Introduction

The secret behind gaming success is the ability to analyze data in ways never before possible, thereby gaining previously unattainable insight into players’ needs, behaviors and usage patterns. The HP Vertica Analytics Platform enables gaming companies to load and query massive volumes of usage data in near real time, around the clock. The technology helps developers understand how users interact with their games and respond to new features and promotions quickly so that they can monetize elements of the game effectively.

Gaming Companies Powered by Vertica:

- zynga
- spilgames
- UBISOFT
- GSN

Why HP Vertica?

The gaming industry has voted with budget. Vertica uniquely meets all of their needs:

Agility

HP Vertica can ingest and prepare data extremely quickly. It has been tested and can load data in excess of eight terabytes an hour. For example, Zynga loads multiple TBs of data per day into HP Vertica, with loads proceeding 24x7 while users are actively querying the system. Once it is loaded in the database, data can be transformed extremely quickly due to HP Vertica’s MPP architecture. In addition, code can be written very easily to do transformations to the data which have previously been difficult or impossible in SQL, include sessionization functions native to HP Vertica.

Learn More:
http://www.vertica.com/industries/web-social-gaming/
Scalability
HP Vertica is designed to run on anywhere from 1 node to 100's of nodes. Because the system can expand while the database is online, adding capacity to HP Vertica is as simple as racking the new systems and running several administrative commands. As soon as these new nodes become part of the cluster, the system has more memory, disk and CPU to use in processing. Also, it is designed to tolerate the failure of components, so there is no single point of failure. And, with HP Vertica’s elasticity features, you have the flexibility to expand – without downtime – as well as shrink the cluster as needed to suit your needs.

Rich Analytics
HP Vertica provides a rich set of analytics for such things as time series interpolation and gap filling – for when you need to match two different sets of time series data but the timestamps do not align. A common challenge in the gaming space is to obtain an event stream from a mobile device, and an event stream for the same user from a desktop computer or laptop. Comparing these two is very helpful, but because the timestamps don’t align, this task is difficult. Through an extension to the ANSI standard SELECT clause, users of HP Vertica can quickly specify interpolation and gap filling to create uniform sets of timeseries data. Furthermore, with conditional change and conditional true events – also extensions to the SELECT clause – tasks such as sessionization become trivial. And these are just the “workhorse” analytics. Vertica also includes analytics such as pattern match – which will search a group of rows for specific patterns – so you can quickly search large volumes of data for patterns such as abandonment or monetization, and quickly identify things which drive those patterns.

Conclusion
HP Vertica is uniquely suited to the demands of the gaming industry, which is why so many companies use HP Vertica in the space. And there are a number of use cases not mentioned here, such as how web and gaming companies use HP Vertica in conjunction with data from Omniture or Kontagent, or use HP Vertica for predictive analytics with their games. Gaming companies like Zynga, Ubisoft, Crowdstar, Playdom, and Mochi Media all use Vertica to analyze their data on a deeper level and enhance the gaming experience in real-time. In a $2 Billion, high-stakes industry, HP Vertica delivers the edge gaming companies need to engage and monetize their users effectively.

Friendly TCO Profile
Due to the uncertainty in the game space, it’s important to select technologies which come with economics favorable to the business model. There are no budgets for huge upfront investments of time and effort, extensive retraining of staff, or retooling of other parts of the technology infrastructure. HP Vertica uses non-proprietary hardware, which means you can select systems with which you are familiar and which fit in with your existing technology management practices. Because HP Vertica uses SQL as the user interface, analysts do not need to learn any new or proprietary languages to work with the data. Furthermore, HP Vertica’s analytic extensions are fitted to ANSI 99 standards so they integrate very smoothly with existing SQL. Tools like the Vertica Database Designer - which automates the design of optimized projections – alleviate the need for a team of DBAs to manage it. In fact, most of our customers don’t even have a full-time Vertica DBA.

Social interaction and the relationship between customer and brand have never been more prevalent. Capturing mouse-clicks, understanding relationships, and monetizing those behaviors in near real-time is the apex of analytics for gaming. Whether it’s customizing a portal for a customer’s online experience or engaging a customer with particular advertisements or offerings, real-time engagement based upon empirical data is critical to the success of gaming and web 2.0 companies.