

# WHITEPAPER

## AST CORPORATION

### A Beginner's Guide to Oracle Planning and Budgeting Cloud Service (PBCS)

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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Oracle's Planning & Budgeting Cloud Service (PBCS) has truly changed the deployment options for Hyperion Planning for many customers. Directed towards the new Oracle Hyperion Planning customer, PBCS is an obvious option with simpler data integration, yet nearly the same robust functionality of core Hyperion Planning. While there are minor differences and some limitations, it's worth a look. This paper will explain the Oracle PBCS solution, highlight the features, and provide recommendations for implementing.

## 2 OVERVIEW OF PBCS




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Oracle PBCS is a subscription-based planning and budgeting solution built for and deployed on Oracle Cloud, using a proven, flexible, best-in-class architecture for planning and reporting. It offers immediate value and greater productivity for business planners, analysts, modelers, and decision-makers across all lines of business within an enterprise. PBCS is built to scale and perform, using the industry-standard Oracle Cloud infrastructure.

Key highlights include:

- Most Complete
  - o Broad – spans Oracle’s application and platform portfolio
  - o Best-in-class – based on Oracle’s industry- leading cloud products
  - o Integrated – built on a common, unified platform
- Most Flexible and Modern
  - o Standards-based – built on industry standards: Java, SQL, HTML5, Web
  - o Extensible – build and deploy new apps or extend existing apps
  - o Portable – migrate apps to and from on-premise
- Enterprise-Grade
  - o Secure – strict controls and policies ensure data protection
  - o Elastic – self-service, capacity on-demand with monthly subscription
  - o Managed – fully automated operations and management

Overall, the solution is robust with the industry-leading Hyperion Planning base, solid workflow and integration options, and a user experience that extends nicely for mobile (tablet) use.

 <p><b>Planning</b></p> <p><b>Goal Oriented Plans</b> Achieve business objectives with target oriented revenue and expense planning, with variance and impact analysis reporting</p> <p><b>Multi-Dimensional Applications</b> Handle complex business logic and dynamic planning and forecasting needs with Oracle Essbase calculation engine</p> <p><b>Driver Based Rolling Forecasts</b> Intuitive driver based modeling, rolling forecasts and ad-hoc analysis for time sensitive planning</p>	 <p><b>Process and Workflow</b></p> <p><b>Flexible Workflow and Process Management</b> Enterprise level collaboration with dynamic, data driven approval orchestration</p> <p><b>Annotations</b> Threaded annotation and commentary with built-in audit capabilities</p> <p><b>Sharing</b> Shared document management allows for enterprise groups to collaborate securely</p>	 <p><b>Integration</b></p> <p><b>Application Integration</b> Connect to source ERP applications such as Financials</p> <p><b>Easy Integration with Oracle and Other Source Systems</b> Leverage existing IT investments and quickly integrate data from multiple sources including spreadsheets and native databases</p> <p><b>Enterprise Awareness</b> Achieve integrated financial decisions driven by multiple sources of financial impacts</p>	 <p><b>User Experience</b></p> <p><b>Intuitive, Role-based User Interface</b> Reduce training costs, increase user productivity with Web and Excel user interface and reports</p> <p><b>Role-Based Tasks and Work Areas</b> Manage, perform and approve tasks in configurable management work areas</p> <p><b>Interactive Dashboards</b> Configurable dashboards across the system to analyze and manage activity in one place</p>
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### 3 WHY CONSIDER THE CLOUD?

