

Top Five Reasons to Choose SharePlex® Over Oracle GoldenGate

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Contents

Contents	1
Abstract	2
Introduction	3
SharePlex for Oracle	3
Top Five Reasons to Choose SharePlex	4
Reason One: Cost	4
Reason Two: Simplicity vs. Complexity	4
Reason Three: Support	5
Reason Four: Scalability	5
Reason Five: Productivity	6
Conclusion	7
About the Author	8

Abstract

This business brief explores the top five reasons to choose SharePlex® over Oracle GoldenGate, a competing data replication solution for your Oracle database environment.

Introduction

There are several data replication solutions for your Oracle databases: Oracle's Active Data Guard and GoldenGate, Quest's SharePlex® for Oracle, IBM's InfoSphere Change Data Capture, and, of course, other vendors have solutions as well. On the surface, these may seem similar in terms of capabilities. But deeper inspection reveals critical differences that you should consider when choosing a solution for your Oracle database environment.

SharePlex for Oracle

SharePlex for Oracle is a simple, low-cost data replication solution for Oracle databases. Over the last 12+ years, this technology has simplified data replication for customers in varying industries worldwide. It decreases downtime and minimizes risk when replicating multiple copies of Oracle data for special purposes to meet your business needs, including:

- High availability/disaster recovery
- Migrations, patches, and upgrades
- Operational reporting, archiving, or data warehousing
- Data distribution/distributed processing
- Centralized reporting or consolidation
- Load balancing
- Cascading using intermediary systems
- RAC alternative for scalability

Oracle GoldenGate may offer similar use cases, near-zero downtime, real-time continuous availability, and minimal overhead. So you may be wondering: *Why should I choose SharePlex?*

Top Five Reasons to Choose SharePlex

Let's go beyond the marketing messages and examine how well SharePlex satisfies some principal business objectives in terms of:

1. Cost
2. Simplicity
3. Support
4. Scalability
5. Productivity

Reason One: Cost

When it comes to evaluating IT solutions, cost is usually at the top of the criteria list. In fact, many organizations have incorporated lower-cost platforms like Oracle Standard Edition into their environments to save on infrastructure costs. With this in mind, SharePlex is available in two different offerings: SharePlex for Oracle Enterprise Edition and SharePlex for Oracle Standard Edition. These options reduce costs since you aren't forced to upgrade your database infrastructure like you must with Oracle GoldenGate. In fact, for Oracle Enterprise Edition, SharePlex is competitively priced at *half* the cost of GoldenGate, and SharePlex has special pricing available for Oracle Standard Edition.

In addition to Oracle Enterprise and Oracle Standard Edition, SharePlex supports multiple Oracle versions, including 8i through 11gR2, RAC, and Exadata. It also supports diverse server platforms, including AIX, HP-UX, Solaris, Linux, and Windows. SharePlex is platform agnostic, so again, there are no upgrade costs, which lowers overall operational expenses.

SharePlex comes licensed with all the tools for replication, including data compare and repair, synchronization, and an intuitive graphical interface for managing and monitoring replication activity — all for one low price. You don't have to buy extra add-on packs or options like you do with GoldenGate.

SharePlex is available in a limited license as well. So if you only need a data replication solution for a short-term project, such as a migration, you have the option of purchasing a three-month or six-month license. You are not forced to purchase a one-year license like GoldenGate.

Reason Two: Simplicity vs. Complexity

There is a common misconception that data replication must be complex. This myth is perpetuated by competing solutions that require multiple modules in a solution stack to achieve full functionality. This is not the case with SharePlex.

SharePlex simplifies data replication in three ways:

1. Trial download
2. Learning videos and forums
3. Product design

First, SharePlex is available via a free online trial download (www.quest.com/shareplex). You can install the trial, enter the license key, and it's ready to go in just 15 minutes.

Second, SharePlex has a helpful online community (www.quest.com/community-shareplex), which contains quick tutorials and forums. The video tutorials are only five to ten minutes long and feature walk-throughs on getting started, using sync, compare/repair, monitoring, and partitioning features. The forums offer best practices from the experts, and the ability to share experiences with peers and access additional educational materials. This online resource gets users up and running faster than with Oracle GoldenGate.

