

# Top Five Reasons to Choose Toad™ Over SQL Developer

Written by John Pocknell, senior product manager, Quest



## ABSTRACT

SQL Developer is free, so why should you choose Toad? This technical brief reveals the top five reasons.

## INTRODUCTION

Toad was one of the first Oracle integrated development environments (IDEs) of its kind. Written in 1995 by a developer for developers, Toad for Oracle is now used by more than 3 million people worldwide, including developers, database administrators (DBAs), analysts, managers, support engineers and many others. Toad has a cult following of extremely loyal users. Their enthusiasm is apparent at events like Oracle OpenWorld and in countless Toad user groups around the world. And while many software companies have tried to emulate Toad's success, it's fair to say that all have fallen short.

Toad remains the benchmark by which other tools — including Oracle's SQL Developer — are measured.

SQL Developer was introduced through an early adopter release in December 2005. It attracted huge interest not just because it's free, but also because it was the first Oracle PL/SQL development IDE from the database vendor — even though JDeveloper already contained a lot of PL/SQL development features. SQL Developer has a dedicated user community, but even a decade after the product's inception, the list of enhancement requests — for features already provided in Toad for Oracle — continues to grow.

This technical brief answers the question, "If SQL Developer is free, then why should I still choose Toad?"

## THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TOAD FOR ORACLE AND SQL DEVELOPER

Table 1 summarizes the main differences between Toad for Oracle and SQL Developer based on five core areas of Oracle database development.

Toad remains the benchmark by which other tools — including Oracle’s SQL Developer — are measured.

	Toad for Oracle 2015 (various editions)	SQL Developer 4.1
Code quality	Toad offers automated rules-based code reviews through its Code Analysis feature, which can have coding violations displayed dynamically in the Editor. Coding rules can be adapted to suit different projects. All rules have been approved by Quest’s own Oracle experts to ensure that PL/SQL best practices are always observed. Code reviews can be scheduled, and a dashboard provides managers with a project-wide view. Toad also provides the ability to build test cases automatically and store them.	Other than basic code templates and formatting, which Toad already offers, it is our understanding that SQL Developer offers little that specifically addresses code quality and best practices. Absence of complete and in-depth code quality assessments will lead to an increase in unplanned development cycles. SQL Developer provides integrated functional testing, but test cases must be built manually before they can be used, which is labor-intensive.
Application performance	Toad enables developers to identify and tune PL/SQL and SQL statements using a very simple interface or a comprehensive optimization environment. This ensures that developers can take care of application performance issues rather than simply relying on DBAs.	SQL Developer appears to offer SQL tuning based on Oracle Tuning Advisor. This technology provides advice for the developer but may often fail to provide the most optimal solution. Tuning Advisor requires the Oracle Enterprise Manager (OEM) Diagnostics and Tuning Packs (part of Enterprise Edition) and must be licensed.
Code maintainability	Code that is not maintainable will often lead to delays when it has to be modified. Coding best practices, as recommended by our Oracle experts and implemented in the Code Analysis feature, ensure coding changes are simplified, improve consistency and reduce errors.	Other than basic code templates and formatting, which Toad already offers, it is our understanding that SQL Developer offers little that specifically addresses code maintenance. This is likely to lead to an increase in errors and problems in production.
Team collaboration	Teams are more effective units than separate individuals. Toad makes it easy to collaborate and share settings, database connections, templates, scripts and code-review standards among team members. This improves consistency, minimizes errors and maximizes productivity.	Other than the possibility to share some templates, it appears that SQL Developer is really designed just for the individual developer. It offers little opportunity to collaborate effectively with other developers in a team.
Productivity	With its functional depth, superior workflow and task automation, time savings in Toad can be measured in hours, not minutes. Many tasks — data exports, reports, schema comparisons and code reviews — can be automated, saved and replicated, minimizing errors; entire multitask workflows can be built and scheduled.	SQL Developer’s workflow seems reasonably logical, but, in terms of functional depth, developers may quickly find that it offers little help for performing some essential tasks. So far as we understand, SQL Developer does not offer any desktop task automation capabilities.

