

Volume 12

Published: May 2, 2003

Web Site: <http://www.dbaonline.org>

Email: admin@dbaonline.org



News Letter

*DBA Online - On the front line of database administration
DBA Online powers Oracle DBA*

DBA Online

Contents

Summary of Technical Seminar on 4/26/2003	1
Message from the President	3
Larry Ellison: Oracle Betting On Linux	4
Oracle DBA Quiz	5



Summary of Technical Seminar on 4/26/2003

The dismal rainy weather and the fear of SARS didn't seem to affect the DBAOnline gathering -- around 200 members and guests attended DBAOnline's technical seminar in Clarion Hotel, Edison NJ on April 26, 2003.

The five-hour seminar started when our hostess Ms. Yan Zhang introduced the president of DBAOnline and Youngtech, Mr. David Wang, to the audience and welcomed him to give us opening remarks.

David briefly went over the history of DBAOnline and its current status. Then he introduced current IT industry trends and shared his vision on future development. He emphasized that Linux technology has become more and more popular due to various reasons. When he finished the speech referencing Larry Ellison's statement: "We'll be running our whole business on Linux", everybody could feel that the Linux wave is looming.

Although configuring SQL*Net connection is DBA's 101 task, few people had



experience with LDAP technology. Mr. John Zhong, Senior Oracle DBA from Goldman Sachs, analyzed the pros and cons of different SQL*Net connection methodologies, including tnsnames and naming server. In detail he introduced LDAP, another way to set up sqlnet administrations. His

presentation covered details on how to add TNS Service Names to an OID, how to configure and create an OracleContext. Although it is still a quite new technology to most of the audience, LDAP started to be widely used due to following reasons: easy administration and implementation, flexibility, scalability and cost savings to the companies. It should be one of the skills that add value to our jobs.



Mr. Dave Anderson, founder and senior instructor of Skillbuilders, gave us a presentation on oracle 9i new features for DBA/developers. Even though many people were already quite familiar with the topic, Dave's instruction was so thorough and organized that it certainly brought our 9i knowledge to a

new height. Plus, he provided many ready-to-use scripts to help us familiarize with the new features ourselves. Dave had over 20 years of database experience and is a nationally recognized oracle expert and speaker. We are really very honored to have him as our speaker! The great news is: he also liked our audience and agreed to present at our seminar again in the future.

This seminar is probably one of the biggest events for DBAOnline. We had several vendors supported us financially and enabled us to give quality IT education and advancement free to the public. Among them are two of the biggest vendors in the industry, Computer Associates and Quest Software Company. Mr. Jeff Surretsky, a technical team leader from Quest, explained some theories behind performance tunings with his in-depth Oracle knowledge. He also introduced their new tuning tool Quest Central that can leverage DBA's tuning effort. Ms Sandra Dearing from Computer Associates talked about the considerations involved during decision-making processes as why and how to choose off-the-shelf tools. It really gave us some guidelines when we need to use that analysis methodology to purchase tools later.



It seemed to support David's "Why Linux" topic, Mr. Sean Hull, senior consultant and founder of iheavy Inc, gave the presentation on Oracle on Linux -- low cost RAC with Firewire. Sean instructed us with amazing details on how to set up a real oracle 9i RAC on Linux with just a few hundred dollars. He also went over the whole architectural

picture of the RAC system. His presentation handout sure can be our manual if we want to gain hands on experience on Linux and RAC and add something impressive to our resumes.

As always, hours passed by without notice. Quest software also brought the audience some good surprise: there were T-shirts available for those people who dropped their business cards at the door after seminar! And of course the T-shirts went out quickly!

With or without T-shirt, everybody had a great time. Many attendees expressed that they enjoyed meeting their old and new DBA friends as much as learning hot technologies.

At the end Yan thanked all the speakers, vendors, guests and members for their valuable work and involvement to make the seminar another success.

Keep up good work, DBAonline!



Message from the President



Dear DBA Online members,

I hope that everybody is doing well. DBAOnline continues to grow and our membership has reached 600. In order to better serve the expanding group, our committee recruited 5 new members and is also divided into the following groups, each with appointed team leader:

Seminar group led by Carol Sheng; Membership activity group led by Wei Tang; Vendor relation group led by June Li; Web group led by Daniel Hu; Media relation group led by Pauline Wan. The new Editor-in-chief is Yan Zhang; treasurer is Yi Han and Webmaster is Warren Yang. Each group has its independence but the whole committee still works in close collaboration.

The new committee has generated a lot of new ideas. One move we have made was to find your needs through surveys. Thanks for your support -- we have received very positive responses. Based on the survey results, we are adjusting our directions. If you attended our seminar on April 26, you probably already noticed that we tried to accommodate your needs when choosing speakers and topics. We continued to work on gaining support from vendors in order to make the membership and seminar free to everybody. In order to strengthen the bond among our members, we plan to organize more fun activities such as picnic, rafting, beach volleyball, etc.

I feel lucky that we have a strong committee team. Every committee member is willing to sacrifice his/her free time. They have spent a lot of time in looking for potential speakers and vendors, in designing survey and summarizing responses, and in the overall seminar preparations. I would like to thank our committee members for their tremendous efforts.

Ultimately, the success of DBAOnline depends on every member. Therefore, your feedback and suggestions are very valuable to us. So far we have received strong support from our members. Here, I would like to express thanks on behalf of American DBAOnline to every of you for your ongoing support!

Wish everybody success and I hope that we can grow together!

