



## SQL Lab Xpert, Instance Monitor and Space Manager Provide Complete Database Management Solution for Medical Center



### Synopsis

*When Dartmouth Hitchcock was faced with tuning problems and poor database performance, they turned to Quest Software products. Together, SQL Lab Xpert, Instance Monitor and Space Manager provide the perfect solution, dramatically improving an analysis process from many hours or days of time and frustration to an effortless 10 minutes.*

### The Challenge

Dartmouth Hitchcock runs a total of 15 databases on an Oracle platform operating on Unix machines. Two of the 15 databases are production databases that experienced severe problems. The DBA at Dartmouth Hitchcock could not tune the existing system manually and required a solution to improve overall database performance.

“Payroll is a very lengthy, time-consuming and high priority process in our company. It usually runs for two days, but we were told it was not going to finish within the correct time frame because it was running very, very slow,” said Tijah Misha, Senior Oracle Analyst and DBA at Dartmouth Hitchcock. “We were unable to pinpoint the true cause of the problem, because so many things had changed in the databases,” he said.

Also, once they located a problem, Dartmouth Hitchcock wanted to avoid taking the database off line to correct errors. With the standard approach at that time, they could not make any code changes without stopping the entire process.

### Quest Solution

Dartmouth Hitchcock began the search for a solution to their database performance issues. Various associates introduced them to different products, including Oracle Enterprise Manager—and most of them recommended Quest Software products. When the company downloaded SQL Lab Xpert and compared it to Oracle Enterprise Manager, they discovered that many of the features they searched for existed in SQL Lab Xpert.

“All of us found SQL Lab Xpert and other Quest Software tools far superior to other products,” said Mr. Misha. They discovered that Oracle Enterprise Manager didn’t allow them to tune their SQL process, whereas SQL Lab Xpert was designed for tuning processes. “Once we downloaded the Quest Software trial versions of SQL Lab Xpert, Instance Monitor and Space Manager, we saw immediate results in solving our payroll and other daily system problems. We liked the products so much that we purchased all of them,” he said.

With Instance Monitor and SQL Lab Xpert, the company was able to identify and tune any problem SQLs in less than 15 minutes. “Everyone claimed it was magic,” said Mr. Misha.

“Instance Monitor allows us to easily determine which process is taking time. It displays all of the processes running on the server and we can check their activity in real-time,” he said.

*“We discovered that SQL Lab Xpert, Instance Monitor and other Quest Software tools were far superior to any other products. Instead of using several different tools, you can use Quest products to monitor and tune your database and manage its space and other problems—basically all of the activities you need. I’ve already recommended them to others.”*

*Tijah Misha,  
Senior Oracle Analyst/DBA,  
Dartmouth Hitchcock  
Medical Center*



Instance Monitor also features a visual display and flow chart on the structure and performance of each SQL. “Usually, an Oracle administrator knows how to generate a flow chart using Oracle tools, but that means they need to write their own script and manually analyze the flow chart. Using Instance Monitor, you just click on the explain plan and it gives you the entire plan for the SQL. You can also watch the SQL’s movement and performance,” said Mr. Misha.

Space Manager provides a graphical representation of database space, how it is comprised and whether a portion of the space is fragmented. “Another valuable feature of Space Manager is the ability to build a script for the objects that you want to create. For example, if you want to move an object from one database to another database, you can select one or more objects in Space Manager and build scripts,” said Mr. Misha. Space Manager also allows Dartmouth Hitchcock to plan the growth of their databases, particularly helpful for anyone designing a new database or not yet in a production environment.

Space Manager’s built-in commands also prevent common syntax input errors. According to Mr. Misha, “Space Manager is very handy, because you can perform several tasks with one tool and also run several other Oracle commands.”

### **The Bottom Line**

Using Instance Monitor and SQL Lab Xpert together enabled Dartmouth Hitchcock to take a process that would have taken ten hours down to 10 minutes. They were faced with a very big process that made it extremely difficult to identify the piece of code that was creating a problem. Instance Monitor showed them where the process was stuck and SQL Lab Xpert allowed them to tune it.

“Instance Monitor is an integral tool that, when combined with Space Manager and SQL Lab Xpert, provides a powerful capability to effectively tune processes, manage space problems and plan for database growth,” said Mr. Misha.

### **About Dartmouth Hitchcock**

Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center is located in Northern New Hampshire. It is comprised of the Dartmouth Medical School, the fourth-oldest medical school in the country, founded in 1797; the Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital, built in 1893; the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Clinic, established in 1927; and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which opened in 1938.

Tijah Misha is the Senior Oracle Analyst and DBA for Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center.