Table 1. The main differences between Toad for Oracle and SQL Developer

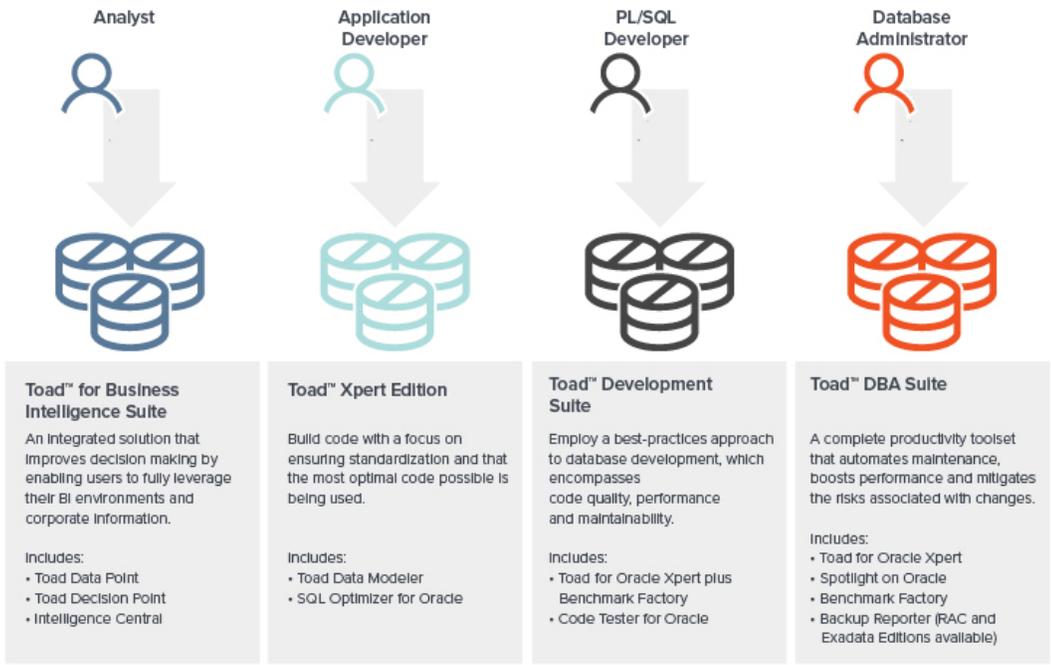


Figure 1. Toad comes in different editions to support a variety of job functions.

**TOAD FOR ORACLE**

From its early days as an Oracle developer’s tool, the Toad for Oracle offering has expanded into new editions that are built to suit different job functions, as shown in Figure 1.

Most offerings are available on several database platforms in addition to Oracle, including SQL Server, IBM DB2, SAP, MySQL and Hadoop. Toad for Oracle 2015 offers configurations and licensing models to support individual users and large corporations alike.

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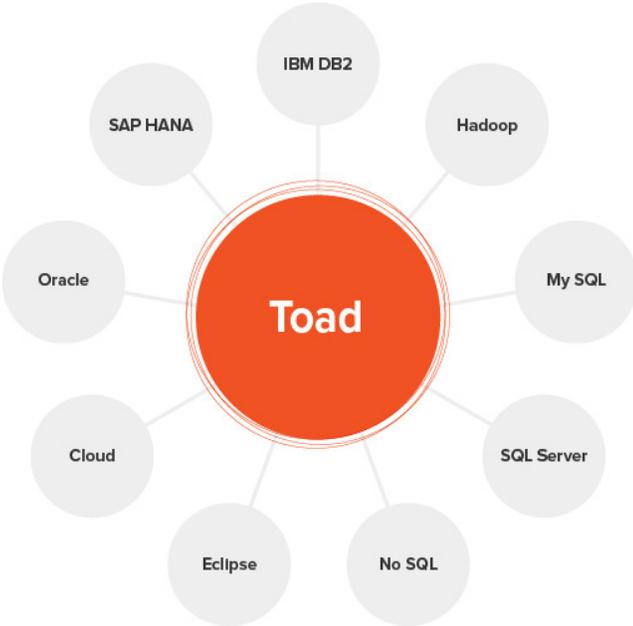


Figure 2. Toad has extended its reach to new technologies such as cloud databases, NoSQL and Hadoop.

Make no mistake:  
Oracle SQL Developer  
is not the same as  
Toad for Oracle.

### SQL DEVELOPER

Launched in 2005, SQL Developer is a productivity tool for Oracle developers and DBAs. It provides benefits in the form of workaday tasks including, but not limited to, query editor, debugger and documentation features for developers and a collection of commodity management features for DBAs.

SQL Developer also provides read-only access to database platforms other than Oracle and interfaces with Oracle's TimesTen in-memory database and Oracle's Application Express (APEX).

### TOP FIVE REASONS TO CHOOSE TOAD OVER SQL DEVELOPER

Make no mistake: Oracle SQL Developer is not the same as Toad for Oracle. Often, people compare both tools and draw that incorrect conclusion without investigating the real differences.

Let's face it, all development tools should allow users to browse objects in the database and to view and change data in an Oracle table, as well as provide an editor for building code, a debugger, a code profiler, a reporting tool, the means to export and import data and a graphical query builder. Since the introduction of Toad, these things are now expected from any development IDE. But these

features alone should not be used as the basis for an effective comparison between one tool and another, especially when the integrity and performance of critical business applications are at stake.

This tech brief examines all editions of Toad for Oracle 2015 and provides a representative comparison with Oracle SQL Developer 4.1 from a productivity standpoint. This paper is not about the features that SQL Developer lacks; it goes beyond that to analyze the functionalities that matter most to our users.

And how do we know these capabilities matter? We saw Toad customers move to SQL Developer when it was introduced because it's free and was thought to offer the same functionality as Toad. But many of those customers have now returned to Toad after realizing they cannot accomplish in SQL Developer what they can in Toad. That alone says a lot about the value Toad offers our customers — value they need to work more effectively.

