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- Maintain and protect your data
- Understand Oracle database architecture
- Troubleshoot your database and keep it running smoothly

Chris Zeis
Chris Ruel
Michael Wessler

Oracle® 11g FOR DUMMIES®

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Oracle® 11g FOR DUMMIES®

by Chris Zeis, Chris Ruel, and Michael Wessler

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Oracle® 11g For Dummies®

Published by
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

www.wiley.com

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Published by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

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Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008942359

ISBNS: 978-0-470-27765-2 (pbk); 978-0-470-46505-9 (ebk); 978-0-470-46507-3 (ebk); 978-0-470-46506-6 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Dedication

Michael Wessler: For my Mom, Barb Wessler. A truly unique woman and loving mother; you're the best! Love always, Mike.

Chris Ruel: I dedicate this book to my parents who raised me well. If it wasn't for them, I don't know what I would be doing today. Well, my dad always said that I would be digging ditches when he scolded me for not applying myself.

Authors' Acknowledgments

Michael Wessler: I would like to thank all my family and friends for being so understanding of the time and commitment it takes when writing a book. It takes countless hours to write one of these and it's those closest to the authors who lose out during that time. In particular, I'd like to thank Angla Imel for understanding "Sorry, I have to write this weekend." I'd also like to thank my fellow authors, Chris Zeis and Chris Ruel, for bringing me into this exciting project. Finally, I'd like to thank Tony and Sue Amico not just for getting me into technical writing, but for being such wonderful family friends.

Chris Ruel: I appreciate the opportunity to be able to cooperate with the other authors of this book, Chris and Mike. A special thanks to the Wiley team (Kyle, Kelly, Tonya, and the mysterious "DB") for putting up with a newbie author who had a lot of questions and a writing style that had to be wrangled into submission.

Lastly, I want thank my lovely girlfriend, Angie, who put up with lots of lost weekends. Also, I apologize to my grilling buddies who wondered where I was half of the summer weekends!

Chris Zeis: I would like to personally thank my cowriters, Chris and Mike, for their support. I would also like to acknowledge the people and resources that helped me through this: my business partners Ron and Ryan at Perpetual Technologies, Inc. (PTI), my good friends and leaders at the Defense Finance and Accounting Serivces, The National Guard of Indiana PFO team (CW4 Ferguson and crew), the great folks at Wiley Publishing, and my Limey.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our online registration form located at http://dummies.custhelp.com. For other comments, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

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Introduction

If you are reading this text, chances are you're considering throwing yourself into the wonderful world of Oracle database administration. The good news is, you have come to right place. The bad news? Well, it's not really bad news . . . but you have quite an adventure ahead of you. Luckily, the authors of this book, your guides in this adventure, can help smooth out any bumpy roads. With over 35 years of combined Oracle experience, we hope to make understanding the Oracle database a fun, enlightening experience.

Oracle is large company with a diverse portfolio of software. It's constantly growing too. It seems like every other week Oracle releases some slick new product or acquires another company. Don't let the overwhelming nature of the big picture discourage you. This book imparts a fundamental knowledge of the basics of database administration. An Oracle career is a constant learning process. Establishing a solid understanding of the building blocks behind the database engine will vault you into a successful Oracle career.

You might be interested to know that the rock behind all of Oracle's products is almost always the database. Take comfort in knowing that in the database world, Oracle is the best. Learning the database is the first step to opening an awful lot of doors for you. Starting at this level is key. After reading this book, you will be well on your way to an interesting career filled with challenges and plenty of opportunity.

There will always be a need for managing information. Every year we see companies grow and accumulate data at a staggering rate. Databases are not a passing fad like some other areas of information technology. The concept of a relational database has been in circulation for almost 40 years and won't be going away anytime soon.

About This Book

Despite this book being titled *Oracle 11g For Dummies,* we focus on the tenets of Oracle database administration. Not only do we cover many of the features released with the 11g version of the database, but also cover the fundamental building blocks. Many of these concepts and techniques apply to past versions of the Oracle and almost certainly future releases.

Sometimes in the book we refer to directories and file locations on both Linux/UNIX and Windows. Essentially the two can be interchanged with a couple of things in mind. For example, here is an ORACLE_BASE value that you might come across on Linux/UNIX:

```
$ORACLE_BASE: /u01/app/oracle
```

In Windows, /u01 is much like a drive letter. They call it a *mount point* in Linux/UNIX.

Also, variables in Linux/UNIX are frequently prefixed with a dollar sign. Furthermore, the slashes are in opposite directions for each operating system. On Linux/UNIX you call / a *forward slash*. In Windows, you use a *back slash* \. Lastly, Windows encapsulates the variable in percent signs. The same previous setting might look like this in Windows:

```
%ORACLE_BASE%: C:\app\oracle
```

We try to give examples of both environments throughout this book.

Who Are You?

People who find themselves needing or wanting a skill set for Oracle databases come from all backgrounds. You might be an application developer, a system administrator, or even a complete newbie. Many of the folks that we come across in this industry became a *database administrator (DBA)* by accident. One day, your company finds itself without a DBA, and the next thing you know, that's you! One trick is to be ready. Above all else, learn on your own and *think* rather than just react.