Third, the unique design of SharePlex provides setup in just one command line with two quick steps: create the configuration file and activate it. SharePlex also streamlines day-to-day operations since it automatically creates and syncs all the queues and processes. There is no need to set up procedures and turn on pieces manually, saving you time. Routine tasks, such as resync of a table, are simplified since SharePlex determines where to start the copy and automatically verifies integrity while posting to locate potential out of syncs between the source and target systems. Other built-in features, including reconcile, flush, and compare/repair, ensure that the source and target are in sync and show you how to rectify any problems. These capabilities are not available from competing solutions or they cost extra.

Reason Three: Support

Data replication solutions are typically used for high availability and critical application availability needs, so uptime and turnaround time are important factors to consider. And depending on the nuances of your environment, you may require a higher level of support to get answers quickly and reduce downtime. Your solution should also be user-friendly, minimizing staff training.

Typically, many large technology companies must support thousands of customers who are running a slew of solutions. The support is often level-one from the outset of every call and is provided by less experienced generalist support staff. This kind of inefficient and time-consuming customer service has become routine practice at many IT companies and hardly provides an optimal customer service experience.

SharePlex has consistently earned a 90 percent or higher customer-satisfaction rating in post-support surveys. It also comes with one year of business-critical support, which is included at no extra charge. Customer service is provided by highly skilled support engineers with years of SharePlex experience. So customer issues are often resolved within the first support call – saving you time.

SharePlex customers also have health checks available to them. The health check tool analyzes your SharePlex environment and provides a report on recommendations for improvements to help you get the most from your investment.

Reason Four: Scalability

As data volumes grow, database infrastructures must scale to accommodate the load. Typically, scalability can be achieved vertically by moving to a bigger server, or horizontally with Oracle Real Application Clusters (RAC) or a peer-to-peer (active-active) replication solution, which balances the application and user load across multiple database servers.

Unlike Oracle GoldenGate, which may require users to upgrade to RAC or Enterprise Edition with add-on packs, SharePlex offers flexible scalability options to meet different needs, without increasing cost, including:

1. Running on Linux and low-cost servers with Oracle Standard Edition
2. Load balancing between multiple databases without the overhead, limitations, and costs of RAC
3. RAC environments using any Oracle version (Standard Edition or Enterprise Edition) with an active-active replication setup

Using SharePlex, you can scale as much or as little as you need to with any of these options, depending on your resources and availability requirements.

Reason Five: Productivity

SharePlex's design, trial download, and tutorials make it so simple to set up and operate that you won't need to add staff resources to use and maintain it. In fact, SharePlex increases staff productivity.

Dr. Rama Tata, a SharePlex customer and applications systems analyst for the Orange County, Fla., Supervisor of Elections had this to say about it, "In addition to eliminating downtime, SharePlex replication saves valuable IT staff time. While three staffers were previously required for the maintenance process, now just one of them can apply the patches and perform all the other maintenance. Moreover, maintenance can occur whenever necessary, since one database can be brought down without impacting the availability of applications."

Pedro Nel Herrera, a SharePlex customer and IT Manager at Codesa, also saw productivity improvements at his organization and stated, "For platform changes – hardware, operating system, database version, etc. – we are saving 80 percent of our staff time, and the operational savings benefits can be quantified at approximately \$85,000 (U.S.) per year."

Additionally, SharePlex's core features provide significant time savings. Functionalities such as compare/repair, a built-in fail back recovery mechanism, and in-flight data integrity checks find and fix data anomalies, so you don't have to make manual adjustments. Oracle GoldenGate does not offer such features, so it's your responsibility to find discrepancies and determine the accuracy of data, which wastes time unnecessarily.

Conclusion

SharePlex and Oracle GoldenGate share some surface-level similarities. However, upon deeper investigation, SharePlex can also help you meet key business objectives, including simplicity, support, scalability, and productivity – at a much lower price.

About the Author

Tom Chu is the product manager for SharePlex and has been with Quest for more than 15 years. Since the product's inception in 1998, Tom has supported SharePlex in a variety of roles, including technical support, development, and product management.

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