So why should you choose Toad? Because unlike other tools, Toad improves what really matters when it comes to application code: quality, performance, maintainability, team collaboration and productivity.

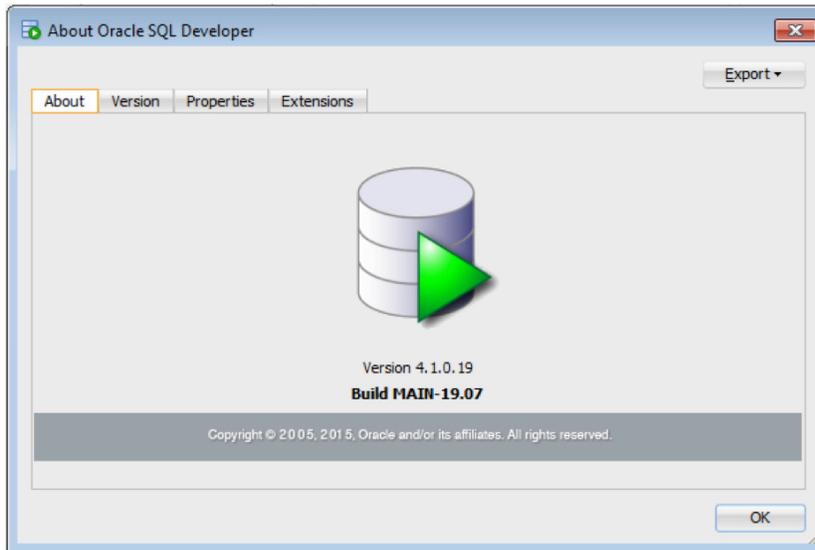


Figure 3. SQL Developer is designed for the individual developer and DBA.

## REASON 1: QUALITY MATTERS

### Expert advice for code correctness, readability and maintainability

One of the characteristics that makes Toad (and indeed Quest) unique is our wealth of domain expertise. Our experts are fluent in most relational database management systems (RDBMS), NoSQL and Hadoop technologies. For example, in the case of Toad for Oracle, we are uniquely positioned to utilize coding best practices and insights from many of the worlds leading authorities on PL/SQL. These insights are embodied in Toad features ranging from helpful knowledge and advice to flexible and automated code reviews.

At any point during code creation or change, a Toad developer can receive expert feedback. Code Analysis, Toad's PL/SQL and SQL advisor, will analyze the code, present coding violations dynamically in the Editor, and offer detailed corrective recommendations on how to optimize the code — not only for code correctness, but also for better readability and maintainability, as well as other best practices categories. This extends Toad's benefits to entire

development and quality assurance (QA) teams. Therefore, when the developer moves on to something else, the person who inherits that same program is not left to wonder what is going on.

For example, if the database is not complaining with ORA or PLS errors when you create your stored procedures, it is very tempting to just assume that everything must be OK. With Toad, you can address that nagging fear in the back of your head that maybe all is not well with your code. With Quest's collective PL/SQL best practices built into Toad's parser, the developer has instant access to better programming techniques and theory.

Code Analysis lets the development team choose rules and even customize rule characteristics based on their company or project requirements. The Edit Code Analysis Rules feature enables the rule's characteristics to be modified, stored and then be shared with each team member.

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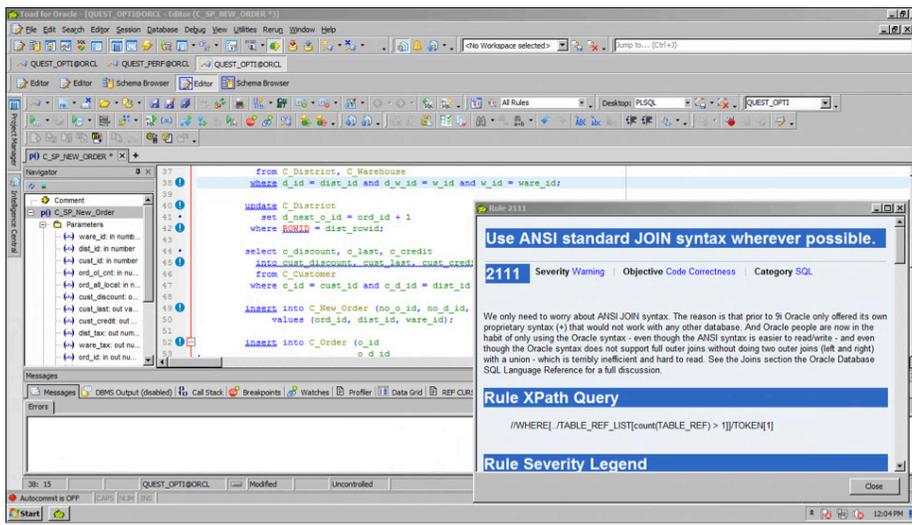


Figure 4. Toad offers practical steps to improve your PL/SQL programs.

