

DBA Best Practices from the Field

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Who am I

- Oracle DBA for 13 years and counting
- Speak at conferences, write articles, 4 books
- Brought up the Global Database Group at Starwood Hotels, in White Plains, NY

Why this Session

- I have seen too many Rules of Thumb and “Best” Practices.
- Some of them could be questionable or even downright wrong!
- Warning: I am questioning everything, leaving nothing to “expert opinions”.
- prolignence.com/downloads.html

“

Advice is seldom welcome.
And those who want it most
always like it the least.

”

Earl of Chesterfield

1694-1773

Guidelines

- Best practices must be justified
 - 🧠 *“Use Oracle Flexible Architecture”*
 - 🧠 *“Ummm ... why?”*
 - 🧠 *“Because, it’s the best practice, stupid!”*

No Justification → Not Acceptable
- It must apply to all cases or show clearly where it’s applicable
 - 🧠 *Best practice is to hot-backup the database*
 - 🧠 *Unless, there is a performance gain by running in NOARCHIVELOG mode*

Different Oracle Homes

- Traditional Approach:
 - /u01/app/oracle/10.2
 - Patches are applied to the same OH
- Suggestion:
 - Use a *different* Oracle Home for each upgrade and patching
 - /u01/app/oracle/10.2/db1
 - In next patch, create a different OH
 - /u01/app/oracle/10.2/db2
 - Apply the patch here, not on db1

New OH Each Time

Current OH: /u01/app/oracle/10.2/db4

New OH: /u01/app/oracle/10.2/db5

- Reduction in risk of new code.
 - Patch fails -> reset the OH to the old one – db4 and restart the db
- Diff is possible, what changed by the patch
- Catalog scripts (c*,u*,catalog, catproc) preserved
- Some binaries are available in older OH
- OPatch "bugs" are also mitigated

ASM Home \neq DB Home

- ASM is embedded in the Database code; so no need to have a different Ora Home
- Suggestion:
 - Create a different OH for ASM, even though it will be initially identical to DB Ora Home
 - `/u01/app/oracle/10.2/db1`
 - `/u01/app/oracle/10.2/asm1`
 - Apply patches specific to product to OH

Set Audit Trail

- Set `audit_trail = db`
Even if you do not need to audit
- True or False: Setting `audit_trail` to DB will start auditing and increase IO?
- Answer: FALSE! You need to issue AUDIT statements as well.
- This parameter needs a recycle; so set it even if you don't plan on using it.
- 11g already has it by default!

Set some parameters

- Set some parameters (These are not modifiable by ALTER SYSTEM).
- `_trace_files_public = TRUE`
 - Sooner or later you need to give access to some trace files to developers
- `utl_file_dir = '/tmp'`
 - Don't need that because of directory objects
 - Req'd for creating Log Miner Dictionary on Flat File

Dump "OFA"

- Oracle Flexible Architecture (OFA)
`/u01/app/oracle`
 - ↳ `admin/SID/bdump`
 - ↳ `admin/SID/udump`
 - ↳ `oradata/SID/datafiles`
- Does not allow separation of filesystems for security, performance, physical location, etc.
- Does not allow for passive failovers

Non-OFA Layout

- Suggested Layout

- `/oracle`

- ↳ `admin/SID/*` - not allowed to users

- `/u01/udump` - allowed for users

- `/prddata/SID/mount1/datafiles` - *high performance*

- `/prddata/SID/mount2/datafiles` - *low performance*

- This mount point naming convention –
`/prddata/SID/mount1` – allows passive failover. MP unmounted from one host and mounted to the passive node.
- On QA, use `/qadata/SID/mount1/...` naming convention; so both prod and qa can be mounted without risk of name collision

Analyze CPU

- Auditing is expensive; we need biggest bang for the buck - Session Auditing

```
SQL> audit session;
```

- Purpose:
 - Calculate CPU consumption and profile users
 - Calculate I/O used by users
 - Identify if someone's account was locked after repeated wrong passwords

Understand the CPU Usage

```
select username, to_char(logoff_time,'mm/dd') ts,  
       count(1) cnt,  
       sum(session_cpu) sum_cpu,  
       avg(session_cpu) avg_cpu,  
       min(session_cpu) min_cpu,  
       max(session_cpu) max_cpu  
from dba_audit_trail  
where logoff_time between '&start_date' and '&end_date'  
group by username, to_char(logoff_time,'mm/dd')  
order by username, to_char(logoff_time,'mm/dd')
```

