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"Administração de Metadados: A Chave de Data Warehousing"

In last decades, the volume of data bases used by systems has increased extremely. To extract strategic level information from many operational data bases is a very complex task. Because of this Data Warehousing technology was created, based on a huge data base called Data Warehouse, used by decision support systems (DSS). In this context, tools denominated OLAP, on-line analytical processing, are necessary for being more adequate for high data volumes. Another benefit of this kind of data base is to allow forecasts, in a process known as Data Mining. Traditionally, there were the areas of data administration and data base administration to elaborate the conceptual model, the logic project and the physical project of data bases. But now, to know and control all components involved in Data Warehousing, what became essential is the administration of Metadata, or data about data. It is no longer viable to leave with no control the vast amount of available data, that only grows especially with Internet popularization. What is the advantage of an essential information, if it can't be found in the middle of tangled data? It is necessary for enterprises to survive in a global economy, that they control one of their biggest assets, their data. For this, the present work studies the importance of Metadata administration in Data Warehousing, its evolution, its points in common and differences in relation to data administration. It is also done an analysis of private solutions, of some market tools and of existing standards for Metadata. As a practical example, a case study is presented dealing with Social Security business in Brazil. Finally, trends for Metadata in near future are considered.