Think of Toad as a coding coach that helps less experienced developers become experts with the advice of seasoned Oracle professionals.

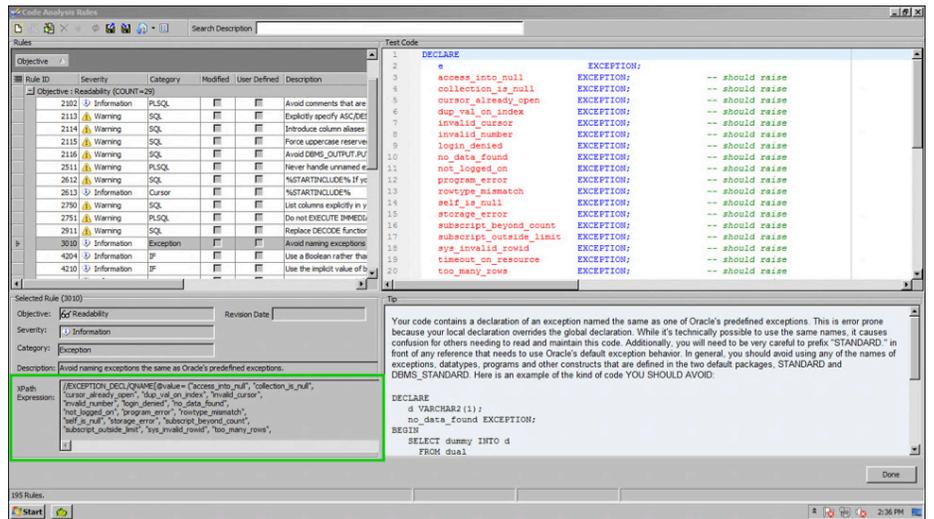


Figure 5. Modifying the characteristics of a Code Analysis rule

We like to think of Toad as a coding coach that helps less experienced developers become experts with the advice of seasoned Oracle professionals. In contrast, SQL Developer offers only nominal functionality to encourage developers to write smarter code. This often results in substandard code that is harder to maintain.

### Understanding and documenting code

For developers who live in the maintenance cycle, Toad also has the ability to document what a program does: It will show the objects involved and the data touched by each execution of the program. Testing is a much more fruitful exercise when you know exactly what to test.

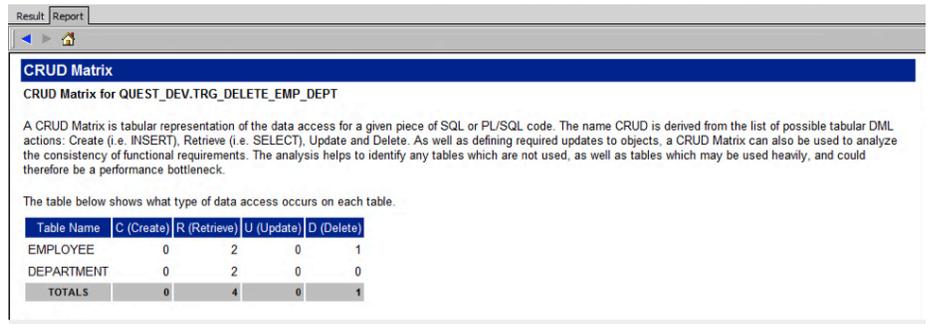


Figure 6. Toad identifies how data is accessed by your program.

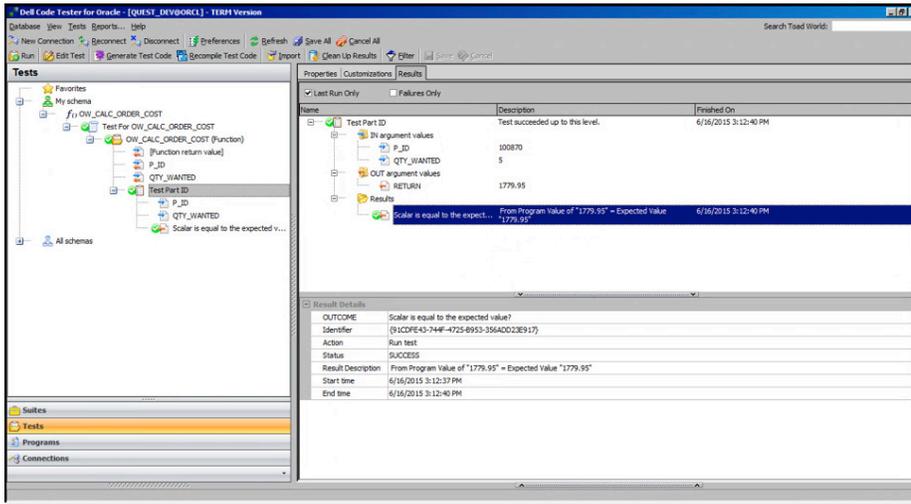


Figure 7. Test your code as if you were a testing expert.

