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Immature IT and the IT Horror Story

By Jim Hannan ([@HoBHannan](#)), Principal Architect

I have been in the IT industry for about 20 years. As many of you can relate, when you talk with non-IT family members and friends, they first ask you what you do. You answer and often they nod in confusion or boredom. Once you get past the awkward 15 second description (I keep it short), the conversation goes one of two ways, "I am having a problem with my PC..." or they tell you an IT horror story about a failed implementation or poorly performing application. [Read More](#)

Travis Credit Union Consolidates Systems and Significantly Improves Stability & Performance

Case Study

Travis Credit Union (TCU) needed to update and consolidate their critical systems in order to gain a complete picture of their members in order to fully understand and support those members' needs.

TCU engaged with House of Brick to provide best practices and reference architecture for running Oracle RAC workloads on VMware infrastructure to create a highly available environment for their core systems. [Learn More](#)

case STUDY

Client: Travis Credit Union
Industry: Financial Services
Technologies: Oracle® RAC, Oracle® Data Guard, Microsoft® SQL Server™, VMware® VM™

Challenge:
 TCU needed to update and consolidate their critical systems in order to gain a complete picture of their members in order to fully understand and support those members' needs.

Solution:
 TCU engaged with House of Brick to provide best practices and reference architecture for running Oracle RAC workloads on VMware infrastructure to create a highly available environment for their core systems.

TCU partnered with House of Brick to take advantage of their Managed Oracle® Services. With the House of Brick MCO team working with the TCU team on the implementation of Oracle Site Recovery Manager (SRM), TCU can engage the MCO team to provide a comprehensive health check of their core environments including their database, virtualization, and hardware/storage layers.

Results:
 TCU consolidated their business applications and now has a very stable, high-performing platform that is easier to manage and provides their member services. This allows a high-visibility view of their members' data and interactions with TCU, which in turn allows them to be better educated and offer an enhanced member experience.

TCU Consolidates Systems and Significantly Improves Stability and Performance

The Company
 Travis Credit Union (TCU), one of the United States' largest credit unions, has been successfully serving its members since 1951. TCU, which serves 177,000 members nationwide, is among the top 100 credit unions in the US and currently has assets totaling more than \$2.5 billion. TCU is a leading financial institution in Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Texas and certain states in California, and has 23 branches serving 12 counties in Northern California.

The Challenge
 Travis Credit Union used a model of searching out the best of breed solutions for various disciplines within their organization. As such they were using top technologies, over time this method led to a complex environment that required more and more time spent integrating these systems and less time evaluating the data from a holistic perspective. This made it difficult to get a truly complete picture of a member, thereby making it more difficult to fully understand, and help support, their members' needs.

The Solution
 With an emphasis on delivering the best customer service and suite of financial services to their members, Travis Credit Union needed to modernize its infrastructure and applications. Therefore, TCU began an extensive effort to upgrade several critical applications. One of the main criteria for this new integrated system was that it needed to be Oracle-based in order to leverage their existing investments in a strong, virtualized Oracle infrastructure.

Travis Credit Union chose House of Brick because of their breadth of experience with virtualized Oracle systems, their work with emerging technologies and related techniques, and their philosophy of acting as a partner who offers knowledge transfer and mentoring to their clients.

TCU partnered with House of Brick Technologies to develop a reference architecture that would position the company to leverage an existing investment in virtualization, with a focus on stability and scalability. They decided on a suite of powerful applications to meet their needs: Oracle RAC on VMware vSphere, Oracle Storage, and VMware Site Recovery Manager for disaster preparedness.

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Convert Your CLOBs to VARCHAR2 in Oracle 12c

by Mike Stone ([@HoBMStone](#)), CIO

SIZE OF [N]VARCHAR2, RAW INCREASED 8X!

One easily overlooked new feature of 12c is an increase in the size of the VARCHAR2, NVARCHAR2, and RAW data types. These data types previously allowed up to 4K of data to be stored in them, but can now accommodate 32K (8 times more).

VARCHAR2 vs. NVARCHAR2

You wouldn't be alone if you were wondering; what exactly is the difference between the two VARCHAR2 data types? [Read More](#)

Oracle Database Migration

by Joe Grant ([@dba_jedi](#)), Principal Architect

When migrating an Oracle database from one platform to another, there are several factors to take into consideration. The first of these is called endianness format. Endianness format refers to the byte order of the data on disk, and is dependent on the CPU and operating system. It is not possible to simply move Oracle database datafiles between systems with different endianness formats. This [Wiki article](#) describes the issue in more detail. [Read More](#)

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