

Segmetrix's Match2Lists.com makes data matching and de-duplication child's play thanks to Kognitio WX₂ via DaaS™

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Amr Hassan, CEO and co-founder, Match2Lists.com

It's not often that a company can say it has the ability to truly revolutionize the way companies do business from its first day in operation. But Match2Lists.com, developed by Segmetrix, has been able to make an immediate significant business impact, helping marketers worldwide complete a key element of their job in less time, less cost and with higher success and reliability. In doing so, Segmetrix and Match2Lists, now a separate company, have changed the dynamic of data matching, making it far more affordable and far more complete.

Background

Segmetrix is a UK-based B2B Intelligence consultancy whose services include integration tasks to help customers ensure they have accurate, consistent data. Until recently, Segmetrix always turned away potential clients who only wanted to do data matching. While the company did the task for existing B2B consultancy projects, it didn't have the bandwidth to handle one-off jobs.

Not that those firms didn't need the work done: "Let's say a company has a big data matching exercise, they've just bought the Dun & Bradstreet worldwide database, or they want to sync their SQL data with their SAP data to get a single customer view of their clients," says Amr Hassan, Segmetrix's chief executive officer. The objective seemed simple enough; to standardize multiple entries so that marketers can reach their target customers more effectively, and the business analysts can better analyze their performance. In reality, Hassan said one customer's company might be spelled in dozens of different ways, making it far more difficult to tie a customer's file together across multiple entries. For companies dealing with large amounts of data, there's a 75-to-80% likelihood that they will face data quality and data integration issues that slow down their ability to use the information.

And that's only the start: "If you're doing this kind of exercise, you have to call in a couple of data bureaus, give them a brief, they go away, they come back with a proposal, you send out the PO, they carry out the exercise over a couple of weeks," Hassan says.

"They come back with, 'here are your files, machine 'matched' to 50%. The remaining 25% are definitely not matched, and 25% are potential matches. But that's not the end of it. You now have the task of validating machine matches, potential matches and none-matches.

"So now, you have to find internal analysts who'll go through your files from the data service at the ones that don't match like, 'This is BT...this is BT Group. Why didn't they match?' Or, 'That's BT, that's BTL, why was that considered a valid match?'" Now, multiply that task by thousands, or hundreds of thousands or even millions of records at a time. Matching multiple data sets takes a team, and time, and money to perform what is, at best, an unglamorous job filled with tedium. At worst, it's a drain on the marketing budget and a gating factor to the marketing department fulfilling its mission.

The Advantage: Kognitio WX₂

Developing and implementing a data matching tool capable of processing millions of records within seconds or minutes became Segmetrix's goal. It was able to develop not only the algorithms needed to make things work, but Derren Fielder, Segmetrix's chief information officer, and his team also worked on developing a user interface that would allow frontline workers to accomplish the task in a fraction of the time previously required, thus freeing analysts to perform more strategic tasks. The resulting product, to be offered as a service, was dubbed Match2Lists.com.

Match2Lists.com features data visualization which allows analysts to go through different levels of scoring in descending order, allowing them to see actual versus projected matching results, giving them the ability to interact with the match results and auto-approve/reject them, or manually accept or reject the records. They can change the scoring parameters and instantly rematch their large data sets.

But for all the advantages of Match2Lists, one significant problem remained: Segmetrix needed a database engine to power Match2Lists.com. After examining several alternatives, Hassan and Fielder quickly settled on Kognitio's WX₂ in-memory analytic database.

The Challenge

Leading B2B intelligence company Segmetrix wanted to launch an online data matching and de-duplication application but needed an on-demand powerful analytical database engine to support it.

The Solution

Segmetrix opted for the flexibility, scalability and low cost of Kognitio WX₂ via Data Warehousing as a Service (DaaS™) to power its Match2Lists.com online application.

The ROI

By using the DaaS™ model to power Match2Lists.com, Segmetrix has a clear competitive advantage vis-à-vis other firms that offer data matching services; not only was Segmetrix able to launch its Match2Lists.com application within a few weeks, data matching and de-duplication exercises on over 35 million online records are now down from weeks to just 10 minutes.