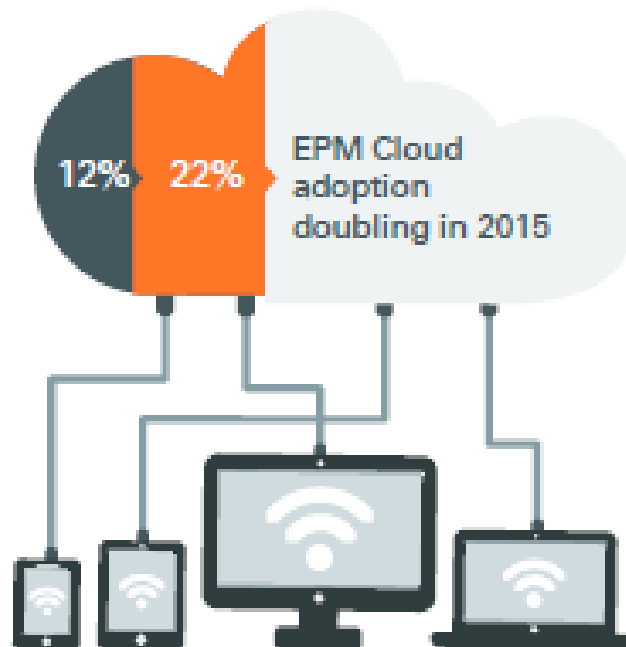
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Oracle's EPM Cloud usage has sky-rocketed since it was released, and this aligns with the findings outlined in Oracle's "EPM Top Trends for 2015" report.

First, you'll notice that the EPM Cloud user base, including PBCS, is doubling in size each year. This increase has been driven by the user community's comfort level with proven, successful deployments of EPM in a SaaS model. Additionally, some existing customers have moved to PBCS instead of upgrading.

Other reasons for the growth and expansion of the PBCS user base align with those more common to SaaS solutions. The same Oracle report finds that 65% of respondents are persuaded by the ability to get up and running quickly – an obvious benefit without the need for new infrastructure and IT support to set it up. Moreover, 53% of respondents are motivated to avoid large, upfront investments. Driven by shrinking budgets or daunted by the prospect of procuring Hyperion Planning licenses, users are attracted to the PBCS subscription model, which significantly reduces the year-one costs. As such, considering PBCS is a must.

#### EPM Cloud Usage in 2014 vs. 2015



## 4 THE TRADE-OFFS OF THE CLOUD AND PBCS

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The cloud and PBCS are not for everyone. Sometimes security requirements, integration models, or the sheer size of an architected solution make PBCS an inadequate option. Until Oracle releases an 'Enterprise' version of PBCS, on-premises or hosted deployments may be more appropriate than cloud-based solutions. Here is how we assess the cloud and PBCS:

First, the 'Good':

- Lower operational expense
- Limited infrastructure overhead
- Lower short-term TCO
- Faster implementation
- Potential for increased innovation
- Upgrades managed by SaaS provider

Then, the 'Bad':

- Loss of control
- Security and compliance concerns
- Longer-term TCO uncertain
- Integration with other systems
- Frequent automatic upgrades

You can see that some topics, such as upgrades, are on both lists and truly are in the eye of the beholder – some folks like control, while others prefer ease of mind.

## 5 ORACLE PBCS – FROM THE FOUNDATIONAL HYPERION PLANNING

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First, Oracle PBCS is Hyperion Planning at its core, so you benefit from having nearly the same robust features and functionality as the on-premise software. These include:

- Best practice planning, budgeting, and forecasting capabilities
- Spreadsheet-like interactivity with larger data sets
  - Rapid loading of large forms
  - Quick cell-to-cell navigation & scrolling
  - Support for shortcuts
  - Auto-calculations
  - Sandboxing
  - Excel-like formulas
- End users able to extend the model
- Add a member on the fly
- Embedded Advanced Predictive Planning
- Time-series forecasting with even more history
- Microsoft Office support and integration

The Oracle Hyperion solutions have been industry-leading for some time and regular Gartner “Magic Quadrant” members for Corporate Performance Management (Oracle calls it Enterprise Performance Management, or EPM). Below is the Gartner report from April 2015. Part of Oracle’s strength in this position is the viability and success of Oracle PBCS.





## 6 GETTING STARTED WITH PBCS

Oracle makes it incredibly easy to get started. You can go through your Oracle sales representation (recommended) to purchase subscriptions, or buy online at the Oracle Store. Here is a good place to start:

[http://docs.oracle.com/cloud/latest/pbcs\\_common/index.html](http://docs.oracle.com/cloud/latest/pbcs_common/index.html)

**Oracle Planning and Budgeting Cloud**

### Get Started

Oracle Planning and Budgeting Cloud Service is a flexible planning application that supports enterprise-wide planning, budgeting, and forecasting in a cloud-based deployment model.

