

PRODUCT FLASH

Oracle Database 11g: A Giant Step for Database Professionals

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IN THIS PRODUCT FLASH

In this product flash, we examine the impact of the next-generation database, Oracle Database 11g, on the Japan market. Oracle Database 11g was announced by Oracle Japan (abbreviated as Oracle below) on September 3, 2007. It is a product that not only showcases the database expertise honed through the years by Oracle, which has just stepped into its thirtieth year in the market since the debut of the world's first commercial RDBMS Oracle Database 2 in 1977, but also one that symbolizes the giant step that Oracle has taken in bringing the database to the next generation.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On September 3, 2007, Oracle announced the new database management system, Oracle Database 11g, into the Japan market. Based on a vision to deliver unparalleled quality, user-friendliness, and efficiency in data management, Oracle Database 11g was developed with the largest size of engineering resource ever put together on a single product in the world and in history. Oracle Database 11g is the product of a development process that incorporates the voices of user groups and partners to deliver enhanced performance, security and automated management. As a next-generation database, the product touts the following new features:

- SecureFiles
- Real Application Testing
- Advanced Compression
- Total Recall

SecureFiles enables large unstructured object data such as healthcare X-ray image and engineering drawings that were managed on file systems in the past to be directly stored and managed within the database to resolve performance bottlenecks. It supports transparent database management, security, and compression functions. By having all enterprise information, including procedures and functions, stored within a single unified database, Oracle has taken a step closer to its long-term vision of helping users take control of information and realize greater data management efficiency.

Real Application Testing is arguably the most innovative of all the new options featured in the top-end enterprise edition of Oracle Database 11g. The function can capture real-life database workloads and replay them in a test environment. This helps users test and fine-tune their systems for optimal performance. By zooming in on functions that they actually use in their work processes, they can save a lot of time and resources on database design and tests. In the past, new versions released with improved functions/performance often ended up in oblivion as it was difficult for users to carry out such complex tests. With Real Application Testing, the database can analyze the impact of environmental and system changes on its own performance. This function is also useful when the user is replacing hardware or OS and wishes to test out the impact on the system. It is especially helpful in the enterprise market where applications and infrastructure are often managed separately as a recent trend.

Total Recall allows users to track and maintain data changes easily and inexpensively through continuous data archiving. In the global environment where compliance has come to the fore, the ability to recall data promptly as and when required is much valued. In the past, it was extremely expensive, though necessary, to store massive amounts of data in storage systems. With Total Recall, it is now much easier and more affordable to track and recall past data. Undoubtedly, this will lend a powerful boost to the compliance systems.

Advanced Compression is a versatile technology that effectively compresses massive tables and non-structured data. It reduces storage capacities and realizes a host of other benefits such as reduced network loads and improved backup efficiency. The function allows users to save on systems cost, power, and space.

With its lethal arsenal of new and enhanced features, Oracle Database 11g offers concrete solutions to user demands on current and next-generation databases. It embodies the technological prowess amassed by top database vendor Oracle over the years, its vision, and its astute ability to discern market needs.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

We believe that the Japan database market will slow down due to a maturing IT market, the infiltration of open source, and the pervasion of multi-core CPUs. CAGR 2006 - 2011 is forecast at 4.5%.

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Japan Software Infrastructure and Tools: Product Flash

However, this does not mean that the database will be commoditized or that there is no more room for technological innovations. As Oracle has demonstrated with Oracle Database 11g, databases can be put to wider use and there is no limit to technological innovations. The value of database can be raised even further.

With the release of Oracle Database 11g, Oracle has effectively driven a wedge of at least three years between itself and rivals IBM and Microsoft. As a commercial product with advanced practical functions, Oracle Database 11g also has a strong edge over open source databases in which immense future growth is predicted.

Of course, the new functions in Oracle Database 11g are not picture perfect and there is still room for enhanced performance and user-friendliness. Notwithstanding this, the position of Oracle Database 11g in the enterprise market is rock solid, being an extremely important product that shows the road map for current databases to evolve into professional-oriented systems. This is a reference that every database engineer and manager should take a leaf from.

The new functions currently offered as options in the enterprise edition of Oracle Database 11g will find their way to the standard edition and other databases, including open source systems, in a few years' time. IDC sees Oracle Database 11g as an epoch-making product that represents a giant step toward next-generation systems.