### Functional (unit) testing

Another way that application code quality can be ensured is through functional (or unit) testing of PL/SQL programs. Both Toad and SQL Developer offer unit testing:

- The Quest Code Tester for Oracle tool is a component of the Toad Development Suite for Oracle. Written by Quest's Oracle experts, it enables easy test case creation that can be automated based on the developer's knowledge of expected behavior and outcomes.

- Oracle SQL Developer's unit testing is available as part of the IDE, but its functionally is limited. In particular, it requires the user to figure out how to create the test cases, so it isn't automated testing by any stretch of the imagination.

With Code Tester for Oracle, you can click through test scenarios or use out-of-the-box tests. For example, you can test a scenario in which row deletion from a table fails due to a primary key relationship violation.

A good testing tool is invaluable because it encourages more testing.

It takes many years of experience to identify and resolve SQL execution performance problems in scripts and PL/SQL code — unless you have the right tools.

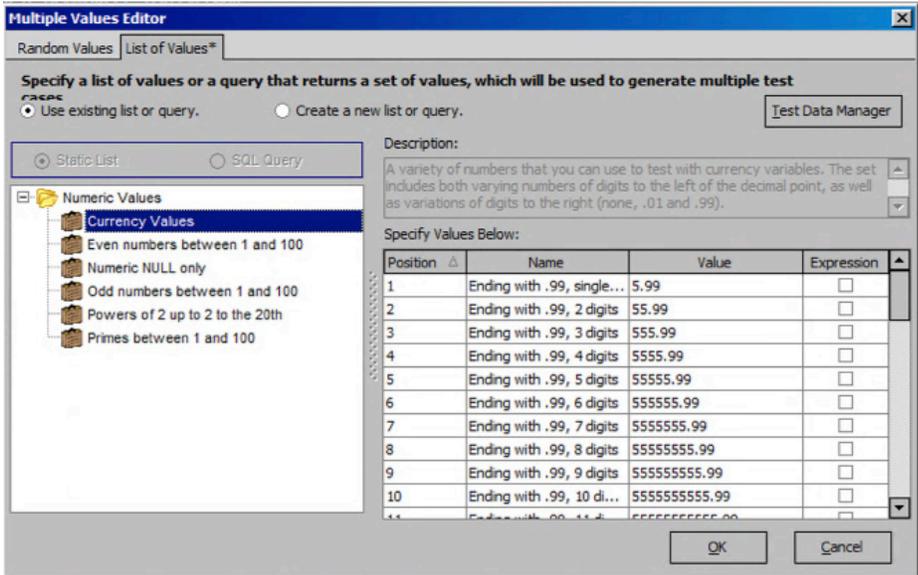


Figure 8. Need help setting up currency value inputs? It simply does not get easier than this.

A good testing tool is invaluable because it encourages more testing. Developers typically dislike testing and avoid it; the first roadblock they encounter will only steer them back to activities they do enjoy, such as writing more programs. Toad can easily test random or specific inputs across multiple data types and provide 25 ways to test the state of a table. Figure 8 shows how easy it is to set up currency value inputs.

The latest version of Code Tester includes a feature called Run-To-Test, which enables developers to run an existing program and save the input arguments and other information as a new stored test case.

Toad’s intuitive testing features ensure that developers will be more successful at building tests, which will directly result in better programs that can be developed and maintained at a lower cost.

**REASON 2: PERFORMANCE MATTERS**

Application performance is another Toad strength recognized by leading industry analysts. Development teams that fail to address code performance issues early on face potentially serious and expensive problems in production.

**Alternative execution plans**

It takes many years of experience to identify and resolve SQL execution performance problems in scripts and PL/SQL code — unless you have the right tools. Toad has you covered. It enables you to see execution plans for code that’s being developed, explore code that’s already executing or find poor plans from the SGA.

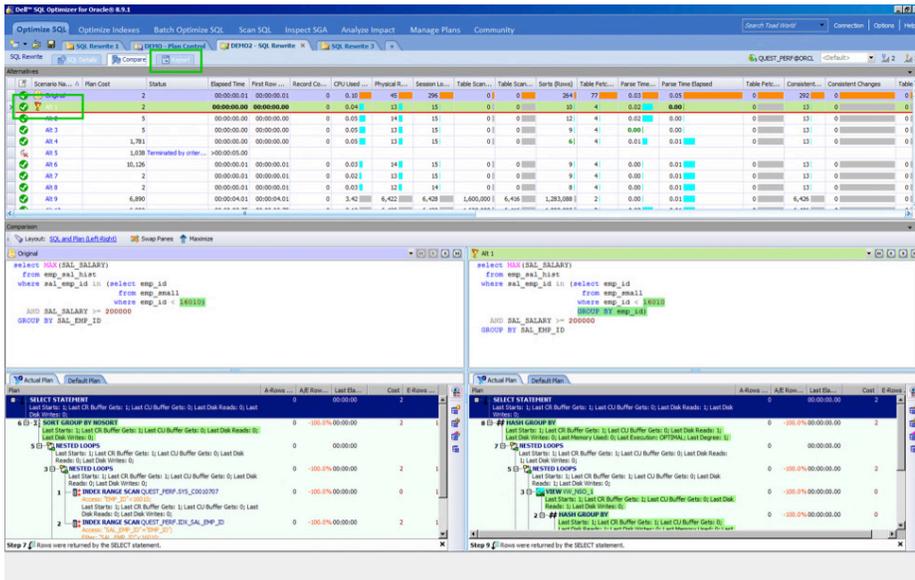


Figure 9. Toad quickly provides alternate rewrites for a problematic SQL statement.

