Locksmith® Archiving
Unlock BPCS/ERP LX Response Times

The high cost of slow response time

Each slow response may only waste a fraction of a minute, but those fractions add up to:

◇ Strong hits on the productivity of users … a real cost that's hard to measure and likely to be surprisingly high.

◇ Daily staff frustration with BPCS/ERP LX performance … with a steady cadence of moaning and groaning directed towards the IS Department.

◇ Painfully slow answers for internal and external customers.

Is your BPCS/ERP LX response time becoming unacceptable?

Even a five second delay can be exasperating. Ten seconds feels like forever to a person with a demanding set of priorities … and every user knows that the situation continues to deteriorate as the months go by.

Here are four real-life examples of particularly lengthy response time problems. Would these illustrations sound familiar to the user community at your company?

Customer Service

CSRs hear preaching about promptly responding to customer phone inquiries … but … in "real life" things don't work that way. If a call arrives when the CSR has been working on something else, it takes 45 seconds to build access paths for the Order Entry screen. The customer waits. After the order is keyed in, the customer then asks if he can get his shipment in three days. The CSR must ask the customer to wait again … **up to a minute on each item** *… for either an Available to Promise look-up or to check for inventory availability through Material Status Inquiry.*

Accounts Receivable

A customer calls Accounts Receivable to straighten out payment application discrepancies across several invoices. The A/R clerk launches ACR300 Account Inquiry. While the customer waits on the line, it takes 25 seconds just to open the program. Seems like an eternity.

Manufacturing Planning

A surprise manufacturing planning meeting has just been scheduled in the Manufacturing Director's office in response to a question from the CEO; they need an update on a category of products 45 minutes from now. The head planner must rely on MRP300 (Planning and Pegging inquiry) to evaluate the situation for about three dozen items. Frustration mounts because there's a delay of about 20 seconds for **each item**. *Then, for each item that needs MRP Maintenance (MRP510), there's another 20 second delay.*

Warehouse Management

A pallet of packaging materials is needed pronto on the filling line. The warehouse supervisor spots a fork lift operator, calls him over to the screen, and then launches a simple Material Status Inquiry. The system takes 40 seconds to display the item and then another 30 seconds to display the locations. Net message to the fork lift driver: "hurry up after waiting."

Improving BPCS/ERP LX response time

Here are the four possible strategies for improving BPCS/ERP LX response time:

1. Archive data from active files *(remove it from the live database)*
2. Database access analysis and refinement
3. Purge/discard old data
4. Acquire a more robust iSeries box

In our experience, archiving (strategy **#1**) provides the most dramatic results per dollar of investment. Archiving picks the "low-hanging-fruit" so it's the approach to work on first. Here's why:

◈ Archiving makes an eye-opening, overnight difference. And, it's not a one-shot deal. The strategy can be repeated in the future when more data have accumulated. It's a durable solution.

◈ Archiving is much less expensive than buying a new box, especially if you add in the typical cost of a new key from INFOR.

  If you're forced into a new box for other reasons (e.g. the lease is up, multiple sites consolidating on one machine, etc.) it still makes sense to archive your BPCS/ERP LX data. Why ...? Because, you should be able to order a somewhat less expensive processor for that new machine if your historical data has been archived.

◈ Work on strategy **#2** can improve response times. Unbeaten Path's **Adrenaline**™ service exploits any opportunity for optimizing SQL indexes and logicals. However, we would not recommend investing in Adrenaline services until *after* the dramatic results available from archiving have been realized.

  To be successful at strategy **#2**, analysts require exceptionally extensive knowledge about both the operating system and BPCS/ERP LX architecture. Wisdom, judgment, and discernment are required to achieve a good strategy #2 result. Here's just two illustrations of the complexity:

  ⊕ Each time a record is added or updated there's a performance hit associated with maintaining the access path for logicals and SQL indexes. So, performance gains may be eroded by the extra system effort to maintain the access path for newly invented objects.

  ⊕ Strategy **#2** optimization results could be affected by the number of records in the physical file; that is another strong reason to try Locksmith first before considering Adrenaline.

