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# Oracle Application Development Tools Statement of Direction: Oracle Forms, Oracle Reports and Oracle Designer

## Disclaimer

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## Executive Overview

With the release in July 2009 of Oracle Fusion Middleware 11g, including tooling such as Oracle Forms 11g and Oracle Reports 11g, Oracle customers are looking for guidance on their choice of development tools for existing and future application development.

Oracle customers have a considerable level of investment in applications developed using the Oracle Forms, Reports and Designer products, and, frequently, ask questions about Oracle's strategy and commitment to these products. This paper aims to answer these questions by summarizing Oracle's software development strategy for Oracle Forms, Oracle Reports, and Oracle Designer. The document is structured in three parts:

In the first section, we discuss Oracle's software development strategy for Oracle Forms, Oracle Reports, and Oracle Designer.

In the second section, we discuss Oracle's support policy and timelines for specific releases of these products.

In the third section, we provide specific technical recommendations to customers who are using these products

## Oracle's Product Strategy

### Software Development Tools Strategy

Oracle's development tools strategy is to offer software development tools that enable the development of enterprise applications on an Internet model. The software development tools consist of two parallel product offerings:

#### **Traditional development tools**

This solution set consists of the modeling environment provided by Oracle Designer, the application development framework provided by Oracle Forms, and the batch/scheduled reporting solution offered by Oracle Reports. The programming language and execution environment for these tools is PL/SQL.

#### **Java development tools**

Recognizing the growth and adoption of the Java EE platform, mirroring Oracle's own strategic direction with the Fusion Applications, Oracle offers Oracle JDeveloper, a complete and

integrated development environment for building enterprise applications on the Java EE platform. In addition, Oracle offers Oracle Application Development Framework (Oracle ADF) a standards-based productivity framework for building Java EE applications. The programming language is Java and the runtime is any Java EE compliant container.

Oracle continues to invest in and evolve both technology offerings and the specific focus for the investments are different based on the market needs for each solution.

To allow customers to use applications developed with either of these two sets of technologies together and benefit from a common deployment and operational environment as well as integration facilities, Oracle provides runtimes in Oracle Fusion Middleware.

## Oracle's Support Policy

Oracle Forms, Oracle Reports, and Oracle Designer have a large and very active install base, with applications developed with these tools being the cornerstone of many businesses including Oracle's own E-Business Suite. Oracle recognizes this considerable investment and remains committed to the long-term support of these products.

### Oracle Tools Support

The support for the products referenced in this paper is outlined below.

#### **Oracle Forms and Reports**

Oracle has no plan to desupport these products. Furthermore, new version of Oracle Forms, Oracle Reports will continue to be released as part of Oracle Fusion Middleware and Oracle Forms 11g and Oracle Reports 11g are components of Oracle Fusion Middleware 11g.

In line with our product strategy, future development activities will be aimed at smoother version-to-version upgrade, integration with features of the platform/ technology stack and product stability.

#### **Oracle Designer**

As stated in earlier versions of this document, since Oracle Designer 10g there have been no major new features although the product continues to be supported and development effort is focused on stability and bug fixes. Oracle Designer is not released as a component of Oracle Fusion Middleware 11g but will remain as a component in the Oracle Developer Suite 10g. Future releases of Oracle Designer and support timelines will be within the Oracle Developer Suite 10g release.

### Oracle's Lifetime Support Policy

Oracle's Lifetime Support Policy defines the support levels and dates for Oracle products. The support timelines for the products referenced in this document are defined here:

<http://www.oracle.com/support/library/brochure/lifetime-support-middleware.pdf>

## Oracle's Recommendations to Customers

Recognizing that its customers who are using Oracle Forms, Oracle Reports, and Oracle Designer are looking to Oracle for specific recommendations on their application development strategy, in this section we provide specific guidance based on our own internal use of these technologies within Oracle's E-Business Suite of applications.

### **Oracle E-Business Suite**

The Oracle E-Business Suite of applications makes extensive use of Oracle Forms for its "Professional User Interface", Oracle Reports for Reporting, and Oracle Designer for database schema design and is pursuing the following product strategy:

#### **Move from client-server to the Web**

The entire E-Business Suite of applications that was developed in client-server mode has now moved to an Internet deployment model. This provides customers with a much lower cost model of deployment and management without having to migrate their technology stack or applications. When moving to the Internet deployment model, the E-Business Suite of applications is now using Oracle's Application Server as its runtime platform.