- Get Started with Subscriptions**
  - Get a trial or subscription
  - Manage and monitor services
- Learn About Service**
  - Learn about Planning and Budgeting Cloud Service
  - View demo (Standard Interface)
  - View demo (Simplified Interface)
  - Learn about prerequisites
  - Review 3rd-party license information
- Get Started with Service**
  - Set up Cloud users and administrators
  - Access the service
  - Create a Planning application
  - See sample connection URLs
  - Set maintenance time
  - Understand backup and restore

The 'Getting Started' content is shown here, with links for learning about PBCS, obtaining trial subscriptions, and the initial steps of getting your PBCS environments up and running. Overall, you will find the amount of online documentation and other content for Oracle PBCS is tremendous and far superior to any of the on-premises options.

Your access to environments, after your subscriptions have been processed, is typically granted in just a few days. It is great to 'jump in' to Hyperion Planning, especially if you're used to the 'old' way of cumbersome installs and base configurations. What you get with PBCS is the following:

- The Planning application itself
  - Including two (2) environments (i.e. PROD and TEST)
- All hardware infrastructure to run the application

- o You don't see it or have direct access, but it's obviously there, supporting your application
- Regular patches and upgrades
  - o Administrators decide timing within prescribed windows
- Nightly backups
- Guaranteed performance
- Support is included

Important to note, there are pre-requisites for PBCS; however, there are not many. As a web-based application, it primarily relies on a browser. Still, the Calculation Manager and Smart View components do rely on and require compatibility for Shockwave Flash (Firefox) or Adobe Flash Player, and Microsoft Office.

The supported browsers are:

- Firefox ESR 38+
- Internet Explorer 11
- Google Chrome 29 and later
- Apple Safari 6 and later

Also note that only Google Chrome (on Android mobile devices) and Apple Safari (on iPads and iPhones) are supported for mobile devices.

For Smart View (Release 11.1.2.5.500 or newer), you need Microsoft Office 2007/2010/2013 and .NET Framework 4.0. For Calculation Manager, Shockwave Flash (Firefox) or Adobe Flash Player (Internet Explorer) is needed. Otherwise, you really just need Internet bandwidth.

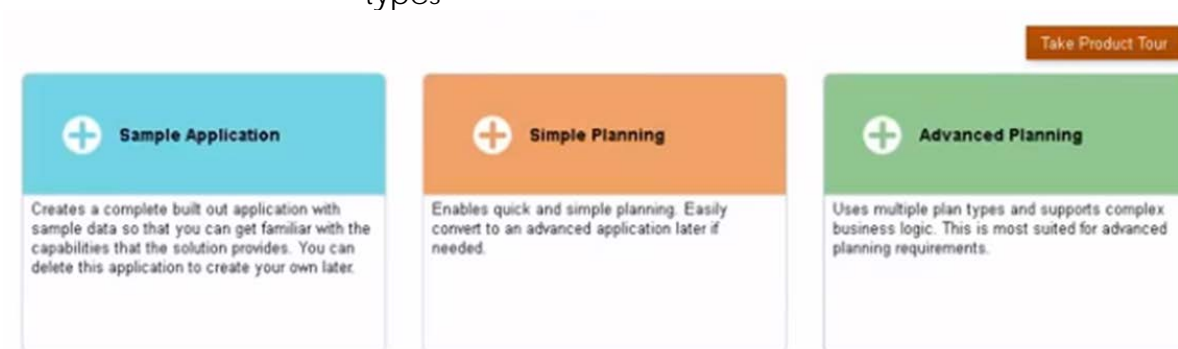
## 7 DE-CONSTRUCTING PBCS

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In an effort to explain what comprises the PBCS solution, it is first necessary to touch on a handful of core components.

First, there are “Application Wizards” that make creating a Planning application easy. The wizard takes you through the core configuration steps, asking questions on how the application will be used, and offering you additional options on how the application should be setup. With the first screen shown below, you can choose to install the sample application, or one of your own with these options:

- Simple: Basic applications with one (1) Hyperion Planning plan type (e.g. dimensional model)
- Advanced: More complex applications with multiple plan types



Next, a critical change is the fact that there are user-interface options. Aside from the “Classic Workspace” look and feel that we have used within Hyperion Planning, Oracle released a new “Simplified Interface”, specifically optimized for mobile or tablet use.

