

An Oracle White Paper  
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# WebCenter Suite 11g: Empowering Users to Create an Agile and Intelligent Business

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## Executive Overview

Information workers today need more agile, responsive, and context-rich enterprise portals in order to drive innovation and keep their organization's competitive edge. With the influence of Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, wikis, and social networking, employees, customers and partners expect these rich Web 2.0 capabilities to be included in the applications, portals and Web sites that they use. This means that organizations will need to deliver rich, participatory enterprise portals that make it easy for users to immediately locate what they need through a variety of ways, quickly access and connect with like-minded users and experts, and directly personalize and customize applications to meet their specific needs.

Oracle WebCenter Suite 11g enables organizations to create flexible and rich portals, applications and Web sites, and places robust customization components and enterprise-ready Web 2.0 capabilities directly into the hands of users to increase productivity and drive business agility and intelligence. At its core, Oracle WebCenter Suite 11g speeds the delivery of these next generation applications and portals that blend composite interfaces, social communities, web applications, along with departmental and enterprise portals. This enables IT to maximize existing hardware, software, and resources as well as deliver applications that meet business needs faster.

Specifically for business users, WebCenter Suite 11g includes a number of capabilities to that empower users and improve productivity. **WebCenter Spaces** is an out-of-the-box application that enables users to build and manage dynamic online communities in order to quickly find and share information, collaborate on new ideas, and manage projects without waiting for IT to build a specialized solution. **WebCenter Services** contains a complete set of Enterprise 2.0 and social computing services that allow users to easily integrate these capabilities directly with enterprise applications, portals, and business processes in order to create richer connections and improve the overall effectiveness of applications and the business. WebCenter's **Business Dictionary and Composer** gives business users role-specific views of pre-packaged integrations with all the resources in the enterprise, such as enterprise applications, content and rich media, business intelligence, and business processes. With direct access to these resources, business users can simply personalize and customize their portals and applications without the help of IT.

## Introduction

In today's dynamic global economy, organizations are bombarded with the pressures of hyper-competitive markets. They can no longer take a "wait and see" approach. Rather they need the ability to innovate faster and react quicker to stay one step ahead of the competition. In order to remain competitive, organizations must address three key challenges in order to succeed in today's economy. First, they need to make it easy for users to access and interact with all of the information sources and applications they need to be productive. Second, they need to be able to enhance their portals and enterprise applications with rich Web 2.0 services to present a more comprehensive view across business processes. Finally, organizations need IT departments to deliver upgrades, customizations and new applications faster, as well as give users the ability to customize and personalize applications on their own in order to respond faster to the dynamic market.

Traditional enterprise portal technology addresses certain aspects of these challenges, however they lack the speed, flexibility, integrated Enterprise 2.0 services, and user-driven application customization that businesses need to remain competitive in today's dynamic economy. What organizations need is a single, unified enterprise portal platform that is flexible enough to build any type of portal, Web site or composite application, includes integrated, enterprise-ready Web 2.0 services, and has the capabilities that empower business users to build their own social networks and applications as well as customize and personalize existing applications without the assistance of IT.

Oracle WebCenter Suite 11g effectively addresses these challenges by providing a complete, open and manageable enterprise portal framework that integrates Enterprise 2.0 capabilities directly into business processes, portals and applications to create richer connections and deliver faster time-to-value. Its unified, standards-based portal platform supports the creation of all styles of Web sites, portals, and composite applications and is designed to enable business users to easily evolve these applications as their business requirements change.

## Access Relevant Information

The information explosion presents challenges for knowledge workers. According to a study by IDC<sup>1</sup>, the digital universe, documents, rich media files, wikis, blogs, Web sites, etc., is projected to hit 1.8 zettabytes (1,800 exabytes) in 2011, a 10-fold increase since 2006. Additionally, the recent flurry of mergers and acquisitions can increase the number and complexity of applications that knowledge workers must use to complete business tasks. In conjunction with the downsizing happening in many organizations, there are fewer people to manage and integrate these systems. The impact of these forces on organizations and their knowledge workers is significant. Not only do these various factors continue to create complexities for IT organizations charged with managing a diverse set of information, applications and systems, but also knowledge workers continue to struggle and waste time accessing, finding, and using relevant information and systems. Without the proper aggregation, integration and categorization of these various information, applications and systems, an organization's competitive edge will erode even faster.

