

The Mystery of the Hidden Data

an eprentise white paper



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Here's the scenario: Your enterprise data is nowhere to be found within your Oracle® E-Business Suite environment. Differences in configurations, duplicate data, and a lack of common structures and definitions have caused inconsistent business processes and data that is "lost" to the organization, resulting in increased costs and risks. Why is this happening, you wonder? Your data has apparently been the victim of silos.

A common affliction among large enterprises, silos—information locked in disparate databases, separate ledgers, different operating units, and so on—are perhaps the biggest contributors to EBS complexity, making trusted and timely information inaccessible, or "hidden," to many in the organization who need it.

Just like in the classic board game *Clue*, determining where this hidden data is located is very much a mystery. At first, everyone has a motive – albeit, a benign motive – to collect data in usable and accessible ways. But somewhere along the way the lights cut out and your organization is left with multiple sources of truth. In order to find the data and "win the game," you need to eliminate the silos.

First you must ask: How did your information become hidden away within these silos?

Perhaps...

Mr. Green in the IT department took part in the original implementation of the company's EBS structure early on. Although he tried to do his best to rope everything together, he lacked the foresight to account for all of the company's needs as it changed over time.

Or!

Mrs. Peacock, a former director of mergers and acquisitions, helped procure a new company as a subsidiary. However, the acquired company came with its own EBS instance, and consolidation was performed at the GL level through spreadsheets. To her misfortune, this effort eventually became messy and made any attempt at ascertaining consistent and correct information a real shot-in-the-dark.

Yet, Maybe!

Col. Mustard, the chief information officer, allowed different divisions to tackle their own informational issues individually with non-synergistic approaches, which left the information sliced up into disparate parts. Each department was subsequently left clueless of the processes going on within other departments.

Or Was It?!

Mrs. White from finance realized that corporate standards, governance and controls were not taken into account during the initial implementation of EBS. She allowed data to be wrenched into quick-fixes on-the-fly, without accounting for their impact on the underlying data structure.

In the end, we can deduce that there are various ways in which data can become compartmentalized into information silos. Whatever the causes may be, it is important to understand how it happened in your instance so that the silos can be properly addressed and removed.

But how do these silos really affect your business?

Imagine the leaders of your organization meeting to discuss upcoming business initiatives for the new year. Each of them presents data that was collected from his or her particular division, while relying on data affected by silos. Suddenly, contradictory information is presented, in accurate forecasts are shared and duplicated efforts – and thereby, wasted time – are discovered. It starts to become very clear that the information is not consistent among them, and soon no one knows who they can trust to be accurate – not even themselves!

The scene just described is a simplified example of a major dilemma that is all-too-common among enterprises with information silos. Without a single source of truth, there is a lack of confidence in the data, and this has a direct impact on operations and financial performance. There is also an increase in resource, legal and audit costs, as well as an increased risk associated with regulatory compliance. The added complexity associated with having silos makes real-time information sharing and reporting impossible, thus stymying your business's ability to react and adapt in a quick and efficient manner.

Here's how to eliminate the silos to solve the mystery and find your data, once and for all:

The first step in solving the issue of these data silos is to identify the information that exists in the enterprise, and then decide what needs to be shared and what needs to be maintained separately due to regulatory requirements. You will also need to understand what informational components will need to work together in terms of the data, the applications and the business processes. Once you have identified these relationships, you will need to develop a plan to implement and execute your changes.

A global business seeking to successfully remove silos will include these three imperatives as part of their roadmap:

1. All of the data must be consolidated into a single instance.
2. There must be a single chart of accounts that meets all of the legal reporting requirements of the business.
3. All of the data and business processes must be correct and accessible to those who need it.

Throughout this process it will be helpful to have a "champion" from among the executive team at your company who can promote this project and provide oversight. This role is typically assumed by the chief information officer, since he or she may assume responsibility for the project, allot a budget and provide realistic expectations for the rest of the business users. Moreover, you will need to communicate the benefits of breaking down these silos throughout the company as it will enable open markets, improve transparency and reach customers.

Although such a project may seem cumbersome at first, it will be well worth the reward. By taking these steps to eliminate silos within Oracle E-Business Suite, companies are able to save money, improve processes and agility, add value to existing operations and create an environment of complete, consistent and correct information. And of course, this means you will no longer have to spend countless hours searching for hidden data!

So now the only mystery that remains is... why are you allowing your information to be hidden in silos?

Curious?

For more information, please call **eprentise** at **1.888.943.5363** or visit **www.eprentise.com**.



About eprentise

eprentise provides transformation software products that allow growing companies to make their Oracle® E-Business Suite (EBS) systems agile enough to support changing business requirements, avoid a reimplementation and lower the total cost of ownership of enterprise resource planning (ERP). While enabling real-time access to complete, consistent and correct data across the enterprise, **eprentise** software is able to consolidate multiple production instances, change existing configurations such as charts of accounts and calendars, and merge, split or move sets of books, operating units, legal entities, business groups and inventory organizations.