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# Introduction to new Oracle users and developers at CERN

Are a new Oracle database user or developer at CERN? Please read on.

First of all, welcome to Oracle support services! The Physics Databases team is reachable at [phydb.support@cern.ch](mailto:phydb.support@cern.ch) to help you. Below you will find a few references that we recommend to bring your development with CERN DB services up to speed: selected references to Oracle documentation, and how to connect to Oracle.

## Links to Documentation

Oracle software comes together with extensive documentation. In case of RDBMS 10gR2 there are ~50k pages of documentation. It is well structured: there are books for both DBAs and developers.

### For developers we recommend:

- Application Developer's Guide - Fundamentals
- Concepts
- SQL Reference
- PL/SQL User's Guide and Reference

### Where to find Oracle documentation

- At CERN: <http://oradoc.cern.ch>
- Outside CERN: <http://tahiti.oracle.com>
- There are documentation sets for different products and versions
- Use documentation for product version you use!

## Connect to Oracle DBs

There are several ways to connect to a database. The basic way is using SQLPlus, which is an application that comes with Oracle client installation and is also available from `lxplus` at CERN.

Basic concepts to know:

- **local\_name** - local name/db alias describing how to connect to database. Also referenced as the connect descriptor.
- **host** - name of node(s) hosting the database
- **service\_name** - for clustered DBs, a service can be provided by one or more physical nodes

### Using local naming (db aliases):

You have a environment variable `$TNS_ADMIN` pointing to a directory. In that directory you have a file `tnsnames.ora` with several entries in the format:

```
<local_name> = (DESCRIPTION=
                (ADDRESS= (PROTOCOL=tcp) (HOST=<host1>) PORT=1521))
                (ADDRESS= (PROTOCOL=tcp) (HOST=<host2>) PORT=1521))
                (CONNECT_DATA= (SERVICE_NAME=<service_name>)))
```

You can connect by using:

```
sqlplus user/password@<local_name>
```

The `local_name` can be different in any machine, as the name says, is a local name. You have to check in the `$TNS_ADMIN/tnsnames.ora` file of the local machine you are connecting from.

**NOTE: local naming (tnsnames.ora) is the recommended method to connect to RACs**

## Using easy connect:

You don't need to have neither `$TNS_ADMIN` or `tnsnames.ora` file. However this only works if you use SQLPlus version `>= 10.x`. Another disadvantage is that you cannot specify more than one host name (which can exist in case of Oracle RACs/clusters)

You can connect by using:

```
sqlplus user/password@//<host>:<port>/<service_name>
```

## More advices

- Checklist for the Oracle application developers

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