## Harness the Information Explosion to Create a More Intelligent Organization

Organizations can create a more agile organization and make faster, more intelligent business decisions by giving users the ability to integrate, aggregate, categorize, filter, and share all these information sources. To achieve this, organizations will need enterprise portal technology that is flexible enough to access and manage a diverse universe of information, yet robust enough to integrate relevant information with traditional enterprise infrastructure and applications. They will also need user-friendly services and capabilities that allow business users to easily create a single-view of all the resources available, and quickly share these findings, resources and information with other users and groups within, across, and even outside their organization.

## Users Manage Information and Create Dynamic Business Communities

New in Oracle WebCenter Suite 11g is WebCenter Spaces, a ready-to-use application that delivers dynamic business communities with all the rich WebCenter Services to empower teams to quickly and efficiently manage their information, applications, projects, and people without requiring IT assistance. It brings together the latest technology around Enterprise 2.0 and social computing, communities, personal productivity, and ad-hoc team interactions without any development effort. Oracle WebCenter Spaces allows users to work more effectively with project

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<sup>1</sup> John F. Gantz, IDC, "The Diverse and Exploding Digital Universe – An Updated Forecast of Worldwide Information Growth through 2011," March 2008

teams and work groups, including teams that span multiple geographies, and even include external members. It eliminates or reduces duplication of efforts and content inconsistencies, and it enables the sharing and collaboration on team content, focusing an organization's valuable resources on solving business problems, tapping into new ideas, and reducing time-to-market.

By providing a dynamic foundation for users to work together in teams and aggregate relevant information, WebCenter Spaces helps your enterprise address many challenges, such as:

- Inefficient communication across geographically dispersed teams
- Error prone manual business processes slow the progress and completion of projects
- Relevant information is locked away on individual desktops and inaccessible by others
- Overusing email for collective content authoring, resulting in version control issues
- Distributing business intelligence and analytics in a time-sensitive manner
- Accessing Enterprise Applications in-context of business processes

WebCenter Spaces includes Personal Spaces, Business Role Pages, Group Spaces and Group Space Templates, enabling business users to create and manage productive online business communities integrated with their enterprise and departmental portals.

#### **User-Created, Customized and Managed Individual Work Environments**

Personal Spaces provide individual users with a dashboard of all the information they believe relevant to them. Users' personal spaces likely include links or portlets for critical applications they use every day, they can add their own personal feeds from a friend or colleague's social network pages, and it's an easy way to quickly access their personal email, tasks, recent documents, and the tags they use most. Personal Spaces deliver a way for each user to have their own set of personal pages that they can create, change, and even share with others. It's an ideal way to streamline a knowledge worker's access to a wide variety of information sources, applications, business processes and data so they can be more productive.

#### **Deliver Role-Specific Applications, Content and Communications**

The Business Role Pages provide a powerful way to communicate with specific types of users within departments or functional areas and even across the company. As defined in an enterprise, users have specific roles for their various groups from administrators to sales representatives, engineers to business managers. Communicating with a specific set of people in these roles can be challenging. Business role pages provide an efficient way to attach a page or set of pages to a specific enterprise role so that all the users are kept up-to-date with information specific to them and their job function.

### Create Dynamic Online Communities

Group Spaces provide a meaningful way to manage all project details involving any group of users. Group spaces also make it easy to deliver a departmental or enterprise portal without making the business wait on IT. Additionally, Group Spaces can be completely customized by business users. They can make simple customizations to navigation, color scheme, or the look-and-feel of portlets. Business users also have access to a role-based view of various pre-integrated enterprise resources, so they can easily add relevant applications, content, business intelligence, or business processes directly to their group space to make it more useful. With these new dynamic business communities and the large number of pre-integrated Enterprise 2.0 and social computing services, teams can start working immediately and enterprise portals can be delivered in an extremely short time. Finally, what sets WebCenter Spaces apart from all other offerings is that these dynamic business communities can be completely embedded into a business process or a modern business application. This enables organizations to capture these unstructured activities as part of the business process or application, providing a complete and integrated view across the business.