Below is a screenshot of the Task Lists within the new “Simplified Interface” – a much cleaner and simpler view into the Planning application and solution features. This simplified interface will soon become the standard for Oracle in the cloud.

As highlighted above, and aside from the new simplified interface, much of the core (and robust) Hyperion Planning functionality remains.

Type	Name	Start	End	Instructions
	Planning Process			
	Quarterly Income Statement			
	Refreshing the Planning Application Tutorial			
	Revenue Forecast			
	Revenue Forecast - Products			
	Revenue Forecast - Services			
	Revenue Plan			
	Revenue Plan - Products			

You still have the ability to create complex web (data) forms for centralized data capture to help eliminate spreadsheets. Features include inherent data entry features for 'spreading' changes, locking data, adding commentary, capturing supporting detail, attaching files to cells, and applying validation rules, all while enforcing data security.

**Review Actual vs Plan** Complete Previous Next Actions Save Refresh Close

Entity: 410 International Sales, Year: FY14 Data Ad hoc Format

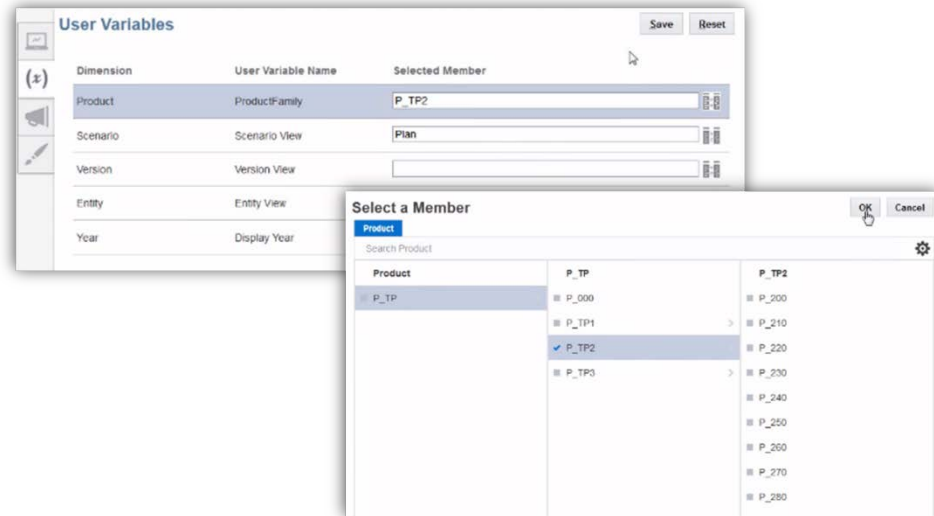
	Actual	Plan	Act vs Plan	Actual	Plan	Act vs Plan	Act vs Plan %	Plan
	Working	Working	Working	Working	Working	Working	Working	Commentary
	Jun	Jun	Jun	Yr to Date(Jun)	Yr to Date(Jun)	Yr to Date(Jun)	Yr to Date(Jun)	Jun
7110: Advertising	15,029	11,892	(3,137)	108,736	136,186	27,451	20.2%	
7120: Public Relations	8,556	6,760	(1,797)	50,167	45,565	(4,602)	(10.1)%	Changed PR firms
7410: Utilities	18,065	13,882	(4,183)	107,625	86,568	(21,058)	(24.3)%	Higher utility rates
7420: Rent Expense	23,651	24,783	1,132	140,910	148,698	7,787	5.2%	
7440: Cleaning and Maintenance	12,805	9,657	(3,148)	76,808	100,349	23,540	23.5%	
7450: Telephone Expenses	10,703	8,043	(2,660)	63,763	50,518	(13,235)	(26.2)%	Direct marketing
7510: Postage	4,482	3,416	(1,066)	26,699	21,195	(5,504)	(26.0)%	Mailed brochure to
7530: Equipment Expense	2,121	1,628	(492)	12,171	21,009	8,838	42.1%	
7003: Total Office Expenses	95,413	80,061	(15,352)	588,069	610,088	23,219	3.8%	
7620: Legal Services	15,170	11,668	(3,502)	92,000	134,487	42,487	31.6%	
7004: Total Facility Services Expenses	15,170	11,668	(3,502)	92,000	134,487	42,487	31.6%	
7640: Airfare	2,316	2,413	97	14,419	15,684	1,264	8.1%	
7650: Car Rental	241	185	(56)	1,449	1,302	(147)	(11.3)%	
7680: Shipping	11,760	12,409	649	70,312	74,190	3,878	5.2%	

