

CaseSTUDY

First American Real Estate Upgrades to Oracle 11i in Less Than Three Months With Help From SmartDB 70% Ahead of Schedule

Organization

- First American Real Estate (NYSE: FAF)
FORTUNE 500

Business

- Financial Services

Challenge

- Upgrade from Oracle 10.7 to 11i within a very short migration window while maintaining complete data integrity

Results

- Implementation time and costs cut dramatically with the help of SmartDB technology.

SmartDB Products

- SmartDB Workbench
- Intelligent Adapters

Based in Santa Ana, California, First American Real Estate is the nation's largest collector and provider of real estate data, serving more than 500,000 users a day. The company collects data on more than one hundred million properties annually and on two million property and mortgage transactions each month. It is estimated that First American Real Estate's products or services are involved in more than 90 percent of the real estate transactions that occur in the United States.

Time to Upgrade Oracle Financials

In addition to its external offerings, First American Real Estate Information Solutions hosts the financial information for the entire family of First American companies. When Oracle announced its intent to phase out Oracle Financials 10.7 and cease support in 2003, First American Real Estate Information Solutions decided to upgrade to 11i.

For previous upgrades, First American Real Estate Information Solutions used contractors to write SQL code from scratch to extract data from the applications to be upgraded. This always proved to be a very costly and time intensive process. To help ensure this 11i implementation went smoothly and quickly, First American Real Estate Information Solution enlisted the help of SmartDB.

SmartDB...Tried and True

First American Real Estate Information Solutions thoroughly evaluated several companies. It became evident SmartDB was best qualified to aid in the 11i migration process. "Our past experience with SmartDB was a big factor in selecting the SmartDB solution. We had previously used SmartDB's products and were keenly aware of SmartDB's myriad of benefits, not only from a technology standpoint but also as a trusted ally", explained Janet Passmore, Director of Oracle Applications, First American Real Estate.

The most compelling criteria for choosing SmartDB were price, performance and flexibility. "With SmartDB's reusable templates and complete set of fully documented Intelligent Adapters, we were confident that our implementation was attainable within the time and budget constraints," said Passmore.

No Small Feat

The 11i upgrade was a major undertaking. With over 26 companies affected, an enormous amount of data had to be migrated in a very short timeframe. The amount of data to be migrated included:

- Code combinations (181,153)
- Journal entries (80,515)
- Journal entry lines (10,943,518)
- Customers (79,242)
- Invoice headers (3,153,182)
- Invoice lines (4,835,016)
- Checks (1,338,909)
- Assets (19,157)
- Vendors (70,000)
- Vendor sites (168,000)



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Migration Completed in Just 3 Months - ROI greater than 40%

First American Real Estate Information Solutions deployed the SmartDB Workbench and utilized Intelligent Adapters to support the migration process. "By utilizing SmartDB's technology, we cut the implementation time by 50%, representing over \$95,000 in savings. We followed our project plan to the letter, just as it had been defined from the start. We achieved over 40% ROI with this first upgrade project, but anticipate a much greater ROI as we re-use this same solution to integrate new business units and acquired companies," said Passmore.

Data integrity was vital in migrating from 10.7 to 11i. Everything had to balance exactly. Because SmartDB's templates and adapters have built-in rules and validation checks, First American Real Estate Information Solutions avoided any 'dirty' data moving into 11i. "The validation checks in the tools were extremely valuable. If a record did not meet certain criteria, SmartDB rejected it up front, alerted us as to what went wrong in that bracket, and forced us to make the necessary changes. This helped dramatically reduce the time spent delving through the Oracle interface to figure what went wrong," explained Passmore.

Ease of Use and Knowledgeable Support Speeds Migration

Prior to getting started, SmartDB conducted a training class so everyone was up to speed on the products. "SmartDB is so easy to use that I gave new employees an overview and they picked it up and used it without any problem," explained Passmore. However, if a problem did arise, First American Real Estate referred to SmartDB's support desk and documentation.

"The support desk is clearly the best I've ever worked with. The folks at the support desk didn't just address my immediate issues, but also gave me ways to solve my own problems in the future," explained Passmore. "Furthermore, it is evident that SmartDB put a lot of effort into the documentation. It is excellent and more thorough than what Oracle supplied with their interface," continued Passmore.

Immediate Results and Recognition Lead to Future Opportunities

"My management wanted to know why past implementations took 8 to 10 months, since with the 11i implementation using SmartDB, it took less than 90 days," said Passmore. Based on the huge success with the 11i upgrade, First American Real Estate Information Solutions plans to use SmartDB for each new company that they will manage data for.

First American's internal Oracle Group has become somewhat of an evangelist, recommending SmartDB to other groups within First American Real Estate. "When the Siebel group saw how well SmartDB's technology helped with the 11i migration, they asked us for a demonstration. They were particularly impressed with the GUI version of SQL loaders and the fact that it allows you to preview before you actually load.

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"Any well-managed Oracle shop should have SmartDB in its arsenal"

Janet Passmore

Dir. of Oracle Applications
First American Real Estate



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