EMBEDDED ANALYTICS FOR THE SAAS PROVIDER

Qrvey: Monetized, Self-Service Analytics at Scale

RICHARD WINTER

SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) providers often need to deliver data and self-service analytics to their customers — and have distinctive requirements that are quite different from those of the typical enterprise customer, where the goal is primarily to provide such services to employees.

A Saas provider may service thousands of customers, each of which in turn is usually a for-profit company with its own private data, its own distinctive analytics, its own security and compliance requirements and its own cohort of paying customers.

Qrvey (pronounced Kur-vay') serves these Saas vendors, providing them with embedded self-service analytics and data management that the vendor can use to differentiate its business solutions and generate additional revenue.

Qrvey is in successful use by many SaaS vendors, each of which can serve thousands of businesses — with tens of thousands of end users — all of whom can be using the Qrvey service at the same time. Qrvey does this efficiently and with pricing that enables its SaaS customers to compete and make money on their data and analytics offerings. And, Qrvey is designed to support rapid, agile, software development by the SaaS customer, resulting in a distinctively valuable offering for embedded data and analytics.

Qrvey and the World of Embedded Analytics: An Example

The public cloud has enabled tens of thousands of small and medium-sized companies, called Saas (Software-as-a-Service) providers, to offer a software-based business solution on a subscription basis.

One example of such a company is JobNimbus, (www.jobnimbus.com) which provides project and customer relationship management software to building contractors. The building contractors are typically small businesses, often with just a few employees, that need to prepare and submit bids; manage jobs; communicate with customers; purchase supplies and building materials; and, so on.

JobNimbus itself has something over 150 employees and supplies services like this to some 6,000 customers who are in such businesses as roofing, framing, window and door installation and other building specialties.

A customer of JobNimbus — say, a roofer — ends up storing data in the JobNimbus system on all of its bids; all of its jobs; all of its customers; its consumption of building materials; and, other topics. Such a customer naturally has an interest

in seeing status reports; analyses of profitability; bid win/loss results; and, other information. So, JobNimbus has an interest in providing such reporting (e.g., dashboards) and analytics along with its other services. The customer may also have other data it wants to store along with that required by the JobNimbus solution.

Qrvey makes all this practical for JobNimbus. Qrvey makes it straightforward for JobNimbus to provide its customers with easily used and visually attractive dashboards; reports; graphs; and, other analytics. Qrvey makes it practical for JobNimbus to store additional data at customer request; for JobNimbus customers to create their own queries, analytics, dashboards and visualizations; and, for JobNimbus to make money on all these services.

What's Different About Qrvey

Of course, there were many popular products for data management and analytics before Qrvey existed. These were already in use at hundreds of thousands of companies, large and small. In connection with self-service by business users, we may think of Tableau or many other products like it. Why wouldn't JobNimbus use one of these products that are already in widespread use?

The reason is that JobNimbus doesn't have quite the same problem as the companies that install products like Tableau for use primarily by employees within the company. JobNimbus is providing data and analytics to paying customers, not employees. Each customer is a company with its own data, which it typically does not want to share with any other JobNimbus customer. Further, each JobNimbus customer — say, a roofer — has its own employees. Each roofer may have its own particular data or analytics that are specific to its company and way of doing business. And, JobNimbus provides services to thousands of such small roofing companies.

Further, JobNimbus operates in a highly competitive market. If it did try to provide Tableau and similar products to all its thousands of customers, that would be extraordinarily expensive. And, it would actually have to deliver about five different commercial products to each customer to provide all the function that Qrvey delivers in one integrated system.

Further, JobNimbus needs to move fast to differentiate its product. JobNimbus needs to make money on the services it offers. And JobNimbus is not a giant organization: its relatively limited product development staff needs efficient ways to create analytics for its customers; to deploy them; to enhance them; and, to keep them in sync with other product features, which are being enhanced on a regular basis.

The needs of JobNimbus are distinctive. And, Qrvey is in the business of focusing on exactly what a Saas Vendor needs to compete; to make its thousands of business customers happy; to make it easy for JobNimbus to maintain and enhance the data and analytics it provides to is customers; and, to help JobNimbus make a profit doing all this.

Use Cases

Qrvey supports a number of different use cases, each with its own requirements. Some examples are:

- Self service analytics: no-code report building backed by robust data security
- Data-as-a-service: users build their own data sets that are stored in the Qrvey system

- Modernization: upgrading legacy databases or consolidating existing, separate analytic systems
- Multi-tenant applications: typical SaaS applications with users requiring custom reporting
- Custom data collection: analyze structured, semi-structured and unstructured data and augment with AI/ML
- Data driven automation: no-code embeddable workflow building within tenants

Architecture

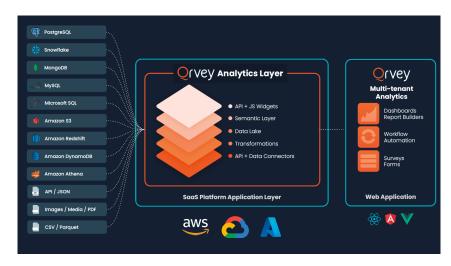Qrvey is deployed as a complete set of data and analytic capabilities within an integrated platform.

Figure 1: *Qrvey Architecture* — a full set of data and analytic functions supporting back end access to a wide variety of customer data sources

Customers

Qrvey serves a wide variety of SaaS providers, each in its own distinctive business. Examples described to the author — in addition to JobNimbus — include a company that provides data protection (cloud backup and recovery); a company that provides IT risk management services; a company that provides cloud infrastructure management; and a company that provides device management for large organizations, such as hospitals.

Recommendation

Qrvey provides a complete solution for data and analytics to the SaaS provider, enabling the SaaS provider to differentiate its business, add value for customers, monetize its services and deliver self-service to business users. It is designed, engineered and priced to fit well into the operations of a SaaS provider, even one with thousands of customers which between them may service tens of thousands of end users.

As with any analytic data platform, a decision to adopt Qrvey should be based on a careful evaluation driven by the customer's specific requirements. Before relying on cost savings or performance advantages, I recommend that customers conduct realistic benchmarks at scale to validate that they will actually realize the benefits they seek.

With that approach in mind, SaaS providers who want to provide data and analytics to their customers ought to take a look at Qrvey. **+++**