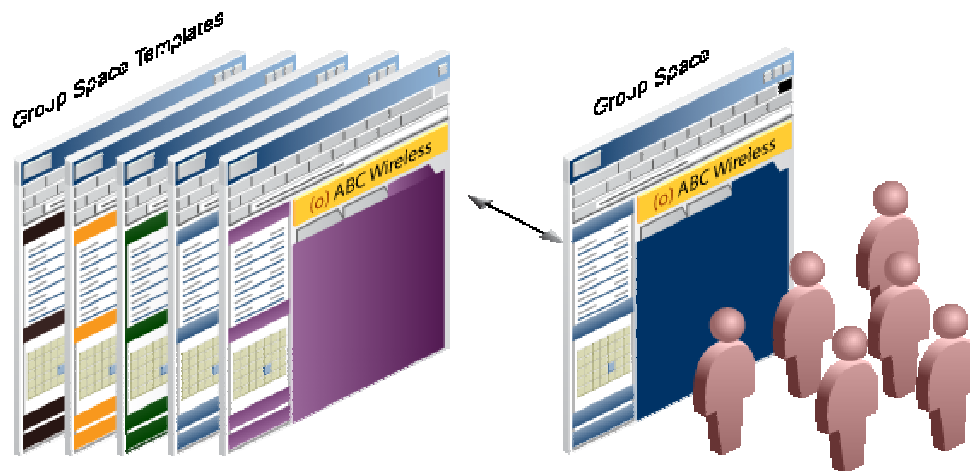


Figure 1. WebCenter Group Spaces and Group Space Templates

### Achieve Immediate Productivity and Consistency Across Projects

Group Space Templates provide a consistent look and feel, and an easy way for everyone to get started. While WebCenter Spaces is optimally configured out-of-the-box so that business users can be productive immediately, there are many applications or portals that require business-specific components to be tailored for a targeted use or process. The Group Space Templates allow any user to save a group space that they have created as a template for others to use directly, saving time and ensuring consistent views of information and resources across similar or related projects or groups.

## Enterprise 2.0 Delivers Richer Connections for a More Intelligent Business

Bridging different data and systems is essential for an agile and intelligent business; however traditional technologies that bridge these various systems do not go far enough. The impact of Web 2.0 technologies in consumer-facing Websites, such as blogs, wikis, tags or social networking, has led organizations to realize that these technologies can add significant value to the business. Instead of deploying another “island” or silo of information, what organizations need is Enterprise 2.0 - enterprise-class Web 2.0 technologies that integrate directly into existing applications and systems and also meet their security and availability requirements. To deliver richer connections and become a more agile and intelligent business, organizations will need an enterprise portal platform that contains pre-integrated, standards-based Enterprise 2.0 services. These Enterprise 2.0 services need to be easily accessed, integrated and utilized by users. By giving users the ability to use and integrate Enterprise 2.0 services such as tags, links, wikis, activities, blogs or social networking directly with their portals and applications, they are empowered to make richer connections, optimize their productivity, and ultimately increase the value of their applications.

### Enhance Applications and Portals with Social Computing Services

Oracle WebCenter Suite includes WebCenter Services – a comprehensive set of standards-based components that enrich existing portals and Web sites with the industry's most complete and open set of Enterprise 2.0 capabilities. These Social Computing Services include wikis, blogs, online awareness and communications, content collaboration and social networks. Oracle WebCenter Services works with all Oracle portal offerings, enabling organizations to enhance their existing enterprise portals and Web sites, and empowering users with Enterprise 2.0 services that work with their existing information systems. The services are integrated so that business users can also use them together (for example, you can add an Instant Messaging and Presence link to a discussion forum to talk with a product expert directly from a forum topic), manage them effectively, and even model relationships between users and information to find new experts, create richer connections, and discover new ways to improve your organization's performance.

To make it easy to apply to your organization, WebCenter Services are grouped into two categories: social computing services and personal productivity services.

#### **Social Computing Services**

At the heart of Oracle WebCenter is the concept of group participation and social computing, linking users and services together with enterprise data and systems in useful ways. For example:

- Sales people can contribute to reports and planning documents linked to a customer relationship management record.

- Managers can bring together data from enterprise systems with documents in Microsoft Office and securely share the results with customers and colleagues.
- Users can manage documents and projects in a group space, create and edit project documents in a wiki, and send related announcements to group members.