Many tools, including SQL Developer, make execution plans for SQL statements readily available, but only Toad has the ability to suggest rewrite alternatives. Start with one problematic SQL statement, let Toad have a swing at it and you now have several dozen SQL queries and plans to choose from. While Oracle Enterprise Manager and SQL Developer's built-in SQL Tuning Advisor are quite powerful and get smarter with each release, both are still far from being able to take any request for data and

build the ideal execution plan. Cue the Toad component, Quest SQL Optimizer for Oracle.

Figure 9 shows how, in seconds, Toad was able to identify multiple rewrite alternatives with unique plans available from a single SQL statement.

Seeing each rewrite scenario side by side with the original query makes the evaluation process a cinch (see Figure 10).

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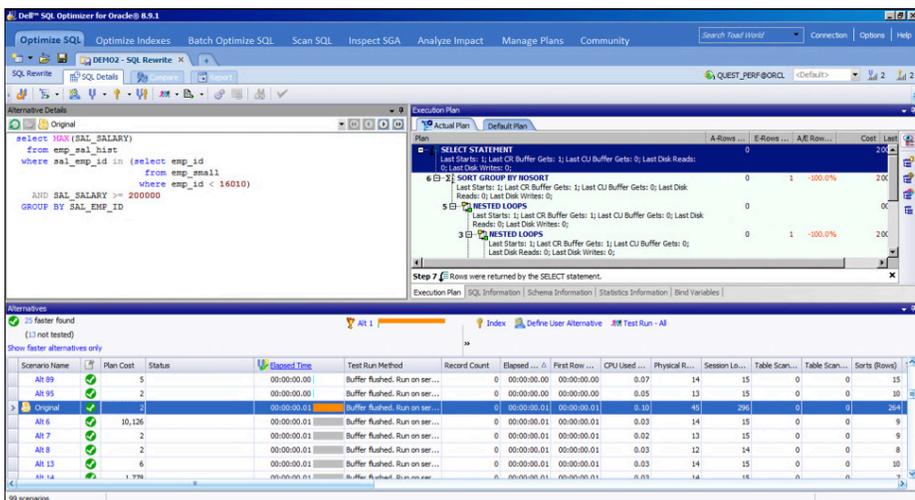


Figure 10. Toad displays each alternative side by side with the original query to make comparison easy.

Seeing each rewrite scenario side by side with the original query makes the evaluation process a cinch.

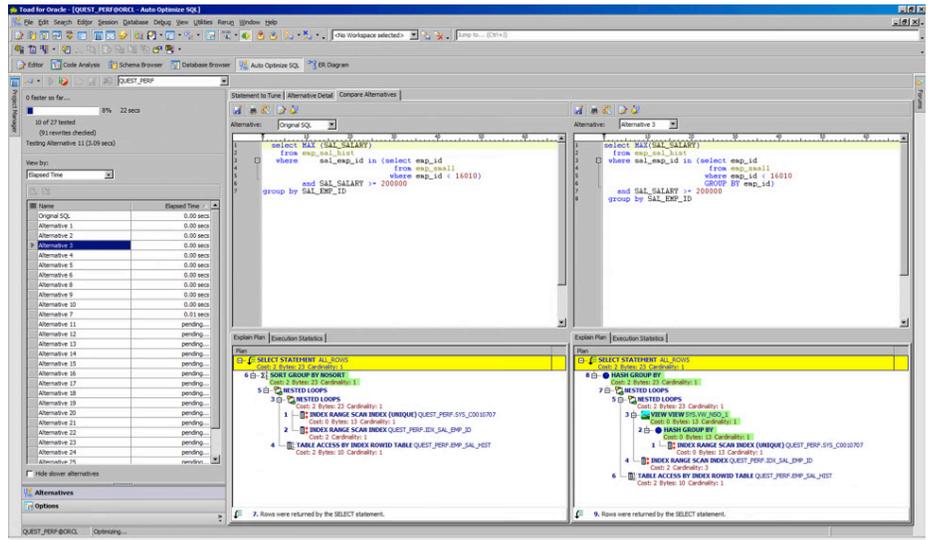


Figure 11. SQL optimization directly from inside Toad

### Ease of use

Want a really simple interface for all this technology? We've got that covered, too. Simply activate the Auto Optimize SQL feature in the Toad Editor by clicking the Auto Optimize SQL button to enjoy the exact same optimization capabilities — without having to open the Quest SQL Optimizer tool separately.

