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Turning the tables on simulation

It's a scenario played out over and over again, a fundamental blocking and tackling move taken straight from the IT organization's playbook. Take Application X, Testing Tool Y, and Workload Z, and you have what's commonly called a simulation. For most businesses, carefully crafted simulations are the best insurance their applications will predictably scale in the real world. But for electronic gaming powerhouse Electronic Arts (EA), creation of carefully crafted simulations *is* the business. And, for those EA simulations that live online, they had better scale incredibly well.

Artful EA simulations in software may imitate life in the real world (such as *The Sims 2*), replicate the professional sports experience (as in *Madden NFL Football 2005*), or bring to life incredibly detailed fantasies (such as *The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-earth*)—and literally dozens of additional subjects. In our cover story, “At the top of their game,” Joe Kugler, VP of Worldwide Technology Services and Operations at EA, talks about how his company turns soft simulations into hard dollars through a roster of highly creative people, innovative processes, and meticulously applied server and storage technology.

Much of the EA technology juggernaut is focused on the burgeoning online gaming landscape and its appetite for monthly fee-based computing power. Consider *The Sims Online*, where each online gamer can create and control simulated people, or *Sims*, and where your *Sims* can interact with any other online gamer's *Sims*. So, for example, if your *Sim* wants to visit my *Sim* in the fictitious city of Alphaville, a single mouse click may invoke multiple database transactions in an EA data center—outfitted, of course,

with Dell™ PowerEdge™ servers running the Red Hat® Enterprise Linux® operating system and Oracle9i™ Database with Real Application Clusters (Oracle9i RAC). As online demand rises, read about how EA scales the simulation infrastructure with more Dell servers to maintain the quality of service.

This issue is not all fun and games, however. Our Cutting Edge section includes a serious look at the scalable enterprise through the eyes of several Dell customers (“Beyond the buzz”), and the conclusion of our informative series on regulatory compliance issues (“Save often”). The Product Showcase section, starting on page 23, highlights Dell's recent introduction of the eighth-generation PowerEdge servers (including the new PowerEdge 1855 blade server), as well as upgrades to the Dell OptiPlex™ desktop and Dell Precision™ workstation lines.

Last, our Customer Spotlight section, beginning on page 38, showcases solution successes with Dell customers from around the world, including Ford Canada, Wyndham International Hotels, GBCblue, Input/Output, and ac3 (Australian Centre for Advanced Computing and Communications).

And if that's not enough reading for you, keep in mind that all current and back issues of *Dell Insight* are always available online at <http://dell.com/dellinsight>. Happy browsing!