  ◈ Strategy **#3** is cheap ... but purging destroys access to historical data. If you wanted to move forward with purging, most files would require one-by-one manual attention. That's because vanilla BPCS/ERP LX arrives with purge programs for only a few files.

How to execute the archiving strategy

If you'd like to try the archiving strategy for BPCS/ERP LX, we know of only one logical action plan: test drive our free Locksmith demonstration software. Please contact us (click **here)** to arrange that.

Locksmith archiving functionality

The software archives historical data from elected BPCS/ERP LX environment(s) and places it elsewhere on the system in a way that sustains user access. The integrity of BPCS/ERP LX file relationships is respected and maintained.

Transaction data archiving

Locksmith provides archiving functionality for transaction data in the following areas:

ACP	8 Accounts Payable Files
ACR	4 Accounts Receivable Files
CST	1 Cost Master File
GLD	7 General Ledger Files
INV	1 Inventory Transaction History File
ORD	14 Customer Order Files
OLM	13 Outbound Logistics Management Files
PRD	5 Shop Floor Production Files
PUR	5 Purchasing Files
SAL	3 Sales History Files
SEC	BPCS and iSeries user profiles

Locksmith will also archive any user-defined files which can be linked to the primary file in the BPCS/ERP LX modules listed above.

Master file archiving

Locksmith also provides archiving functionality for the following four BPCS/ERP LX master files and all the transaction data associated with those master files:

Item Master	Up to 302 Related Transaction Files
Customer Master	Up to 247 Related Transaction Files
Vendor Master	Up to 115 Related Transaction Files
Lot Master	Up to 105 Related Transaction Files

Soft-deleted master file records are eligible for archiving. Locksmith will not allow you to archive records which are pertinent to the current annual accounting period.

Additional Locksmith information

✧ Archived data can still be accessed for inquiry or reporting using either standard BPCS/ERP LX programs or company-specific reporting tools. Here's one illustration of how this Locksmith functionality can help:

Once the ORD files have been archived, the BPCS order number sequence can be restarted. Users can still interrogate old orders from the archived order number sequence. That's the end of the '999999' order number ceiling problem.

✧ When master file records are archived, all references to that record are also archived from the transaction files. This means that ID number can be re-used. Here's one illustration of how this Locksmith functionality can help:

Your company is running out of available customer numbers. There are 2,500 deactivated customer master records. Locksmith will archive these records as well as all transaction records for this customer (i.e. customer orders, shipments, sales, payments, etc.). These 2,500 customer numbers can now be re-used.

Additional Locksmith information, *continued ...*

✧ If necessary, archived data can even be restored to the live BPCS/ERP LX environment. The user may also elect to store archived data off-line.

✧ Users have the flexibility to select which specific date field will be used to control the process of selecting records for archiving. Some BPCS files have several date fields to choose from (e.g. for ORD: order shipped date, order entered date, last maintained date, etc.).

✧ Several file maintenance functions can be selected by the user:
  ▷ Re-sequence the ITH file by item after the archiving process removes data and then update the item master file.
  ▷ Clear data from BPCS work files, and reorganize all physical files in a specified library (e.g. removes hard deleted records),
  ▷ Reset the status flags in the customer order files.

✧ An interface is provided to easily add and maintain archiving jobs on the IBM job scheduler.

Customer testimonials about Locksmith

Please click **here** to see a collection of testimonials and recommendation letters from happy Locksmith users.

Deactivating obsolete items / preparing the IIM for Locksmith

Locksmith can't archive an item master record unless it's been deactivated. Since INV100 is so hard to use, your enterprise may have a significant number of items which are both obsolete and still active. Instead of struggling with INV100, companies cope with this by inserting warning text in the item description. If you'd like to learn about a much more efficient approach to item master record deactivation, click **here** to see a description of Unbeaten Path's **Item Undertaker** software.

Questions ?

It would be a privilege to answer any questions about Locksmith software. Here's Unbeaten Path International's contact information:

Toll free North America: (888) 874-8008
International: (+USA) 262-681-3151
Send us an e-mail (click **here**)