What's in This Book

Oracle 11g has six different parts with six different major topics.

Part I: You Don't Have to Go to Delphi to Know Oracle

Part I helps prepare you for implementation by discussing why you'd choose Oracle in the first place, what's included in the architecture and

how the elements work together, and what you need to do before starting Oracle database creation.

Part II: Implementing Oracle on Your Own

Part II gets you into the nitty gritty of Oracle database creation by discussing the tools and actual steps you'll take. The Database Creation Assistant (DBCA) is detailed here, as well as the SQL language. You can use either tool; automatic or manual setup is your choice. Finally, you read what to populate your Oracle database with.

Part III: Caring for an Oracle Database

You can't just create and populate an Oracle database: You have to protect it. Part III has the tools and tips you need to secure both the database and the data within. The less glamorous but no less crucial maintenance chores are detailed in this part, along with basic troubleshooting, should you need to do some. Enterprise Manager makes a star appearance here as well; keeping an eye on your database can keep you from having to troubleshoot in the long run.

Part IV: Inspecting Advanced Oracle Technologies

Part IV reveals some rare Oracle goods, including the flashback database, flashback data archive, and database replay. Rolling back for data recovery is detailed here, and high-availability options Real Application Clusters (RAC) and Data Guard are explained as well.

Part V: The Part of Tens

Avoid installation mistakes by reading Part V. Ten simple things to avoid (and another 10 to make sure you do) add up to 20 problem solvers. Head off trouble before it starts.

Icons in This Book

You see these icons throughout this book. They're a heads-up for different situations.

Warnings, if not heeded, will cause you to lose data. And maybe your job.

Remembering these bits of information can help you in the long run. And even the short run. Even on a brief walk.

Tips can save you time or energy or manpower or resources. We realize all these items are in short supply.

Technical Stuff icons indicate things we think are interesting and want to share with you, but can be skipped if you'd rather get straight to the nitty-gritty.

Where to Go from Here

Jump on in! Keep an open mind and try not to get overwhelmed. Like any skilled profession, it isn't always easy but you can do it and we think you'll find it rewarding. This book is written so you can avoid the "too-much-information" reaction. Look at each section as a piece of a big puzzle, and you will soon see how everything starts to take shape.

Part I

You Don't Have to Go to Delphi to Know Oracle

"One of the first things you want to do before installing Oracle 11g is fog the users to keep them calm during the procedure."

In this part . . .

Need to create a database? Considering Oracle? Already administering an Oracle database? Chapter 1 helps you with the first two by touting Oracle's advantages. Chapter 2 explains how Oracle database architecture works and Chapter 3 prepares you for actually implementing the Oracle database.

Chapter 1

A Pragmatic Introduction to Oracle

In This Chapter

- Getting familiar with Oracle
- Implementing grid computing
- Incorporating Oracle into everyday life

Oracle 11g is by far the most robust database software on the market today. It's also the leading database software used and sold all over the world. It has become an enterprise architecture standard for managing data, regardless of the data's size or complexity.

This chapter highlights the reasons to use Oracle 11g.

Introducing a New Kind of Database Management

Oracle is software that efficiently organizes data in a relational manner. Before Oracle, other database software ran on mainframes and used a *hierarchical data model* where data is stored in a tree-like structure as flat files — those crazy COBOL programmers!

The *relational model* is a concept where data is logically stored. These design elements are in the form of tables. Tables have columns, and the columns have attributes (character or number, for example). The tables are organized to store specific data. The tables relate to one another through primary keys.

For more clarity, Oracle, the company, was founded on the database software that transformed the industry into what it is today. Oracle, the company, owns many software products and applications that it has written or acquired, but the database software is still Oracle's core product.

This book focuses more on database administration rather than Oracle applications administration.

Decoding the *g* in Oracle 11g

Oracle has always had some creative marketing techniques. In the late 1990s, the Internet was booming, and everyone wanted Internet technology. Oracle released an upgraded version of Oracle 8 and labeled it 8i. *i* represents the Internet. This addition was a popular move because businesses realized the advantages of providing access via the Internet. Use of the Internet also reduced the labor and cost requirements for client server applications in which the client was installed onto the end user's PC.

As popular as the Internet boom was, grid computing is now the evolution of enterprise architecture management. (Hence the *g,* which stands for grid.)

Pooling Resources with Grid Computing

Grid computing offers a pool of distributed resources for computing services. It's simply described as computing as a service, similar to a utility-type model.

Oracle supports grid computing with its Real Application Clusters (RAC) capability and its Oracle Enterprise Manager (OEM):

- **RAC** uses Oracle's clustering software to manage a highly available environment. If you need additional hardware resources (such as memory or CPU), or experience hardware failure, you simply add another *node* (server) to the grid. (Truthfully, it's more complicated than that, but you get the point.)
- **EM** manages the databases and hosts, which are also called *targets.* It has a web interface that gives you a comprehensive view of each target's state. It handles all the monitoring requirements and provides other web-based tools to interact or perform maintenance with.

