

Insights into Oracle & Microsoft Licensing & Procurement Practices

ITAK Columnist

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ITAK welcomes back Scott Rosenberg for another edition of the column: Oracle & Microsoft Q&A. In this recurring column, Scott will answer any questions on Oracle and Microsoft licensing and procurement practices.

A Procurement Manager at a large healthcare company asks:

How effective is Oracle's ULA?

You're referring to Oracle's Unlimited License Agreement, which is basically a pseudo self-license available to the software vendor's largest clients, or

clients that have an extremely large Oracle procurement. It's an "all you can eat" type offering. Under the Oracle ULA, the client is licensed to have unlimited access to anything Oracle during a set period of time. Once that time is over, future licensing is set based on usage recorded.

In terms of effectiveness, we've seen mixed results. This is one of those cases where value depends on several factors, and overall effectiveness can only be determined individually. We see some clients who have benefited greatly by

ULAs. Results can be very good for the client since usage is unlimited and the fixed cost is a relatively known factor based on the set time. In some cases, several dozen products that are offered can be used at an unlimited level.

These are very complex agreements, with contracts running to several dozen pages. We've handled a large number of these, and 3 out of 4 times we simply conduct detailed discussions with the client and Oracle on small tweaks and boilerplate language. However, 1 in 4 times, we have to completely customize the agreement based on the client's business and needs.

So, it can be a very beneficial structure but you need to put a lot of work into analyzing it to make sure that it's working for you.

Send your questions directly to ITAK@iitam.org and we'll get them answered for you. Please indicate whether you would like to be publicly acknowledged or prefer to remain anonymous.

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