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Amr Hassan, CEO and co-founder, Segmetrix

They discovered that WX₂'s massively parallel in-memory processing made it possible to rapidly handle huge volumes of data, making it a good fit for Match2Lists, which would have to routinely deal with such volumes. “There’s a lot of serious computation happening behind the scenes,” says Hassan. For example, if a business needs to match a subset of 100,000 records to all five million of its records of customers in one country, that creates billions of permutations; all of those permutations have to be scored and ranked to tell the business that, for example, 50 percent of its data matched 100 percent, 20 percent matched 90 to 95 percent, and so on. Hassan and his team looked around, but “Kognitio was the only one able to provide us with that power.”

More importantly, Hassan decided to access WX₂ through Kognitio’s industry-first Data Warehousing as a Service (DaaS™) offering, taking advantage of its outsourced capabilities, in much the same way that Match2Lists’ customers would utilize his service. “The power of Kognitio’s DaaS™ solution with WX₂ means that as demand grows, we switch on more blades, or as it diminishes, we shut off some blades. It is flexible. We don’t have to invent a fast wheel that already exists. The beauty of Kognitio’s DaaS is that it, too, is an on-demand service. To have that kind of processing power on demand is groundbreaking in the sense that this is true computing as a service. The term ‘SaaS’ may be misused at times. Take online CRM applications; do we need software or storage as a service? The application is taking your customer records and storing it online. It’s not really doing computation. Think of 100-thousand records being matched with five million records. You’re creating potentially billions of permutations happening in minutes right before your eyes. That’s supercomputing as a service.”

The Results

“Where do you start?” asks Hassan. Even though it was only formally introduced earlier this year, Match2Lists has already garnered several worldwide clients, and is paying dividends, literally, by the minute, because Segmetrix has priced its service very aggressively, and changed the paradigm in the process.

For instance, Hassan cites an example performed for a Match2Lists prospect. “We did a live test a couple of days ago, and it took five minutes to match 10 thousand customer records from their Siebel database to the 35 million online names in our database. What Match2Lists does is to take the traditional weeks of orchestrating that exercise and condenses it down to maybe 10 minutes. That’s the business impact. So you upload your lists, press a button, get them matched, you visually verify the match results very quickly, and then you download the matched results. It can do 100,000 names in one list versus 5,000,000 records in another list and do that in 10 minutes, and you’re done. That’s the power of WX₂.”

Then, there’s the cost factor; the use of DaaS has allowed Match2Lists to fundamentally reorder that aspect. “Where other data bureaus will charge you for the number of records you intend to match, at perhaps x cents per record, we only charge for the matches you verify. So, if you upload 100 thousand records and only match five thousand, we only charge for those five thousand at a ridiculously low cost per record; 15 cents on a pay-as-you-go basis.” On a monthly subscription basis with unlimited usage, Hassan says the cost drops even further, down to three cents per match, or even lower.

By contrast, current industry standards call for up to a 50-cent charge per attempted match. “That’s attempted, not verified,” Hassan stresses. “They multiply that number by the number of attempted matches. That’s the alternative picture. We say you can use Match2Lists all the way to the end, and only pay when you’ve verified and ready to download.”

Hassan freely admits that Segmetrix has revolutionized the process, and ‘pushed the envelope.’ “The alternative picture, involves complex software requiring trained people to operate it, and then more humans to verify the results. That means resources at the data bureau, which you pay for, and resources within your business.

“We could have come up with several iterations of Match2Lists in the past few years that would have been at different maturity levels or completeness levels versus our vision. And we didn’t. We kept that under wraps until we reached the disruptive level we had in mind. Kognitio’s WX₂ and DaaS played an integral part of us reaching that level where we felt ready to take it to market. As a result, we have a clear competitive advantage over those who would try to mimic what we’ve done. They’d have to go a long way to do so.”

The bottom line is that Segmetrix has assembled a powerful engine with Kognitio’s WX₂ at its core. By combining WX₂'s analytic power with Segmetrix’s proprietary software, Match2Lists.com has achieved a first-to-market advantage and delivered a truly revolutionary service with the real potential of allowing marketers to reach out to potential customers far more effectively at a far lower cost.