

## OT?: Application Architecture Question

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I have a potential client who has a Access-based DB which they use for recording orders, customer details etc...

They want to provide some of this information online, eg. customer account details and stock-levels etc, whilst retaining their existing functionality. They also want to retain the Access front-end but want to migrate the DB to SQL Server.

AFAIK, they dont have local, dedicated web servers, but use a hosting package of some description.

I'm trying to think of different ways to tackle this, but no 'silver-bullet' solution.

1) Host their own web server. Access (via and Access Data Project or ODBC) could communicate with the same SQL Server as the ASP application. Not sure if the have the will/money/technical capacity to host their own servers, but I suspect not.

2) Scrap Access and redevelop all there back-end & UI to use ASP/SQL Server online – requires a lot of re-work, and means that the whole operation is vulnerable if the site goes down.

3) Keep existing systems, and periodically update online SQL Server DB with the needed information. Not sure yet how much data we are talking about here, and not sure how we could synchronise the online-offline DBs

Can anybody think of any alternatives? Any comment on these?

It seems this is a relatively small org trying to think bigger, but I fear I'm going to dash their hopes. Without making the project a lot more complicated and expensive, I'm not sure how we can do what they want.

I'd also be appreciative for comments on the synchronisation idea. How could we go about synchronising and Access & SQL?

Does anybody have any experience in this whole area that they can share?

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Thanks in advance

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