

# Users Plan for Quick Oracle 11g Upgrades

## Security improved; broad grid support still lacking

By China Martens

**O**RACLE DATABASE users last week said they expect to quickly upgrade to the new 11g release, which adds new security and management features but continues to lack support for grid technology.

Oracle 11g, unveiled last week in New York, is the successor to Oracle Corp.'s 10g database, which first shipped in February 2004.

Wachovia Corp. in Charlotte, N.C., hopes to certify 11g for internal use by the end of the year and to have its migration efforts well under way in 2008, according to Ed Mulheren, a senior database administrator.

He said he expects that the improved security features in 11g will help Wachovia meet the ever-increasing regulatory demands on financial services companies.

Mulheren said that updates like 11g's support of case-sensitive passwords bring the database's security capabilities more in line with Wachovia's Windows desktop security policies.

Arup Nanda, senior director of database engineering and architecture at Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc. in White Plains, N.Y., expects that his organization will migrate to Oracle 11g next year.

The hotel chain didn't participate in the beta program because it uses HP-UX and 11g doesn't yet run on that operating system.

"We will have to settle for the production release later this year and then at least six months of testing after that," Nanda wrote in an e-mail. Starwood uses Oracle databases for almost all of its business processes, including reservations, check-in and checkout, and guest loyalty programs, he said.

Nanda did point out that the vendor's upgraded database still lacks the ability to make a tablespace read-only when there are active transactions in the database on

different tablespaces.

Oracle said the 11g database includes new automation features; integration with its disaster recovery software; new data partitioning and compression capabilities; and the ability to store images, large text objects, and advanced data types like XML, medical images and 3-D objects.

### PUTTING THE 'G' IN 11G

Andy Mendelsohn, senior vice president of database server technologies at Oracle, acknowledged that 11g lacks extensive support for grid computing, even though the "g" in both 10g and 11g refers to *grid*.

"We're doing a lot of work in grid for the next release, which will make grid infrastructure even easier to adopt," he said.

Analysts said that if 11g works as promised, it could be a solid, if unspectacular, upgrade.

For example, James Governor, an analyst at RedMonk, a Denver-based consulting firm, said that while the new release includes no "earth-shattering" updates, its performance and availability improvements make it an adequate upgrade.

Donald Feinberg, an analyst at Gartner Inc., added that 11g's ability to manage all sorts of unstructured data could be important because companies are hungry to expand the types of data they can manage.

Beta testing for 11g began in September, but Oracle

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**ARI KAPLAN**, PRESIDENT, INDEPENDENT ORACLE USERS GROUP



had been closemouthed on a launch date until about a month ago.

"Oracle was a little bit more cautious, wanting to make sure they got the product right," said Ari Kaplan, president of the Independent Oracle Users Group and a senior consultant at Datalink Corp., a database consulting firm in Chanhassen, Minn.

Kaplan said the key upgrade in the new database is improved integration of 11g with Oracle's Audit Vault and Database Vault software, which will help prevent database administrators from making unauthorized changes to data.

"There's a key flaw with all databases," he said. "If they're smart, a DBA can modify data and cover their tracks." Oracle's vaulting software ensures that every action a database administrator executes effectively "goes into a lockbox that they are powerless to modify," Kaplan added.

A Linux version of the database will ship in August. Pricing was not disclosed. ■ **Martens** is a reporter for the IDG News Service. Computerworld's **Marc L. Songini** contributed to this story.

### NEW FEATURES

## Oracle 11g

- Advanced automation and self-management tools
- Integration with Oracle Data Guard disaster recovery software
- New data partitioning and compression capabilities
- Support for large objects like images and advanced data types
- Improvements in XML performance
- Embedded online analytical processing cubes