The services that support these group concepts are:

- **Announcements service:** Offers an effective group communication mechanism for important information around activities, events, processes, and overall updates.
- **Discussions service:** Enables community discussions on a set of topics, facilitate quick resolution of issues, and provide a searchable knowledge base. In addition, there are many different portlets to drill into specific areas of the Discussions service such as hot topics, favorite or watched topics, and updated topics.
- **Blog (Web log) service:** Provides the means for an individual or a community to share personal insights with online audiences. This service supports two types of blogs: personal blogs for individual users and community blogs that enable members to share their views on a particular topic.
- **Instant Messaging and Presence service:** Enables users to see who in their community is online and provides instant access to interaction options, such as sending an instant message, writing an e-mail, and displaying a peer's profile. Users can also see a list of their buddies. The Presence service can be used to quickly “activate” any username on the screen. For example a user can use the “Click-to-Dial” capability, where a user sees a person's name, clicks on the presence icon, then selects “Click to Dial” to initiate a phone call.
- **Wiki service:** Provides the means to work simultaneously on documents and share ideas, either in the context of communities, or as individuals. The flexible edit options allow users leverage either their word processor or the Wiki syntax to make changes and all changes, and versions are tracked, making it easy for users to view how the content has evolved over time.
- **Document Library service:** Enables users to display and manage their documents and files in a content repository. Many features of the underlying content repository are surfaced including versioning, tagging, check-in and checkout, linking content to other services, and connecting with the content author directly.
- **Events service:** Provides group calendars to enable users to schedule meetings, appointments, and any other type of team event. Additionally, a dedicated Events page is available to every group space where the moderator has enabled the Events service.
- **Links service:** Provides an easy way for users to share their knowledge with others. Often, there are many tasks that require users to remember the relationship between different items. For example, an employee might have to remember where to file their expense reports, and also have to remember where the document describing the accounting rules for expense

reports has been stored. Using Links, users can connect seemingly unrelated items together. In this way, they do not have to rely on memory and, just as important, new users receive the benefit of others' work, saving a significant amount of time.

- **Lists service:** Allows users to create and manage all types of lists. This powerful capability allows users to keep track of meeting action items, open issues, new product or project ideas, project status, and more. Different types of data can be stored in a list, including a "person." In this way, when the user's name shows up on a list, it is automatically enabled with the Presence service as mentioned above.
- **Tags service:** Provides a way for users to mark items that they use infrequently so that they can find them quickly when required. In addition, tagging allows for others to find items based on their own labels instead of a corporate taxonomy. The capability to tag items delivers a better organization of information based on how users really access and label the items, often called a "folksonomy." Since tags are directly integrated with searching, users can immediately find what they need. The Tags service also includes portlets for creating and maintaining a tag, deciding if the tag is shared or private, favorite tags, tags used by others, and a Tag Cloud view. The Tags service can be added to any application or portal to enable this powerful new way of sharing information and knowledge.
- **Activity Graphs service:** Enables the tracking of any kind of activity that a user performs in order to influence results and recommendations used by other services. For example, most social computing sites today allow users to post their own information about their personal activities, accomplishments, thoughts, and friends. When applied in a business context, the work that a user does (posting documents, resolving customer escalations, winning a sales bid, developing a new product or service, etc.) needs to influence the user's expertise as seen by other users. The Activity Graphs service provides an extensible engine to log, track, analyze, and recommend users' items and actions that others might find helpful. For example, if you wanted to resolve a specific customer issue, then users could leverage Activity Graphs to help find another person in the organization that has dealt with a similar problem. The Activity Graphs service allows for experts to be identified and surfaced to any user's network.
- **People Connections service:** Enables users to quickly assemble their business networks. This People Connections service includes portlets that show off a user's profile, a visualization of the user's network, a display all the invitations pending and accepted from others, a whiteboard (also known as a "wall") to display relevant information about one's role or self, and monitor and manage received and given kudos. With the Activity Graphs service, the People Connections service provides a view on these activity streams including filters for the user to determine the type of activities that are of interest. Together these two services make social computing services much more valuable within and across enterprises.
- **Oracle WebCenter Analytics:** Enables users to create usage reports for any custom application or portal. Oracle WebCenter Analytics can be used to determine the important pages, most used content items, most active Group Spaces, number of users visiting these

different sites and services, and even provides recommendations to make the Activity Graphs service more valuable. Oracle WebCenter Analytics delivers the type of information business users require in order to determine how and where to allocate resources for site enhancement or improvement.