As has been the case in more recent versions of Hyperion Planning, you have the ability to create impressive dashboard-type web forms with charts, tables, and other graphics to be available on both mobile and desktop.



Moreover, there is a powerful feature for administrators to author web forms via the new interface and save them as a functioning Financial Reporting report. This feature is not perfect, but definitely a nice, new way to transition from a well-received web form to a well-received report.

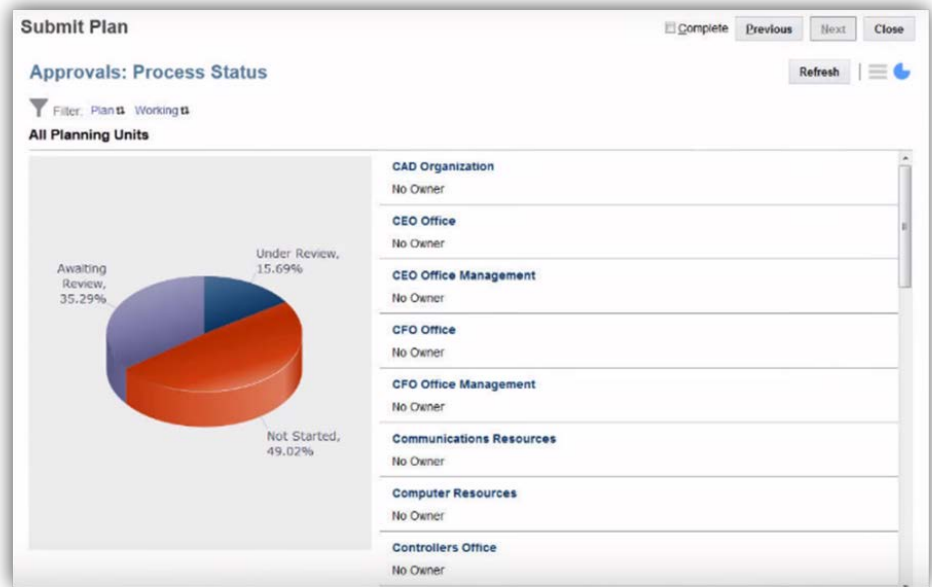
Data security is still driven by “planning units” against the Entity dimension, but the setting of ‘user variables’ has changed. A simple settings menu for ‘user variables’ allows you to specify/change what data you are looking at, again, applying data security appropriately.



For each user variable, the selection of desired ‘members’ is not too dissimilar to the interface in the ‘classic’ view. This is definitely an area for future improvement for PBCS.

The workflow and approval processes have not changed significantly, other than the simplified interface look and feel. It remains based in best-practices and offers a visualized approvals process with workflow status dashboards that help manage progress against your budgeting (and budget cycle) deadlines.

