

Migrating Express-based Applications with Escendo Analytics

An Escendo Solutions Brief

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Overview

The de-support of Oracle Express, including Financial Analyzer and Sales Analyzer, has forced many organizations to investigate ways to migrate their sophisticated and stable Express environments to different technologies – an undertaking that in most cases will equate to a complete re-implementation of their data models, structures, programs, procedures, formulae, and interface, plus a complete re-loading of all historical data. As a result, Express users today are contemplating substantial - and yet otherwise unnecessary - OLAP deployments which will inevitably incur substantial costs, effort, and risks.

Fortunately, there is another option that preserves current investments in Express and minimizes the effort and costs of migration. By moving your Express application to Oracle OLAP, you not only get to enjoy the world's most powerful OLAP engine, you get the opportunity to extend the capabilities and reach of your current application. And by using Escendo Analytics to manage your migration, you get a fast and easy move to Oracle that avoids the significant costs and risks of moving to a proprietary OLAP technology.

What is Escendo Analytics?

Escendo Analytics is a comprehensive decision support application that couples an unparalleled range of analytical capabilities with the speed, scalability, and manageability of Oracle OLAP. This combination allows you to achieve the broadest and most advanced OLAP functionality using vast volumes of data, and deliver it to any user in any way with astounding levels of performance, scalability, and security. Now you can enjoy the world's most powerful analytical engine with an integrated and robust application that meets all of your decision support needs without the expense and limits of traditional BI technologies.

In addition to the core Analytics application that resides entirely inside Oracle OLAP, Escendo Analytics includes two additional components: Escendo Analyzer and Escendo Architect. Escendo Analyzer is a web-based client that provides powerful and intuitive access to all of the capabilities of Escendo Analytics without the need to build separate, external data structures or cubes. As a result, it is a natural choice for users who need both sophisticated analytical capabilities and fast response times across large data sets.

Escendo Architect is a development workbench that empowers companies to quickly and easily migrate their existing Express applications (including OFA, OSA, and custom apps) to Oracle OLAP with complete protection for all data, hierarchies, models, formulae, and programs as well as most reports. As a development tool that speaks both Express and OLAP, it provides unparalleled functionality and control for deploying Express applications on OLAP. And, because Architect is a part of Escendo Analytics, the resulting OLAP application can immediately be accessed using Escendo Analyzer, or any SQL-compliant front end.

By using Escendo Analytics, Express users get a powerful and integrated solution for preserving the functionality and stability of their Express applications while eliminating the costs, complexity, and constraints of traditional OLAP technologies. Why implement disparate, proprietary cubes that restrict your BI applications and require significant capital and operational expenses when you can leverage your existing investment in Oracle for a more capable, more accessible, more secure, and easier-to-manage enterprise analytics solution?

The Analytics Process

Migrating from Express to OLAP using Escendo Analytics is achieved in five basic steps, most of which are fully automated. As a result, migrations of even the largest applications are usually achieved within hours or just a few days, versus the weeks and months for traditional, proprietary re-implementations.

The five basic steps of an Escendo Analytics migration from Express include:

1. **Analyze:** Taking stock of your current application is important for a couple of key reasons: first, it allows for the components, structure, and operation of the application to be documented for post-migration validation and benchmarking, and; secondly, it provides an opportunity to assess whether any part of the application should be changed during the migration. For instance: adding or changing hierarchies; adding measures; increasing the amount of historical

data; consolidating databases; streamlining data loads; or optimizing calculation routines are all examples of application modifications that can easily be made during an Escendo migration. The time required to properly analyze an application, what Escendo refers to as a HealthCheck, is dependent on the current state of application documentation as well as documenting the extent to which the application will be modified.

2. **Transfer:** Getting information out of Express can be an easy process...if your target environment speaks Express. In most cases, migrating from Express involves exporting all of the data into flat files and then painstakingly loading those files into manually-defined target fields. But Express also provides its own export format that contains all of the metadata necessary to export and import Express data and structures quickly and easily between Express environments. This Express Interchange Format (EIF) is natively understood by Escendo Analytics, too, which means that a process that requires many hours of tedious data mapping in other technologies, takes only a moment with Escendo. Using the EIF format, Escendo Analytics exports your entire application and imports it directly into a Migration Workspace in Oracle OLAP. Not only does this provide an exact copy of your current application, it allows all future steps to be performed inside Oracle with no further need to move data between environments.
3. **Conversion:** Using the application copy in the Migration Workspace, Analytics loads a set of conversion tables in Oracle. These tables are designed to provide the structural and metadata conversions that are necessary for an Oracle 10G or 11i OLAP environment. These tables also provide all of the application-level structures that will allow Analytics to query and process the data for end-users. This can also be a good time to affect any application changes such as: add any new data or structures that were identified as desirable during the Analyze stage; omit items that you would prefer not to migrate over; or optimize the application for 10G or 11i.
4. **Load:** With the staging tables completely and correctly filled, Escendo Analytics loads Oracle OLAP. All necessary components are created including cubes, dimensions, hierarchies, measures, formulae, programs, etc. without the need for any manual intervention. This process also builds Analytics' open metadata structures that provide easy access to the OLAP application from any SQL-compliant front-end.
5. **Completion:** With the application now fully migrated to OLAP, the last step is in accessing it with a client interface. Escendo Analyzer can preserve many reports from the Express application, a capability which can mean significant time savings during this last part of the migration. Of course, if a third-party BI tool is the preferred method, then the Escendo Analytics application is ready and open for supporting one or several front-ends.

Escendo Analytics provides the fastest and most powerful way to migrate any Express environment to Oracle OLAP. For Express users who wish to migrate their Express applications unchanged to OLAP, Escendo Analytics provides the industry's most complete and automated migration solution. With significant automation in the Transfer, Conversion, and Load processes, moving an application from Express to OLAP can be done in a matter of hours for most environments. And, for those Express users who wish to augment or modify their application during migration, Escendo Analytics provides the deep fluency with both Express and OLAP such that everything that should be preserved is, and everything that needs to be created can be done within a complete, integrated, and powerful framework.

Delivery Options

Escendo makes it easy not only to complete the migration, but also to deliver the application. With a team of services professionals with deep expertise in Express, OLAP, and Analytics, we can deliver the right resources at the right time for the fastest and most efficient Express migrations. Escendo also provides hosting services in a secure, state-of-the-art, SAS 70 Type II datacenter. Our hosting environment can be used as a migration environment, and can be used to deliver your application going forward with a team of dedicated and Oracle-certified professionals.

For companies who would like to see how effective an Escendo Analytics migration can be for their own environment, Escendo can generally migrate a portion of an Express application as a proof-of-concept in a very short time either at the customer's site or at Escendo's facilities.

The Escendo Analytics Advantage

Migrating from Express using Escendo Analytics means delivering the right application for your business while preserving your investment in Express technology, applications, and skills. An Escendo Analytics migration provides an opportunity to easily extend your application while leveraging the world's most powerful OLAP engine for current and future analytical and reporting needs. And Analytics does all of this while avoiding the costs, complexity, and constraints of typical BI technologies. Migrate to a better, faster, and open OLAP application – migrate to Escendo Analytics.

For more information, visit www.escendo.com, or email us at info@escendo.com.