- **Oracle WebCenter Ensemble:** Enables the creation of “mashable” components that can be surfaced through the Oracle Business Dictionary to make it easy for users to add different widgets, gadgets or resources to any page or site, on any platform, enabling the creation of enterprise mashups from just about any source.

### Personal Productivity Services

Many Oracle WebCenter Services are specifically designed to work with standard personal productivity tools, offering functionality focused at the individual rather than the group. These services include:

- **Mail service:** Exposes a user’s e-mails in the application or portal and enables them to perform basic e-mail interactions, such as view, read, create, and delete messages, send attachments, and reply to or forward an existing e-mail. Often times, emails contain the list of people working together to resolve an open issue or working together on a project. Within the pre-built portlets that are part of Oracle WebCenter Services, a user can even directly create a Group Space from this email note. With this capability, users stay focused on the task at hand and not on how they create an area or Space to manage the task.
- **Worklist service:** Surfaces business processes in the context of the current business scenario and enables users to view and take action on all tasks and notifications from a central place. Often times, the only place a user gets a complete list of all the processes requiring their attention is in their email inbox. The Worklist service provides an easy way to bring together to all the different workflow tasks from distinct applications and delivers them in an easy to use portlet so users can quickly respond.
- **Notes service:** Enables users to track and manage simple personal notes by providing a means of “jotting down” and retaining quick bits of personal information.
- **Recent Activities service:** Enables users to quickly view the most recent documents, discussions, announcements, feeds, and other actions happening in their Group Spaces. In one location, users can get an aggregated view of items they want to work on and review.
- **RSS (Really Simple Syndication) service:** Exposes content from many different Web sites in a news-feed viewer and provides an RSS feed for others to consume. It’s a quick way of publishing information out, and consuming information from many sources to get an aggregated view of what is occurring around the task, process, or activity that is being tracked.
- **Search service:** Helps users locate data, documents, experts, and information stored anywhere within the enterprise. Oracle Secure Enterprise Search (SES) is integrated with this service.

## Create a More Agile and Responsive Business

Business users traditionally depend heavily on their IT organization for application or portal customizations. However, in today's hyper-competitive business environment, speed is essential to success. Organizations can no longer afford to wait long periods of time for IT to fulfill application enhancements or customization requests. Additionally, with the resource constraints facing many IT organizations today, it doesn't make good business sense to use precious IT resources on simple customization requests from the business. What organizations need is a proper set of customization and personalization capabilities that are simple enough for the business user to use yet powerful enough to create the enhancements they require.

### Place Customization in the Hands of Users

To successfully place customization capabilities in users' hands, organizations will need to provide an integrated set of capabilities that allow users to customize applications and portals completely on their own. It needs to be easy and intuitive. First, the different enterprise resources that a user can use to customize their application should be neatly displayed based on the user's role. Second, they need a powerful, yet user-friendly capability that allows them to customize their application or portal with a few simple mouse clicks. Finally, user created personalization and customizations need to persist throughout the lifecycle of the application or portal.

### User-driven Customization and Personalization

Business users can customize or personalize any page using WebCenter Composer's on-the-fly visual page editing features. Users access and select different resource components available in WebCenter's Business Dictionary in order to add new content to the page. The Business Dictionary provides a role-based view of available components or resources, and these components can include information from a variety of enterprise resources such as enterprise applications, managed content, rich media, business processes, or business intelligence systems. Together, WebCenter's Composer and Business Dictionary give users access to a powerful, yet easy to use, set of tools to personalize and extend their WebCenter portals and applications without involving IT.