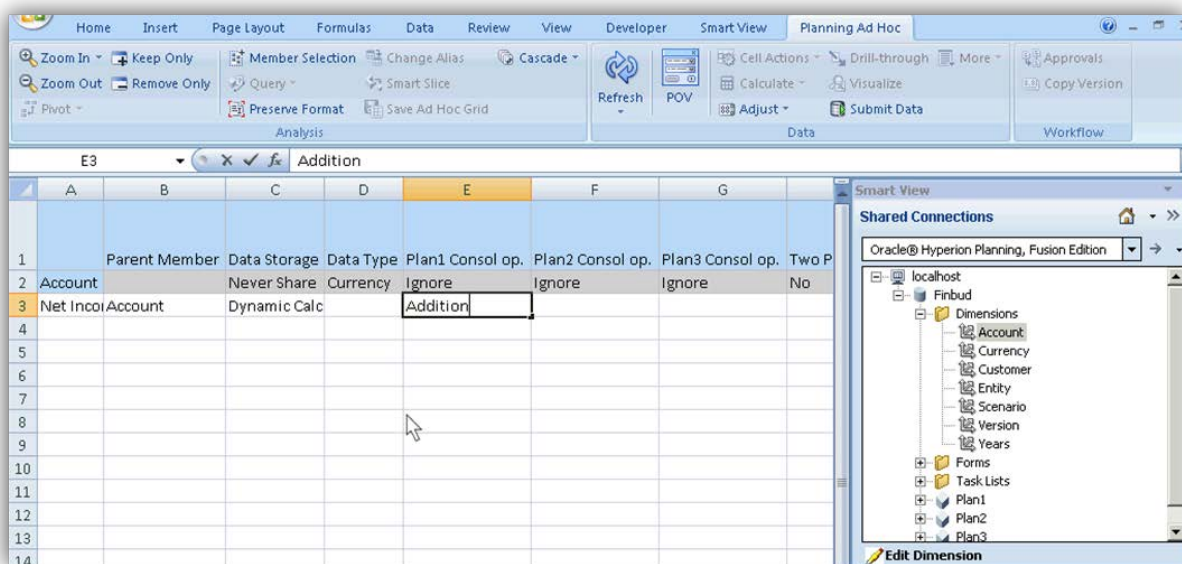
Below, you will see the steps of the approval workflow and their ownership, along with a graphical representation of the status.



For reporting, continue to leverage Financial Reporting Studio or FR. Interestingly, our customers and end users are leveraging web (data) forms for analysis and reporting (their words), others primarily use Smart View, and some embrace FR. Financial Reporting Studio is soon to be transformed into a lighter cloud solution, but until then we essentially have the same options.

With regards to Smart View, you can further utilize this great tool to manage dimension members.

To do so, you must connect to the Planning server, open the dimension, and begin adding or updating members and properties as seen below. This is a really nice option.