Output

USERNAME	TS	CNT	SUM_CPU	AVG_CPU	MIN_CPU	MAX_CPU
USER1	04/04	3	918	306	17	859
USER2	04/04	36	15,286	425	0	4,094
USER3	04/04	3	794	265	174	379
USER4	04/04	187	396,299	2,119	1	124,274

Know Activity by Users

```
select username, to_char(logoff_time,'mm/dd') ts,  
       sum(logoff_lread) lread,  
       sum(logoff_pread) pread,  
       sum(logoff_lwrite) lwrite,  
       sum(session_cpu) scpu  
from dba_audit_trail  
where logoff_time between '&start_date' and '&end_date'  
group by username, to_char(logoff_time,'mm/dd')  
order by username, to_char(logoff_time,'mm/dd')
```

Output

USERNAME	TS	LREAD	PREAD	LWRITE	SCPU
USER1	04/04	283,271	10,858	33	918
USER2	04/04	4,570,965	6,225	2,854	15,286
USER3	04/04	601,838	1,988	26	794
USER4	04/04	33,639,028	4,545,505	1,083,473	396,299

Trace Account Locks

- Identify when someone's account was locked

```
select to_char(timestamp, 'mm/dd/yy hh24:mi') ts,  
       os_username, userhost, returncode  
from dba_audit_trail  
where username = 'ARUP'  
order by timestamp;
```

Output

01/10/07	14:12	arupnan	CORP\UPNANT	0
01/10/07	15:12	arupnan	CORP\UPNANT	0
01/11/07	04:00	orandsp	hndspdb1	1017
01/12/07	04:00	orandsp	hndspdb1	1017
01/13/07	04:00	orandsp	hndspdb1	1017
01/14/07	04:00	orandsp	hndspdb1	1017
01/15/07	04:00	orandsp	hndspdb1	28000

Wrong
Password

Login
OK

Account
Locked

Audit DDL

- Because someone will always complain, what happened to his/her table
.... and you are the DBA and you are saying you don't know what happened to it?!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- SQL: `AUDIT TABLE BY SESSION;`
- `stmt_audit_option_map` shows the statements
- `AUDIT ALL BY SESSION` does most DDLs
- *Caveat:* in DW environments, users create and drop a large number of tables; so this may not be advisable.

No .LOG for Redos

- Common Practice:
 - Redo logs are named <Name>.log
- Problem:
 - Deletion of log files via some cron that deletes “.log” files generated, e.g. sqlnet.log.
 - Listener Attack that can change the listener log to redo1.log
- Suggestion:
 - Choose .redo or .rdo for redo log files.

Listener

- Set Admin Restrictions in LISTENER.ORA
 - `ADMIN_RESTRICTIONS_LISTENER=on`
 - This prevents online modification of the listener parameters
 - Modify the `listener.ora` file and use
`$ lsnrctl reload`
- Use a different listener for External Procedures

Build a Metadata Repository

- Use Data Pump to Create a Repository of Objects:

```
$ expdp u/p content=metadata_only full=y  
  directory=tmp_dir dumpfile=md.dmp
```

- Import this to create an SQL File

```
$ impdp u/p directory=tmp_dir  
  dumpfile=md.dmp sqlfile=md.sql
```

- See my paper: Datapump: Not Just for Data Movement

Validate Database

- Use RMAN Validation Option

```
RMAN> backup validate database  
archivelog all;
```

Then check for corrupt blocks in view
`v$database_block_corruption`

- Logical Corruption

```
RMAN> backup validate check logical  
database archivelog all;
```

Preview RMAN Restore

- Always preview a restore

```
RMAN> restore tablespace users preview;
```

- Does not actually restore but checks the availability of files
- Not the same as VALIDATE
 - Checks what files are required
 - Validate assumes you know that
- Not the same as TEST

```
RMAN> restore tablespace users test;
```

 - Does not actually start the recovery process; so the tablespace need not be offline

RMAN> restore tablespace users preview;

List of Datafile Copies

Key	File S	Completion Time	Ckp SCN	Ckp Time	Name
173716	238 A	30-MAR-07	62872433554	30-MAR-07	/f.rman
... And so on ...					
173775	2074 A	31-MAR-07	62918498516	31-MAR-07	/j.rman

no backup of log thread 1 seq 92170 lowscn 62872343042 found to restore
... And so on ...
no backup of log thread 1 seq 92173 lowscn 62902345362 found to restore