### Identifying problematic statements

Of course, it's not enough to be able to just automatically tune a statement; developers need assistance with identifying which statements need to be tuned. Rather than tune every statement they write, Toad can categorize plans as problematic or complex and ripe for tuning. Development managers or QA engineers can also use Toad's Scan SQL feature to pull out all the problematic plans from an application project or from the database itself. We have a wealth of experience in the field of application performance tuning, and this expertise is leveraged in Toad to suit varying levels of expertise.

Although SQL Developer 4.1 now offers the capability to identify and tune SQL statements in scripts or PL/SQL code, this actually leverages their OEM Tuning and Diagnostics Packs, which are currently available through OEM Database Control and require separate licensing. Contrary to what you may

have heard, Toad for Oracle does not require licensing of OEM Diagnostics and Tuning Packs to utilize its SQL tuning and optimization functionality.

### REASON 3: MAINTAINABILITY MATTERS

#### Understanding the impact of proposed code changes

A forward-looking database professional understands that the code you write today will have to be maintained for years into the future. What this means is that, although developers often just want to write code as quickly as possible, this is actually a shortsighted approach. Code that cannot be effectively maintained will ultimately cost the business in the future. For instance, if developers who maintain code do not understand how a change to a stored procedure or package can potentially affect other database objects, then a simple change could be disastrous to the underlying application.

We cannot rely on developers to manually produce maintainable code, even if they are provided with knowledge and advice. The tool must seamlessly facilitate the creation of maintainable code, or it won't happen. Toad's Code Road Map feature provides developers with a graphical representation of their code and the objects to which it relates. This ensures that developers understand the potential impact of changes to code

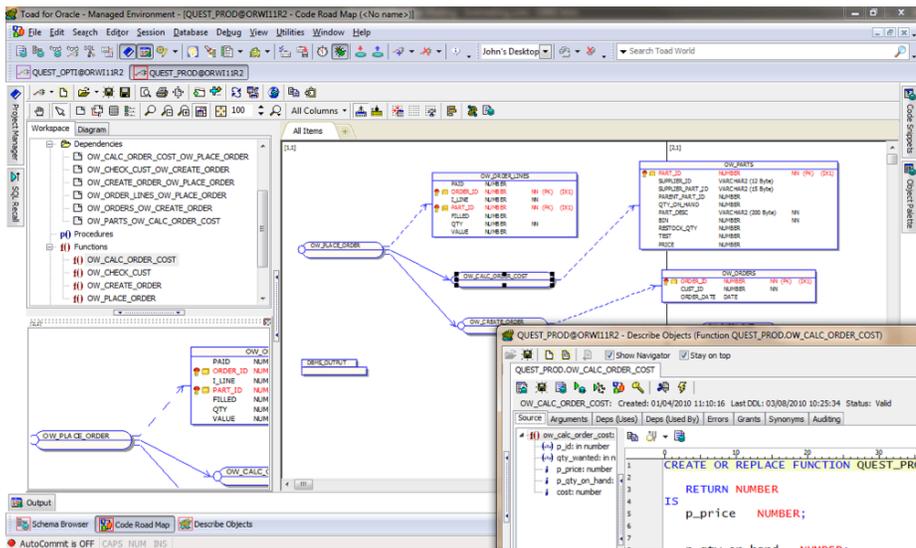


Figure 12. Code Road Map ensures that developers understand the bigger picture.

(or to objects like tables) that could break the application.

Oracle SQL Developer provides no such assurances; developers must figure out whether a proposed code change will impact something else. With so much code to maintain across your applications, are you prepared to take that chance? Of course not; it's like driving without car insurance.

### Ensuring standards are followed

Each organization must decide what maintainability rules are appropriate for them, but all organizations need to ensure that their rules are implemented consistently. SQL Developer only offers code templates to improve consistency and some basic code refactoring. These methods alone do not ensure that developers create code that is easy to maintain.

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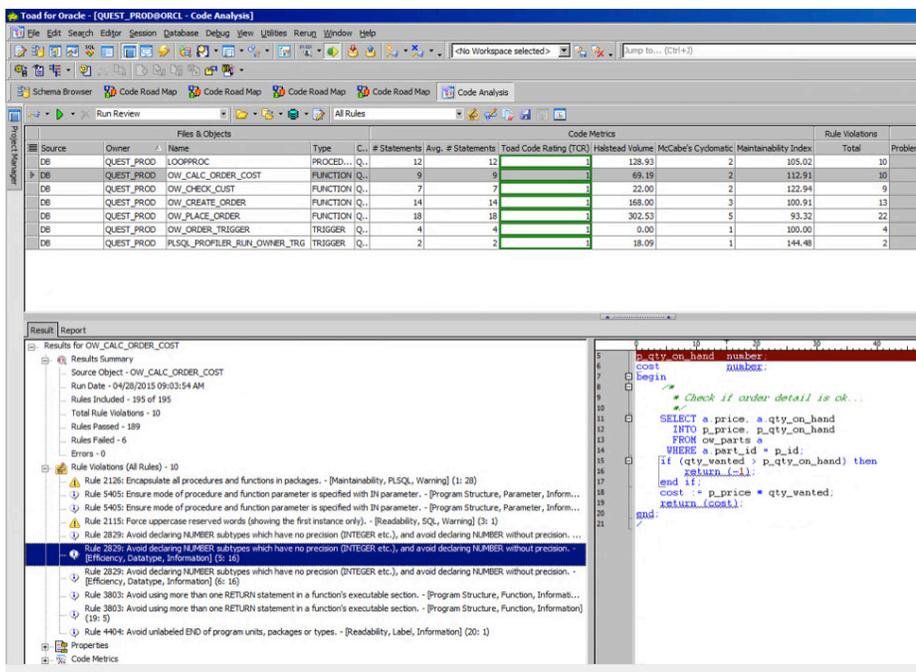