### User Customizations Persist Throughout the Portal Lifecycle

Customizations change everyone's view of an application or portal and are typically required to "brand" a delivered application or portal for a specific customer or purpose. Customizations include simple changes such as inserting a logo or altering the colors to match those of your organization. They can also involve adding items to a page, changing the layout of a page, altering a supplied process, and specifically tailoring the delivered application or portal to meet any business need. WebCenter Composer provides a flexible model for effectively storing these customizations through Oracle's Metadata Services (MDS). Traditionally, these customizations

are stored as part of the application, and are lost when a patch or upgrade to the base application is deployed. With Oracle WebCenter Suite 11g and Oracle MDS, all base application definitions, customizations, and personalizations are stored in the Oracle MDS repository as a layer on top of the base application. The benefit to business users is their customizations and personalizations are maintained throughout the lifecycle of the application. With Oracle WebCenter Suite 11g, IT can develop and deploy new versions of applications without losing customizations or personalizations that were added over the life of the product by business users. The result is better IT responsiveness and a more agile and intelligent business.

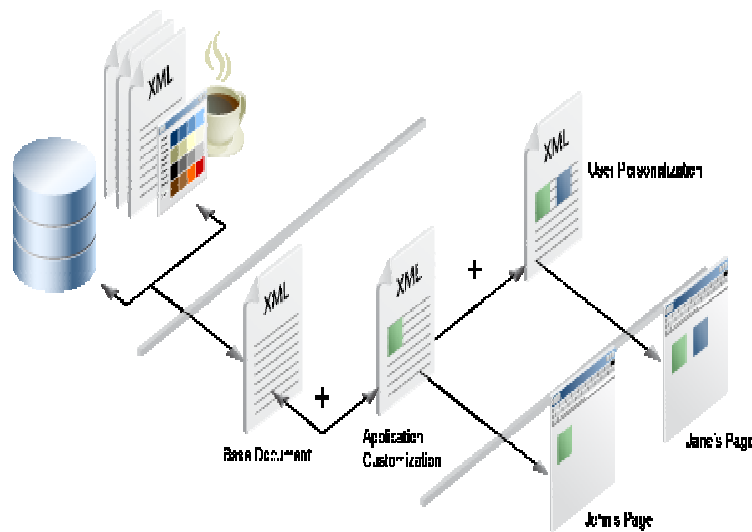


Figure 2: Customizations and personalizations persist throughout the portal lifecycle with Oracle Metadata Services

### User Create “My Page” Views with Personalizations

Personalizations made with WebCenter’s Composer and Business Dictionary change a user’s view—and only their view—of a portal or application page. Other users are not affected by the changes a user makes to a page. Many web sites and social services on the Internet today provide a means for users to create their own “personal” page. Users can decide what is important to them and organize information so that it is quick and easy to find. WebCenter Composer enables personalizations by displaying information from WebCenter’s Business Dictionary in a role-based view, so that users see only resource components relevant to them. For example, to personalize a page a sales representative might select a list of current customers, a list of current leads or sales opportunities, and a list of past customers and products up for renewal. A customer support representative might see only a subset of these components in his or her view of the Resource Catalog. The important point is that individuals can tailor the page to add any combination of

components to their pages whenever they want or need them, without affecting everyone else's view of the page.

WebCenter Composer is also leveraged extensively inside Oracle WebCenter Spaces to enable users to customize and personalize Personal and Group Spaces. The Oracle WebCenter Spaces application provides a working example of how end users can take an active role in managing and altering their work environment to match their specific needs and requirements, creating a more agile and intelligent business.

## Conclusion

The hyper-competitive economy and resource constraints facing organizations today require them to find ways to make their applications, portals and Web sites more agile and intelligent and their knowledge workers more productive. Organizations need to provide faster access to relevant information and resources, enhance existing applications and business processes with rich Enterprise 2.0 services, and place customization capabilities directly into the hands of their business users. Oracle WebCenter Suite 11g successfully meets these challenges providing a complete, open and manageable enterprise portal platform that creates richer connections and delivers faster time-to-value. With Oracle WebCenter Suite 11g, organizations can dramatically improve user productivity by empowering users to create their own dynamic online communities and work environments, develop richer connections and integrate Enterprise 2.0 capabilities directly into their business processes and enterprise applications, and evolve applications on their own as their business requirements change.



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Users to Create an Agile and Intelligent  
Business  
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Oracle Corporation  
World Headquarters  
500 Oracle Parkway  
Redwood Shores, CA 94065  
U.S.A.

Worldwide Inquiries:  
Phone: +1.650.506.7000  
Fax: +1.650.506.7200  
oracle.com



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