

CLIFFORD CHANCE



Effortless cloning of Oracle databases and applications

CASE STUDY - CLIFFORD CHANCE

About Clifford Chance

Clifford Chance is a global legal practice, with over 3,700 legal advisors and 7,500 total staff. Their implementation uses 13 Oracle database environments, including Oracle Financials and Keystone Professional, a 3rd party practice management system.

Requirement

As part of their continuous drive for performance and efficiency within IT, and specifically as part of their upgrade to the newest Oracle applications, they highlighted significant issues with their cloning operations.

Cloning describes a series of processes that allow identical, working versions of databases and applications to be created within an enterprise. Each clone was taking 2 'person' weeks, and 1 elapsed week to execute, and they needed to deliver clones for each of their 13 Oracle environments every 1 or 2 weeks, over a period of several months. The time and effort involved in producing these clones represented significant roadblocks to the successful migration of their systems and related projects which were at the core of their IT operations.

Therefore, they looked for a solution that would address (and hopefully remove) these roadblocks, and found it with XClone™, from Babboo.com.

Description of solution implemented

XClone is a software solution that automates the production of clones for Oracle databases and applications. The standard functionality delivered by XClone includes cloning for Oracle Financials, but not for Clifford Chance's 3rd party Keystone Professional application. Therefore, after a 1-week business and systems analysis, they were able to specify a custom plug-in from Babboo, which provided them with the ability to include the Keystone system in the automated cloning solution.

As this is still an IT function, their database administrators (DBAs) are the prime users of XClone. Eventually, responsibility for cloning will also include their outsourced applications support partners.

XClone automatically produces the clones they need for testing, quality assurance, documentation, training, user acceptance and internal support. XClone removes DBA involvement at the various stages in the cloning process and reduces the time taken to create clones. XClone is configured as a client/server solution, with a single client able to control multiple clone server processes. Clones can be executed on demand, or scheduled using XClone's internal scheduler. It can create Full Clones, which includes all software for the Oracle (RDBMS) Server, Oracle Applications and the latest copy of their master database, and Hybrid Clones, which share the Oracle Server and Applications software, but have their own database and instance names.

What benefit has the organization received as a result of this solution?

Clifford Chance was able to not only meet its project cloning requirements with XClone, but performed ahead of those requirements. Database and application clones are now delivered more quickly (they take less actual time to produce) and save the time of 2 DBAs during each clone.

Not only has performance benefited, but they can now produce more reliable clones. One of the pre-requisites for a clone is that it is an exact replica of the master environment, and this is especially challenging task when using manual, script-based solutions.

XClone allows them to roll out vital, new applications without system down-time, thanks to its ability to deliver 'hot' clones and refreshes, while their end users are still using the system.

How was the effectiveness of the solution measured?

Before implementing XClone in their live environment, they carried out a 30-day evaluation of the solution. The quantitative and qualitative measurements they performed during that evaluation justified the full implementation of XClone.

Their technical headcount (specifically that which was previously allocated to system migration) has reduced, and they have been able to reassign those DBAs to other, key deliverables.

Overall, the quality of support they can offer to the business has improved, because the additional functionality with the latest Oracle and 3rd party applications can be delivered with less negative impact on their users and the business as a whole.

How does the solution adapt to changing business requirements and deliver long-term sustainable value?

XClone supports the ongoing development of Oracle releases, and the creation of a custom plug-in for their 3rd party Keystone Professional application has proved that it can also adapt when they add new applications to the technology stack. By their very nature, IT environments grow over time, and XClone will continue to play an important part in Clifford Chance's ability to provide excellent service to its business.

For more information, and to download a free evaluation copy of XClone, visit www.babboo.com.

Babboo.com Limited
Westpoint
78 Queens Road
Bristol, BS8 1QX
Tel: +44(0) 117 9856999
Fax: +44 (0) 117 9856995
Email: sales@babboo.com

Babboo Corporation
730 Florida Street, Suite 16
San Francisco, CA 94110
USA
Tel : +1 415.206.9047
Fax: +1 415.449/3401
Email: us_sales@babboo.com

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