

In Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS), **interfaces** and **conversions** refer to the processes that enable data exchange between Oracle EBS and other external systems. While both terms deal with integrating data into or out of Oracle EBS, they are used in slightly different contexts. Let's break them down:

1. Interfaces in Oracle EBS

An **interface** refers to the mechanism used for exchanging data between Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) and external systems (like other applications or databases). Interfaces allow Oracle EBS to send and receive data from other systems.

- **Purpose:** The main purpose of interfaces is to **transfer operational data** from one system to another without manual intervention. For instance, data may come from external systems like third-party applications, legacy systems, or even non-Oracle ERP systems, and be imported into Oracle EBS to support business processes.
- **Types of Interfaces:**
 - **Inbound Interface:** Data comes into Oracle EBS from external systems (for example, importing sales orders, supplier invoices, or inventory data).
 - **Outbound Interface:** Data is sent from Oracle EBS to an external system (e.g., exporting financial data to an external reporting tool or sending shipment details to a third-party logistics provider).
- **Interface Process:**
 - **Data Extraction:** Data is collected from the source system.
 - **Data Transformation:** Data is converted or mapped to match Oracle EBS data structures and business logic (e.g., date formats, field names, etc.).
 - **Data Loading:** The transformed data is loaded into Oracle EBS via a specific interface program.
- **Technologies Used:**
 - **SQL*Loader:** For loading data into Oracle tables from flat files.
 - **PL/SQL:** For custom logic to transform and load data into Oracle EBS.
 - **Open Interfaces:** Predefined API or data structures designed for importing or exporting data.

2. Conversions in Oracle EBS

A **conversion** typically refers to a **one-time data migration process** in which data is transferred from an external source into Oracle EBS during the initial setup or when migrating from legacy systems to Oracle EBS.

- **Purpose:** The main purpose of conversions is to **load historical or master data** into Oracle EBS so that the system can start functioning with this data. Examples include converting customer records, supplier information, inventory data, and financial balances from an old system into Oracle EBS.
- **Types of Conversions:**
 - **Master Data Conversions:** Data related to key entities like suppliers, customers, chart of accounts, employees, etc.
 - **Transactional Data Conversions:** Data like open invoices, open purchase orders, or historical transactions from a legacy system.
- **Conversion Process:**
 - **Data Extraction:** Historical data is extracted from the old system or external sources.
 - **Data Cleansing:** The data may be cleaned or transformed (e.g., resolving duplicate records, standardizing data formats).
 - **Mapping to Oracle Structure:** Data fields from the legacy system are mapped to the corresponding fields in Oracle EBS.
 - **Loading Data:** Data is loaded into Oracle EBS using a set of predefined tools and methods (e.g., **Data Migration Workbench**, **SQL*Loader**, or Oracle's **API interfaces**).
- **Technologies Used:**
 - **Oracle Data Pump:** For fast, efficient data transfer between databases.
 - **PL/SQL:** For custom scripts to handle complex data transformations and load into Oracle EBS.
 - **Oracle Integration Tools:** These include tools like **FBDI (File-Based Data Import)**, **WebADI**, and **ADFdi (ADF Desktop Integration)** for loading data.

Key Differences Between Interfaces and Conversions:

- **Interface:**
 - Continuous data exchange (can be recurring or real-time).
 - Usually, it's for operational data like orders, invoices, or payments.

- Data is transferred into Oracle EBS (inbound) or out of Oracle EBS (outbound).
- **Conversion:**
 - One-time or periodic data migration.
 - Typically occurs during system implementation or data migration.
 - Deals with bulk, historical, or master data.

Example Scenario:

1. **Interface:** A company may use an interface to import sales order data from an external order management system into Oracle EBS for processing and fulfillment.
2. **Conversion:** During the implementation of Oracle EBS, the company migrates all customer data, open orders, and inventory balances from the old legacy system into Oracle EBS, so the system is ready to go live with accurate historical data.