List of Archived Log Copies

Key	Thrd	Seq	S	Low Time	Name
92212	1	92174	A	30-MAR-07	/PROPRD1_1_92174_525355299.arc
... And so on ...					
92239	1	92201	A	01-APR-07	/PROPRD1_1_92201_525355299.arc

Media recovery start SCN is 62872433554

Recovery must be done beyond SCN 62948207913 to clear data files
fuzziness

Finished restore at 06-APR-07

Save RMAN Log

- You copy to tape:
 - RMAN backup files
 - Init file
 - Archived logs
 - But not RMAN Log files, do you?
- RMAN Logs contain information about the backup pieces, names, location, etc.
- Proves invaluable during recovery

```
input datafile fno=00084 name=/f1.dbf
output filename=/backup/loc3/data_D-CRMPRD_I-
79785763_TS-DWT_ODS8_RES_FN
O-96_43ie2scm.rman tag=FULLBKPFS recid=174298
stamp=618757792
```
- Allows you to look for specific files from backup sets

DBID

- Important for Recovery
- Note the DBID and keep it in a separate place
- Write DBID to alert log every time backup is taken

```
declare
    l_dbid number;
begin
    select dbid into l_dbid from v$database;
    dbms_system.ksdwrt(2, 'DBID=' || l_dbid);
end;
```

Do Not Use SPFILE

- SPFILE Advantages:
 - Can be on shared filesystem, incld. on ASM
 - Can be backed up by RMAN
 - Can be updated automatically by command line by `ALTER SYSTEM SET ... SCOPE = SPFILE;`
- SPFILE Disadvantage
 - Older version overwritten
 - Comments possible; but only for the current entry

PFILE Advantages

- Place comments in the init.ora file

```
# AKN 3/20/06 added because ...  
# RJN 4/10/06 changed from 1M to 2M  
# JER 10/3/06 changed from 2M to 4M  
# DFW 12/7/06 changed from 4M to 6M SR# ...  
log_buffers = 6M
```

- Has a history of changes, with the names and dates of changes
- Very useful for troubleshooting and for record keeping

If you must use SPFILE

- Make sure you have a version control system in place to track parameter changes
- Example:
 - `SQL> create pfile='/tmp/a' from spfile;`
 - Check diff between this and the previous
 - Write the differences to a log file
- In Oracle 11g, you can create PFILE from memory:
 - `SQL> create pfile='..' from memory;`

New Oracle User for Clients

- Problem:
 - App running on the DB server, needs SQL*Plus
 - `$OH/bin/sqlplus` is not accessible to world
- Common Solution:
 - Change `$OH` permissions to allow all others
 - Make app part of the “dba” group
- Suggestion:
 - Create a separate Oracle user: “appora”
 - Install the Oracle client under that user

Separate Instance and DB Names

- Common Practice:
 - DB_NAME same as Instance Name
- Suggestion:
 - Append “1” after DB Name for Instance, e.g.
 - DB Name: PRODB
 - Instance: PRODB1
 - If you ever need to convert the DB to RAC, you will not need to change the Instance Name
 - No need to change Init.ora, PW File, etc.

Archivelog Location

- Rate the most important
 - Datafiles
 - Archivelogs
 - Backup of datafiles
- Most important is archivelogs
 - If datafiles are lost, they can be recreated
 - Archived logs are *never* recreatable
 - Missing archived logs = halted recovery
- Flash Recovery Area
 - Not for Archived Logs

Create a Controlfile on Trace

- Execute:

```
SQL> alter database backup controlfile to trace as  
      '/path/cr_db.sql' reuse;
```

- It creates a **CREATE CONTROLFILE** script

- You can use it to recreate controlfile
- Or, the database itself
- Self documenting the datafiles and redo logs

- Change Control:

- Write a separate file for each day
- Do a diff to find the added files, redo logs, etc.

Use oraenv

- Oracle supplied tool, in \$OH/bin
- Look up the OH in /etc/oratab or /var/opt/oracle/oratab (in Solaris)
- Why this?
 - It makes your job easier while changing OH
 - It makes a consistent interface – jobs, commands

To ASSM, or not?