#### **Upgrade to the latest versions**

For the current release Oracle upgrade the E-Business Suite to Oracle Forms 10g and Oracle Reports 10g in order to exploit the stability benefits they provide, to use the features of the Oracle Database (RSFs), and to pick up the new features in these versions.

#### **Interoperate with Java/J2EE**

Finally, by moving to the Internet model and upgrading to the latest release of the application server, the E-Business Suite can also co-exist and interoperate its Forms and Reports applications with modules built in Java/Java EE.

#### **Develop new modules using JDeveloper**

"Self Service User Interface" and new E-Business Suite modules are now Java EE applications developed using JDeveloper. These new applications are deployed on the same application server as the Forms and Reports applications allowing them to inter-operate and share the same in-

frastructure and common services. In addition, Forms and Java EE applications are able to share existing business logic by using database PL/SQL stored procedures.

Since Oracle E-Business Suite has significant amounts of its code base built using Oracle Forms, Oracle Reports, and Oracle Designer, customers should remain certain that Oracle continues to support current versions of these products for the appropriate time frames.

## Recommendations for Oracle's Customers

Oracle recommends that Forms, Reports and Designer customers follow a similar path that it took with its own E-Business Suite of applications: (i) Move to the Internet, (ii) Upgrade to the latest versions of Oracle Forms, Oracle Reports, and Oracle Designer; and (iii) Interoperate and co-exist these applications with new Java EE applications using Oracle Fusion Middleware.

For customers who are facing new requirements such as a move to a self service model or a market pressure to provide an HTML user interface, the Java Enterprise Edition (Java EE) specification has opened up a whole new set of options for application development not previously available to the developer. As such, we fully expect customers to be exploiting these opportunities and to take advantage of Java EE to build extensions to their applications. Thus, our strategy is also to provide Java EE development environment familiar to Forms, Reports and Designer developers.

Oracle JDeveloper 11g provides a visual and declarative development experience as well as an end-to-end application development framework (Oracle ADF) designed to simplify Java EE development and bring the productivity and ease of use of Oracle Forms to the Java EE platform.

The Oracle E-Business Suite has successfully standardized the development of all the Java EE applications on this development environment.

Oracle JDeveloper 11g with ADF is the tool of choice for Forms, Reports and Designer customers because it carries over a similar development model. However, given the architecture difference between Java EE and Forms or Reports, Oracle has no plans to offer a complete migration solution that would attempt to migrate applications built with these tools to Java EE.

Instead, Oracle's strategy is to provide a Java EE development environment exposing similar concepts as Forms and Reports, giving to Forms and Reports developers the opportunity to become productive in a new, but familiar environment.

## Conclusion

Oracle remains committed to support Oracle Forms and Reports. The support cycle is aligned to Oracle Fusion Middleware 11g for Forms and Reports and Oracle Developer Suite 10g for Oracle Designer. While Oracle Designer does not include new features, Oracle Forms and Oracle Reports will continue to evolve to allow customers to easily upgrade their applications to the web

and benefit from the centralized deployment and shared services that the application server provides.

Given the rapid growth and adoption of Java/Java EE technologies in the industry, Oracle's strategy is also to provide a productive Java EE development environment (JDeveloper and ADF) allowing Forms, Reports and Designer customers to embrace Java EE development while still using a familiar RAD, visual and declarative approach.

Following the successful example of the Oracle E-Business Suite, Oracle recommends customers to web deploy their existing Forms and Reports applications, consider the opportunities of new development in Java EE using JDeveloper and ADF and integrate these applications together on the application server, sharing common services and business logic. Thus, existing Forms and Reports applications can co-exist with new services and applications built on Java EE and share common infrastructure of Oracle Fusion Middleware.

With this strategy, Oracle allows customers to continue to leverage their existing investments for many years while offering a path to incrementally move to Java EE, at their own pace, using a productive and familiar development environment (JDeveloper and ADF).



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