracle 8 and UNIX Performance Tuning*, Simon & Schuster, 1998, ISBN 013907676X
  - Baird, *OCP Training Guide: Oracle DBA*, Pearson Education, 1998, ISBN 1562058916
  - Chamberlin, et al., *A Complete Guide to DB2 Universal Database,* Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, 1998, ISBN 1558604820
  - Cook, et al., *The DB2 Cluster Certification Guide*, Pearson Education, 1998, ISBN 013081900X
  - Corrigan, et al., *Oracle Performance Tuning*, O'Reilly & Associates, Incorporated, 1993, ISBN 1565920481
  - Niemic, et al, *Oracle Performance Tuning: Tips and Techniques*, Osborne/McGraw-Hill, 1999, ISBN 0078824346
  - Velpuri, *Oracle Backup and Recovery Handbook*, McGraw-Hill Osborne Media, 1995, ISBN 0078821061

- Suto, *Informix Performance Tuning*, Simon & Schuster, 1996, ISBN 0132392372

- AIX 5L Version 5.1 publications, which can be downloaded from:

  http://publib16.boulder.ibm.com/pseries/en_US/infocenter/base/aix51.htm

  - *AIX 5L Commands Reference Volumes 1 to 6*
  - *AIX 5L Performance Management Guide*
  - *AIX 5L Performance Toolbox Version 2 and 3 Guide and Reference*

- Whitepapers and other resources

  - *ArcSDE for Informix Administration* by Mark Harris and Tom Pattison, found at:

    http://www.esri.com/devsupport/devconn/sde/presentations/uc2000/426.pdf

  - Codd, *The Relational Model for Database Management, Version 2*, Addison-Wesley, 1989, ISBN 0201141922
  - *DB2 UDB for AIX Performance of Enterprise Storage Server*, which can be found at:

    http://www-3.ibm.com/software/data/db2/os390/pdf/db2aixess.pdf

  - *Providing OLAP to User-Analysts: An IT Mandate*, by E.F.Codd, which can be downloaded from:

    http://www.essbase.com/download_files/resource_library/white_papers/providing_olap_to_user_analysts.pdf

  - *Tuning Informix for OLTP Workloads* by Denis Sheahan, which can be found at:

    http://www.oninit.com/performance/sunoltpguide.pdf

Referenced Web sites

These Web sites are also relevant as further information sources:

- Official Web sites:

  http://www.ibm.com/software/data/informix
  http://www.ibm.com/software/data/db2
  http://www.oracle.com
  http://otn.oracle.com

- Internal Web site for AIX performance tools (IBM only)

  http://w3.aixncc.uk.ibm.com

- DB2 fixes download

  ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/products/db2/fixes/english-us

- Informix useful sites

  http://www.iiug.org
  http://www.oninit.com

- IBM documentation server

  http://techsupport.services.ibm.com/server/library
  http://www.redbooks.ibm.com

- AIX Performance PMR tool download

  ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/aix/tools/perftools/perfpmr

- Java download sites (authorization required)

  http://www6.software.ibm.com/dl/dka/priv/dka-h?S_PKG=dka130ww
  http://www6.software.ibm.com/dl/wspt/priv/wspt-h?S_PKG=pretechww

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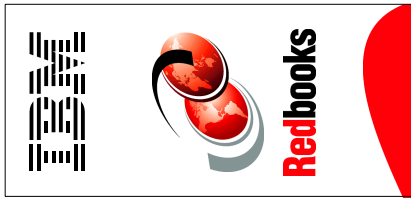

Database Performance Tuning on AIX

(1.0” spine)
0.875”<->1.498”
460 <-> 788 pages

Database Performance Tuning on AIX

In-depth discussion on RDBMS performance characteristics

Covers DB2 UDB V8, Oracle 9i, and Informix DS on AIX 5L

Comprehensive tuning tips and examples

This IBM Redbook is designed to help system designers, system administrators, and database administrators design, size, implement, maintain, monitor, and tune a Relational Database Management System (RDBMS) for optimal performance on AIX. RDBMS is usually a significant factor in building the profit line of a company. They represent an important investment and their performance is vital to the success of the company.

This redbook contains hints and tips from experts that work on RDBMS performance every day. It also provides introductions to general database layout concepts from a performance point of view, design and sizing guidelines, tuning recommendations, and performance and tuning information for DB2 UDB, Oracle, and IBM Informix databases.

The performance tips provided here relate to the things that a system administrator or database administrator can change. This book does not cover performance tuning issues that relate to application and database design, including SQL query tuning.

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