- Automatic Segment Space Management
 - Uses bitmap of free space on the block; no need to check the UET\$ table
 - Great for Performance
- But, bitmap is only for 25, 50 and 75% free
- Potentially lose up to 25% space on each block
- Suggestions:
 - Use ASSM for non-DW databases
 - Use MSSM for DW databases
 - Buffer busy waits not common on DW anyway

Kill Inactive Sessions

- Problem:
 - Some apps, especially web apps under connection pool, remain inactive draining resources.
- Suggestion:
 - Use resource manager and set the inactive session disconnect timeout
- Why RM, why not Profiles?
 - RM allows you to turn on and off via scheduling and event. Profiles are hard coded.
 - RM allows service name based control

Check Listener Log

- Create External Tables on Listener Logs to identify issues, profile users, etc.
- See <http://www.dbazine.com/oracle/or-articles/nanda14>

Service Names

- Oracle database can be accessed via SID or Service Name
- Conventional TNS Entry

prodb1 =

```
(DESCRIPTION =  
  (ADDRESS_LIST =  
    (ADDRESS = (PROTOCOL = TCP)(HOST = prolin1)  
      (PORT = 1521)))  
    (CONNECT_DATA = (SID = PRODB1)))
```

- Service Name

```
(CONNECT_DATA = (SERVICE_NAME = PRODB1))
```

Enable Service Names

- In the instance, check service names present already:

```
SQL> show parameter service_names
```

- Create additional service names:

```
SQL> alter system set service_names =  
    'SVC1', 'SVC3', 'SVC3';
```

- Check if listener is listening for these:

```
$ lsnrctl services
```

- In RAC, you should use SRVCTL:

```
$ srvctl add service -d MYDB -s SVC1 ...
```

Why Service Names?

- No change in functionality
- Separates use from user, e.g. SCOTT logging from laptop uses service SVC1; but from app server SVC2.
- Enhances resource manager use
- Allows load balancing and failover in RAC or Data Guard databases
- Allows fine grained failover capabilities
 - Service SVC1 fails from node1 to node2; but SVC2 fails to node3

OS Specific Tweaks

- On HP/UX, use sched_noage
 - Necessary for setting right priorities for processes
 - Make "dba" group pat of MLOCK
- On Solaris use Intimate Shared Memory
 - Optimizes the memory management

Raw Devices

- Use one size for devices and add them to tablespaces.
- Common Use:
 - Create a raw device of 100GB in name /dev/./users01.dbf
 - Create tablespace USERS with the raw device
 - When USERS need more room, expand the raw device.
- Recommended Use:
 - Create raw devices of 30GB named /dev/.../d1, d2, etc.
 - Create tablespace with the devices d1, d2 and d3.
 - When USERS need more room, add a new device
- Advantages
 - No outage
 - Reuse devices

Using ORADEBUG

- Problem:
 - Database Issue; you want to use oradebug;
but SQL*Plus hangs!
- When SQL*Plus does not work, use
`$ sqlplus -prelim`
It does not establish a connection
You can run ORADEBUG now

Dumping

- Data block

```
alter system dump datafile d block b;
```
- The rest:

```
alter session set events 'immediate trace
name <Key> level 10';
```
- Controlfile CONTROLF
- File Headers FILE_HDRS
- Redo Headers REDOHDR
- System State SYSTEMSTATE
- Process State PROCSSTATE
- Library Cache LIBRARY_CACHE

```
alter session set events 'immediate trace
name LIBRARY_CACHE level 10';
```

Scripts

- Deletion of trace files older than some days.

```
DAYS=2
```

```
find /u02/app/oracle/admin -name "*.log" -ctime  
  ${DAYS} -exec rm {} \;
```

```
find /u02/app/oracle/admin -name "*.trc" -ctime  
  ${DAYS} -exec rm {} \;
```

```
find /u02/app/oracle/admin -name "*.trw" -ctime  
  ${DAYS} -exec rm {} \;
```

```
find /u02/app/oracle/admin/*/cdump -ctime ${DAYS}  
  -exec rm -r {} \;
```

- This clears up enough log files and trace files from OH, a major cause of failure.

Aliases

- Aliases make some repetitive job faster and quicker

```
alias bdump='cd
  $ORACLE_BASE/admin/$ORACLE_SID/bdump'
alias pfile='cd
  $ORACLE_BASE/admin/$ORACLE_SID/pfile'
alias obase='cd $ORACLE_BASE'
alias tns='cd $ORACLE_HOME/network/admin'
alias oh='cd $ORACLE_HOME'
alias os='echo $ORACLE_SID'
```

Remember

- It's not a best practice, if it is not justified
- You have to understand *why*; not just *what*
- Best practice needs to be situation-aware
 - Which goes back to “you have to understand”
- Always question whenever someone tells you it's a best practice

Thank You!

Q&A

prolignence.com/downloads.html