

# Boffin/Open

Oracle's extensive contribution

**Boffin/Open** is the third iteration of the Boffin application. The first was written in Wang interpretive BASIC-2 starting in 1975, culminating in two impressive installations in the United Kingdom; Bow/Patmar group and Lep Transport in Birmingham. The second iteration was a complete rewrite of the software, this time in Wang ANSI COBOL for Wang VS computers; starting in late 1976; culminating in four large application servers through which Lep Transport Limited ran 54 offices in the United Kingdom. The real breakthrough came in June 1988 when Bishopsgate attended an Oracle seminar in the Mayfair hotel in London, UK, where the Oracle guest speaker uttered the magic words (for a software house); **'If you are willing and able to rewrite your application in Oracle SQL; you will be 100% compatible with all of the computer platforms and environments on which Oracle offer their RDBMS and other products'**. The software world changed that day; sounds corny, but it did.

**Boffin/Open** was born by Bishopsgate becoming a worldwide partner of Oracle in the vertical software market of Freight related application software. The Bishopsgate programming team was tasked with the statement **'Rewrite the Boffin/VS application entirely in Oracle SQL on a program-for-program basis; where there is an advantage available because of the Relational Database foundation – take advantage of it; where there is an advantage available because of the 4GL programming language; take it; include all of the wishlist items in this 'final rewrite' of Boffin.** The very important or major attributes offered by the partnership with Oracle which made it impossible for Bishopsgate to ignore 'the call' was (1) The lure of hardware and operating system independence; previously the users had to purchase Wang hardware and operating system (2) The upgrade of the application to run on a Relational Database from the older ISAM files on the Wang, (3) the availability of a 4GL (Fourth generation programming language) which is now called Oracle Forms and Reports and (4) having access the huge expansion of the overall Oracle software which has undoubtedly cost Oracle so much over the years. Nothing contained within the Boffin/Open application interferes with any Oracle software facility; the two applications run and grow in parallel with respect to each other.

**Boffin/Open** has been 'thrashed' over its three consecutive births; IT Works! The Boffin/Open application contains more than 2,000 Oracle Forms (programs) and 800 Reports all available to run on Oracle 9i Database Release 2 or later and under both Oracle Forms and Reports 6i and 9i. The Oracle 6i Forms and Reports is the last Oracle Release to offer traditional Client/Server processing; which is Bishopsgate's preferred application architecture. The Oracle 9i Forms and Reports version supports a different installation architecture; where Client-PCs run as Thin-Clients both locally and over the Internet making the Boffin/Open application server equally available to both local and remote users, simultaneously on an H24/7 basis. Notice that there is only a very small telecommunications cost associated with the connection of remote Client-PCs accessing and using the whole of the Boffin/Open application. Bishopsgate have successful customers in many countries using the Boffin/Open application on releases of Oracle going back to Oracle 7.3 where the cost of ownership for the current year must be approaching nothing!

**Boffin/Open** will be offered on the very latest Oracle 10 product, in due course in order to maintain the valuable parallel development of the Boffin/Open application and Oracle products; which now contain very much more than simple the best RDBMS in the world. This Oracle 10g compatible version of the Boffin/Open application will probably become available in late 2005; unless someone wants to help pay for the conversion with a large order based upon Oracle 10g!

**Boffin/Open** running with the Oracle 9i Release 2 or later database and either Forms and Reports 6i or 9i is available to run under any hardware and computer operating system for which Oracle offer their products. Bishopsgate have already run their Boffin/Open application on servers running Sco-Unix; SUSE Linux, Redhat Linux, Microsoft Windows server 2000/2003! In all cases, and in response to the fact that nearly all office workers in the world know how to run Microsoft Windows, Client-PCs usually run one of the Microsoft Windows operating systems; which works well. There is no practical limit to the number of Client-PCs (Rich and Thin and in any mix) and physical printers that can be supported in any given WAN/LAN and Boffin/Open can be run as an Oracle Workgroup or a Domain within a user's local or global Virtual Private Network.

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