David Wang
President of American DBAOnline
May. 2, 2003



Larry Ellison: Oracle Betting On Linux

By Dan Orzech

Oracle is seeing a huge trend towards Linux, says the company's CEO, and is pitching its new database clustering technology as the ideal way to take advantage of the open source operating system and low-cost Intel hardware.

Move aside, IBM. Oracle is jumping on the Linux bandwagon.

Larry Ellison, the outspoken CEO of the world's second-largest software vendor, revealed yesterday that Oracle is seeing "a stunning trend" towards Linux, and is "betting very heavily" on the open source operating system.

The combination of Linux running on powerful but inexpensive Intel processors, and Oracle's new 9i Real Application Clusters (RAC) database technology, offers "a huge competitive advantage," according to Ellison.

Ellison's comments came yesterday, during an analyst conference call to discuss the Redwood Shores, Calif.-based software vendor's quarterly results.

Oracle is seeing tremendous amount of customer interest in Linux, according to Ellison.

"It's hard to believe the numbers," he said. "In 25 years at Oracle, I've never seen anything with this much of an uptake. We think Linux is a huge opportunity."

While Ellison and other company officials did not specify how much of the Linux activity involves the RAC clustering software, Ellison spoke at length about the advantages of running RAC on Linux.

RAC's failover capabilities let users run Oracle database applications on groups of inexpensive Linux Intel-based servers, according to Ellison.

"You can afford to use a bunch of these low cost machines," he said, "and it doesn't matter if they fail periodically, because our software conceals the fact that you're having hardware component failures. If one or two or three fail, the rest keep running, and your users don't even notice it."

Oracle says it has about 900 customers using RAC, although a large number of them appear to be in development, and not yet running the product for production applications.

The company would not say how many of these 900 RAC users are running on Linux, although it did mention several who are, including Southwest Airlines, the Federal Aviation Administration, and The Statue of Liberty Ellis Island Foundation, which is using it for an online database which will allow people to look for relatives who entered the United States at Ellis Island. The database lists the names of 25 million people who passed through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1924.

RAC on Linux is also powering the online version of game maker Electronic Arts' popular PC game The Sims, which that company launched earlier this week.

Oracle has released as open source several of the pieces required to run RAC on Linux, including its Clustered File System software, according to Rene Bonvanie, vice president of marketing for Oracle's 9i database.

Pricing for Oracle's 9i database starts at \$40,000 per CPU. The RAC option costs an additional \$20,000 per CPU. Oracle is running a half-price promotion on the product, so through February the cost is \$10,000 per CPU.



Oracle DBA Quiz

Many DBAs expressed interests to our DBA quiz posted in our last newsletter. To fulfill your request, we prepared another 10 questions. Give them a try when you have time. See how you are doing without looking at references. Please email your answers to admin@dbaOnline.org for your score.

1. When should one back up a read-only tablespace?

- A) During regular backup window
- B) Prior to placing the tablespace into read-only mode
- C) Immediately after placing the tablespace into read-only mode
- D) Prior to creating a new tablespace
- E) Prior to altering the database structure

2. Which of the following SQL functions can operate on any datatype?

- A) TO_CHAR
- B) LOWER
- C) LPAD
- D) MAX
- E) CEIL

3. statement about the LGWR is false?

- A) There is only one redo log writer per instance
- B) A commit confirmation may be issued before a transaction has been recorded in the redo log file
- C) During long transactions Oracle can flush data to the redo logs before it is committed.
- D) An Oracle instance cannot survive without a redo log writer

4. Which Oracle access method is the fastest way for Oracle to retrieve a single row?

- A) Primary key access
- B) Access via unique index
- C) Table access by ROWID
- D) Full table scan

5. The storage parameters for a given table are: INITIAL=100, NEXT=100, MINEXTENTS=2, MAXEXTENTS=10, PCTINCREASE=20. If the first 3 extents are filled, what will the size of the FOURTH extent be?

- A) 120
- B) 140
- C) 144
- D) 240
- E) 400

6. Several months ago, a user was created called bkup_admin for use with backups. A new backup program was purchased which needs all the rights of bkup_admin but needs to be called bkup_mgr. How would you go about removing bkup_admin and adding bkup_mgr?

- A) Simply use the RENAME command.
- B) Use the ALTER command.
- C) Export user bkup_admin, DROP with cascade user bkup_admin, Import using user to user.
- D) Export user bkup_admin, DROP user bkup_admin, Import using user to user.

7. How do you create a SQL version of the control file, when there are read-only tablespaces in your database?

- A) ALTER DATABASE BACKUP CONTROLFILE READ ONLY;
- B) ALTER DATABASE BACKUP CONTROLFILE TO TRACE;
- C) ALTER DATABASE BACKUP CONTROLFILE TABLESPACE READ ONLY;
- D) ALTER DATABASE BACKUP CONTROLFILE TO TRACE INCLUDING READ ONLY;

8. You have noticed that you are left with some old backups which are no longer required. You have been using RMAN and now you want to have a list of these files. Which Recovery Manager task will accomplish this?

- A) LIST NEED BACKUP;
- B) REPORT EXPIRED BACKUPS;
- C) REPORT OBSOLETE;
- D) LIST OBSOLETE BACKUPS;

9. The DBWR process is NOT responsible for:

- A) Defers writes for I/O optimization
- B) Uses a LRU algorithm to keep most recently used blocks in memory
- C) Writes to database redo log files as people COMMIT data
- D) Writes all changed (i.e. dirty) buffers to datafiles

10. Which component of an instance holds session variables and arrays when you are NOT running in MTS mode?

- A) SGA
- B) SQL Area
- C) Library Cache
- D) PGA
- E) Shared Pool