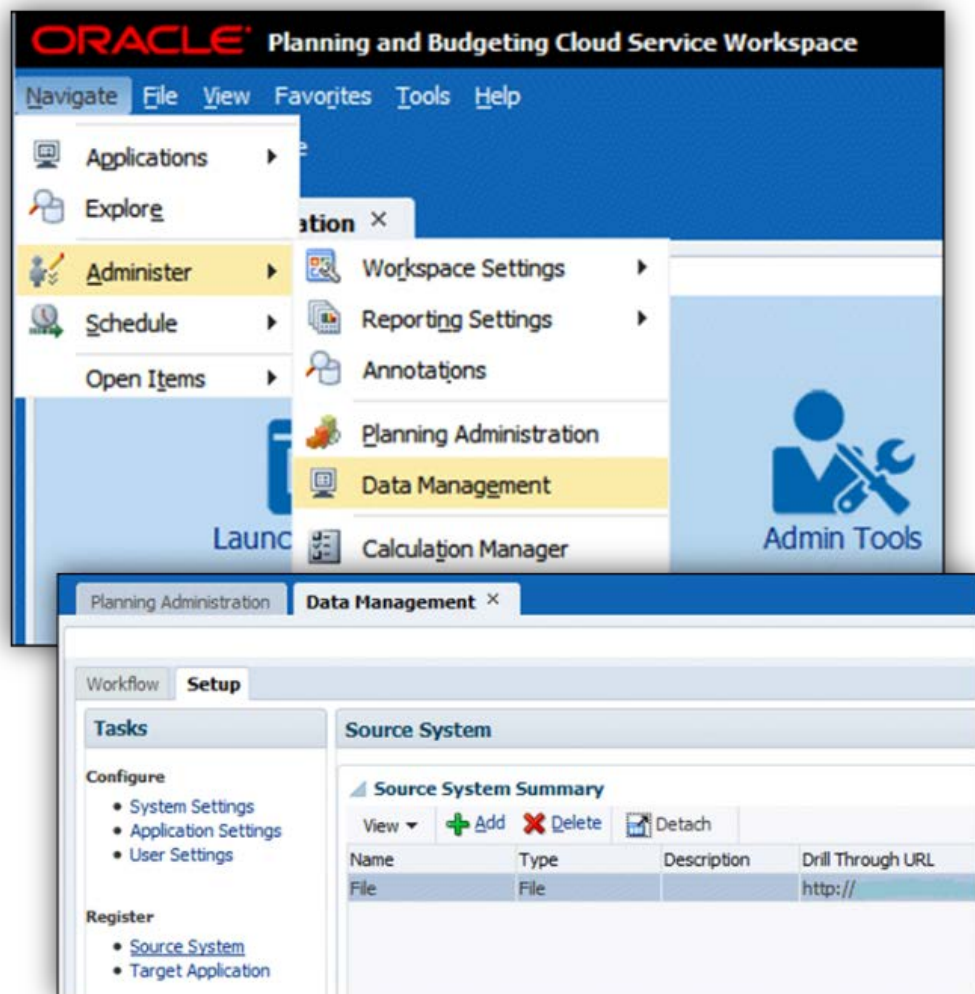




## 8 INTEGRATING DATA

The data integration model changes a bit with PBCS, as the data needs to be moved into the cloud. This is primarily done with files, which are produced and transported via FTP. REST APIs do exist and are being leveraged more and more, but the core approach is to use files.

FDMEE exists for PBCS, but in a 'lite' version. Pre-built adapters and ERP Integrators are not available, but the data mapping facilities of FDMEE are still quite helpful, and 'drill-through' into your ERP can be configured.

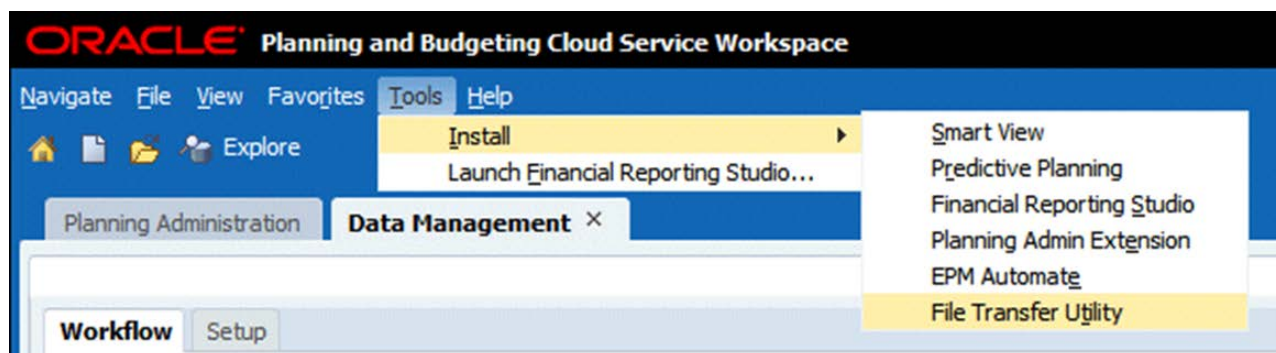


Here are the steps for setting up FDMEE in PBCS:

1. Set up the source and target systems.
2. Create an import format.
3. Define the location, period, and category.
4. Set up the data load mappings.
5. Create and execute a data load rule to import and validate the source data.
6. Export the data to Oracle Planning and Budgeting Cloud.

Then, in the PBCS target application, you must verify that the data was loaded and that you can drill through to the source system (if configured).

Additionally, it is likely that you will want to automate the data loads. For this, Oracle has provided a File Transfer Utility (EPMCopy.exe). Upon installation (see below), you can easily create a batch file that contains an EPMCopy command to load data into your Oracle PBCS target application.



## 9 REVIEWING THE PBCS SOLUTION

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Several of our customers have implemented PBCS and we truly see the value, but we also see where it may not be the right fit.