Together, RAC and EM make up the components to support true grid computing. RAC is a complex architecture that requires a fair amount of systems and database administrator knowledge, which is unfortunately beyond the scope of this book.

Chapter 13 covers the capabilities and configuration for EM and its lighter single database version, DB Console. You can find additional information about Oracle RAC at www.oracle.com/database/rac_home.html.

Anticipating Technology and Development Trends

Oracle's success is partially due to anticipating, adapting, and establishing database technology trends. You can choose from numerous designing tools and Integrated Development Environment (IDE) technologies, such as Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), Java, and Extensible Markup Language (XML).

These technologies are portable, which reduces hardware or software dependencies and suits standard *business-to-business (B2B)* processing and communication:

- **SOA** is a style of IT architecture that utilizes a build-once/deploy-many concept. Its root definition includes webcentric services that work together to sustain business processes. SOA separates the application function from the underlying software and hardware to allow better use (or reuse) of application processing. These functions or service units are written to be flexible by design and capable of service-to-service communication.

  SOA concepts eliminate hard coding and stove piping of applications for better use with other applications. Generally, SOA is engineered for large enterprise architectures that require a scalable, cost-effective approach to application development and maintenance.

- **Java** is a free programming language that standardizes applications across hardware platforms. This write-once/run-anywhere programming language supports *object-oriented programming (oop)* methodologies. Java is widely used for enterprise-level applications on the web and is very popular because it can run on any operating system without much tweaking. Oracle supported Java shortly after its creation.

- **XML** is an all-purpose language that helps share data across systems via the Internet. It standardizes the programming methods or calls, which allow for B2B communication. XML supports the SOA framework as well.

Meeting Oracle in the Real World

The Oracle 11g database can support any requirement you have for using and storing data. From financial institutions, such as banks, to human resources or manufacturing applications, Oracle can handle it. Its strengths lie in its vast number of software components and its ability to recover to any point in time.

General Oracle use supports a variety of applications that are labeled by type. The following list outlines the majority of database types:

- **Online Transactional Processing (OLTP):** Used for transaction-oriented applications where the response is immediate and records are modified or inserted regularly.
- **Decision Support System (DSS):** Used for processing data and making judgments on data for making decisions. A DSS database usually involves many ad hoc queries.
- **Online Analytical Processing (OLAP):** Used for analyzing data. Typically, OLAP is used for business intelligence or *data mining,* such as budgeting or forecasting.
- **Hybrid:** Acts as a multifunctional database. Most hybrid databases contain transactional, processing ad hoc querying, and batch processing. Larger databases that have service-level requirements are generally isolated to their own databases for performance and manageability reasons.

Uses for Oracle center around data and information. Industries leaders are particularly interested in information. Have you heard the motto "Information Drives Performance"? That motto basically suggests that the performance of a company is relative to the information it has and uses. This information assists in making more competitive and educated decisions.

A good example of this process is how Amazon and eBay use their information. They track user interaction on their Web sites to help define a user's shopping tendencies and interests. They then make programmatic recommendations based on that information to promote purchases, which in turn creates revenue. Information usage in this manner is known as *Business Intelligence* (BI) and is a common practice among many businesses today. Instead of saying, "Build it and they will come," Oracle can say, "Get their information and build them something they can't refuse."

Making the Oracle Decision

The decision to use Oracle over other technologies or database software can be a difficult one. Several things can influence your decision:

- Cost
- Available expertise
- Project scope
- Scale

Most of our clients decided to use Oracle based on available expertise because pricing is fairly competitive across database companies. In one case, Microsoft SQL Server was almost chosen because the developers had ASP/VB.NET experience. If the developers were Java eccentric, the database software would have never been discussed. Management, however, realized that it could use the pre-existing Oracle database infrastructure and still develop with Microsoft products.

Microsoft Access and even Microsoft Excel have their place, but if you want functionality, scalability, recoverability, and security, Oracle is the best choice. Linux gurus also use MySQL or PostgreSQL. Both are free for public use. The difficulty in using or managing MySQL or PostgreSQL is finding qualified expertise. You also need to consider the software support capability of the product. Oracle support provides a deep, mature group and a knowledge base for issues, such as bugs or general guidance.

In comparison to other database software products, Oracle has a similar level of complexity in installing, configuring, and maintaining it. Senior expert-level professionals are sometimes necessary for particular issues, but most novices to Oracle can achieve success without much training or guidance. We've trained many DBAs in our day, and they all had very little knowledge of Oracle but were eager to get their hands dirty. A good understanding of information technology and computers in general definitely helps with the learning curve.

Oracle runs on all the common and latest operating system versions of Linux, UNIX, Microsoft Windows, Mainframes, and Mac. It provides the same functionality and utilities regardless of the operating system or hardware. It also supports 64-bit architecture to add additional memory space for large applications. You can purchase licensing per CPU or per named user.

Additionally, Oracle provides lower-cost licensing for its standard editions. Oracle licensing information is available at www.oracle.com/corporate/pricing/technology-price-list.pdf.