Dartmouth Hitchcock plans to evaluate I/Watch, which automatically runs in the background for 24 hours, collecting and creating a history of operating system problems. They also plan to install Instance Monitor onto other test and development databases experiencing performance problems.





## Foglight is Invaluable Performance Tool for International Shipping Company's Critical Peoplesoft Environment



### Synopsis

*After implementing Peoplesoft, Crowley Maritime faced numerous Oracle problems and poor system performance. With Foglight, they can identify and resolve problems within 15 to 30 minutes – a process that lasted a day or two in the past. Foglight enables Crowley to take a proactive versus reactive approach to any potential compromises to system integrity.*

### The Challenge

Crowley Maritime is a large international container shipping company with a strong focus on customer service and advanced IT technologies. To achieve this goal, Crowley moved their payroll operations from a DB2 mainframe base to Peoplesoft for Oracle on five Sun Unix platforms.

This was a large project for the business and changed its entire infrastructure. After implementing Peoplesoft Oracle on the Unix platforms, Crowley Maritime experienced many difficulties. They lacked an experienced technical staff and were unable to locate the source of the problems. With limited time and resources, Crowley's immediate concern was to stabilize the Peoplesoft environment, since it controlled their payroll functions. For them, payroll is a critical driving force and the Peoplesoft environment is a top priority. Any problems are immediately visible to users, a strong argument for a timely, accurate and problem-free process.

Crowley Maritime suspected that runaway Oracle queries were constantly draining and consuming significant system resources. Their current system trouble-shooting processes were very limited and didn't help them to quickly identify the source of problems. This inability to identify the difficulties within their platforms and operating systems motivated them to search for a solution that would give them much-needed visibility.

### Quest Solution

Crowley evaluated three or four different products. "What sold us on Foglight was that we saw instant results after installing it," said Ed Ramsey. "Foglight proved very useful to us right out of the box and didn't require a lot of configuration or long learning curve. Since all of our internal resources were dedicated to several major projects, any other product we evaluated would have created a hardship for us to install, configure and use," said Ed Ramsey.

Foglight allowed Crowley to compare their various platforms and operating systems and view anything affecting application performance. Their DBAs and Peoplesoft technicians are able to immediately address any deficiencies within those environments. "It helps us to work together and we are very happy about that," he said.

*"We have limited time and resources to troubleshoot potential problems within our systems. Foglight enables us to isolate and solve problems immediately. With Foglight, we don't panic because we are now able to solve problems much quicker, usually within five or ten minutes – long before any of our customers or employees are ever affected. Foglight is a complete enterprise monitoring solution and is truly a great product."*

*Ed Ramsey,  
Unix Systems Manager,  
Crowley Maritime*



Immediately after installing Foglight, Crowley Maritime knew it was the perfect tool for their environment. It provided much needed visibility into their different systems, platforms, operating systems, CPU, memory, disk utilization, and Oracle and Peoplesoft applications. Its graphing capabilities made it instantly apparent to Crowley that their Unix boxes were memory starved. Foglight also keeps a history of all activity, and this has proven invaluable to their DBAs and Peoplesoft technicians to use this feature to trace the threads of what happened. Several of the other products evaluated didn't provide this capability.

"Foglight has been very use to implement and use. Now that we're using the product, Foglight is improving our entire environment, not just Peoplesoft Oracle issues," said Ed Ramsey.

### **The Bottom Line**

Crowley includes Foglight as an integral part of their future business goals to provide 24x7 monitoring for all facets of their operation. It allows them to immediately locate the source of any system problem or compromise.

"Foglight provides enough leverage for us to see the correlation between all of our systems simultaneously. It provides the ability for us to monitor our Peoplesoft boxes, Sun systems and Oracle instances to determine their health at all times – and the causes of any potential problems," said Ed Ramsey.

Since Crowley has few technicians on staff and very little time resources, they rely very heavily on Foglight to identify problems for them. What used to require a full day or more to resolve they can now locate within minutes.

"We've really gained a huge advantage from Foglight. And now that management is becoming accustomed to less problems with the systems, we're able to provide a higher level of performance and service to everyone," said Mr. Ramsey.

Crowley has also claims Foglight support is outstanding. "It's a relief know there are some good, top-notch people behind the product who can help us to find the problem – or devise a way to track it with Foglight," said Mr. Ramsey.

With Foglight, Crowley Maritime can spend less time on locating and solving problems and more time on strengthening and improving their environment.

### **About Crowley Maritime**

Crowley Maritime is a container shipping company servicing the Americas. Ed Ramsey is the Unix Systems Manager responsible for all five main Unix systems.

Crowley is very satisfied with their experience with Foglight and plans to evaluate other Quest products to help them with runaway queries, SQL tuning and other functions to improve their overall efficiency.