The advantages are numerous; here are a few we see:

- Many online training videos and tutorials
- Helpful, guided application demos
- Many wizards for setting up applications and underlying functionality
- Best practices for Planning are built-in
- Built-in performance and validation tools
- Choice of Oracle data center
- Ability to 'lift and shift' current Planning applications to the cloud
  - Uses common LCM migration facilities
- New functionality first
  - Oracle's "Cloud First" strategy
- Reduced reliance on IT and internal infrastructure

However, there are limitations to be aware of – here are a few to consider:

- Only one application is supported per subscription.
  - The application can contain up to three (3) BSO (block storage) plan types (cube models) and up to four (4) ASO (aggregate) cubes
  - Each additional application requires an additional subscription
- The file system is currently limited to 150GB
  - Includes space for your Essbase database, reports, and any exported Life Cycle Management content
- EPM Architect (EPMA) is not supported (Classic Mode only)
- Data is loaded via flat file using FTP
- Pre-built Hyperion modules are not currently supported ('Enterprise PBCS' options are coming soon)

## 10 MOVING TO ORACLE PBCS

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Ultimately, if you are considering Oracle PBCS, you are either targeting a new implementation or a migration from on-premises (or hosted) to the cloud – Oracle calls this a ‘lift and shift’.

### **New Implementation Highlights and Considerations:**

- Eliminate the normal start-up activities:
  - Hardware procurement and setup
  - Software procurement, install, and base configurations
- Access is provided in days with a new subscription
- Leverage new application wizard and configure applications
- Focus on data and FDMEE up front, then functionality
- Can be accomplished in a few months
  - Dependent on availability of requirements, number of applications and their design complexity, extent of data integration needed, and end user (super user) involvement

### **Lift and Shift Highlights and Considerations:**

- Investigate Oracle’s ‘Customer to the Cloud’ program
- Pre-built modules (e.g. CapEx, etc.) do not yet port
- May need to change data integration approach
  - Shift to simplified, file-based approach
- Regression testing is still needed
- Can be accomplished in weeks
  - Again, this is dependent on the number of applications and their complexity, components needing testing (reports, forms, etc.), extent of data integration changes needed, and availability of regression test scripts.

## 11 RECOMMENDATIONS

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As you consider and/or begin your endeavor with PBCS, here are a few recommendations:

- Understand the limitations
- Get multiple subscriptions
  - If you need more than two (2) environments, reduce the quantity of the secondary subscriptions
- Embrace the simplified integration model with FDMEE
  - Know that Oracle wants you to succeed - ask for help/support as much as needed
- Leverage Oracle's valuable online content:
  - Tutorials: [http://docs.oracle.com/cloud/latest/pbcs\\_common/pbcs\\_tutorials.htm](http://docs.oracle.com/cloud/latest/pbcs_common/pbcs_tutorials.htm)
  - Videos: [http://docs.oracle.com/cloud/latest/pbcs\\_common/pbcs\\_videos.htm](http://docs.oracle.com/cloud/latest/pbcs_common/pbcs_videos.htm)
  - Initial  
Documentation: [http://docs.oracle.com/cloud/latest/pbcs\\_common/CSPGS.pdf](http://docs.oracle.com/cloud/latest/pbcs_common/CSPGS.pdf)

## 12 CONCLUSION

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In summary, PBCS is a fantastic solution from Oracle and a great option for folks considering a move to the cloud. With robust features and functionality, a large subscription base, and the ease of implementing, PBCS gives both existing and potential customers a viable deployment option in the cloud.

### **Special Thanks:**

Special thanks to several folks on the EPM team at AST Corporation for their contributions to this paper, as well as Oracle EPM solution consultants, including Kapil Garga.



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Patrick Callahan is the Vice President of EPM at AST Corporation ([www.astcorporation.com](http://www.astcorporation.com)). With pragmatic advice, ultimate client service, and superior delivery, AST offers industry experts in Oracle Cloud, EPM, Oracle Applications, BI, Middleware/SOA, CX, and related technologies, as well as Managed Services.

Mr. Callahan maintains Oracle Specializations for Oracle EPM, BI, and BI Applications, and is active on the Oracle EPM and BI Partner Advisory Councils. His experience is centered in EPM, BI, data warehousing, program management, Oracle Applications, and core technologies, and he has presented at Oracle OpenWorld (OOW), Collaborate (OAUG), KScope (ODTUG), Oracle Tech Days, North Central Oracle Apps User Group (NCOAUG), and various other regional and industry-specific conferences.

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