Figure 13. Toad provides every development manager's dream: a consolidated code review dashboard.

Toad shines a bright light on application code and makes it harder for inefficient code to sneak into the database.

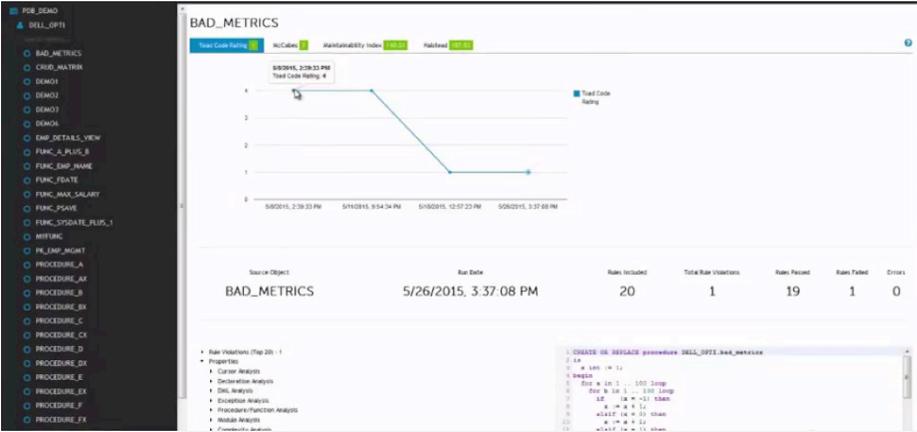


Figure 14. Toad provides a web-based summary report that makes it easy to share results with stakeholders, including managers and the developers themselves.

Toad offers far more. In particular, development managers and team leads can easily perform a comprehensive code quality review of all the PL/SQL and SQL in the application. This enables the manager to measure the quality of the code from the beginning and track it throughout the development lifecycle. Poorly implemented code can be highlighted and returned to the developer with advice on how to make improvements. HTML-based reports can be shared via a powerful web interface as

well as email. Code reviews can be automated and scheduled using Toad's automation features, saving hours of time, increasing efficiency and ensuring consistency.

The ability to maintain quality from the beginning of a software project is even more critical when you are working with contractors or remote development teams. Toad shines a bright light on application code and makes it harder for inefficient code to sneak into the database.

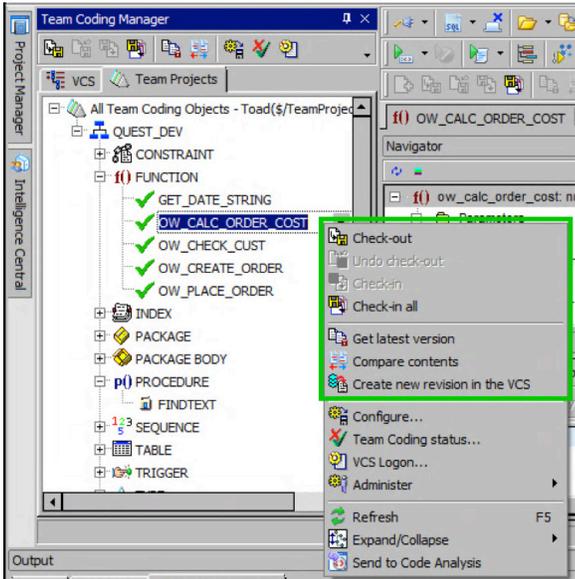


Figure 15. Toad's Team Coding Manager helps handle version control integration seamlessly.

## REASON 4: TEAM COLLABORATION MATTERS

Good teamwork can improve application quality, reduce program bottlenecks and minimize maintainability issues. But in many development shops, teamwork is still a challenge. Many times, when we ask prospects or potential customers how effectively coding standards are used by their development teams, they smile and say, “That’s a challenge for us.”

Toad offers a variety of collaboration tools:

- Team Coding Manager (shown in Figure 15) handles version control integration seamlessly. This enables development teams to focus on the database changes while working within Toad. Toad supports a wide variety of version control systems.
- The Project Manager utility (shown in Figure 16) allows you to organize databases, connections, database objects, scripts, data models, to-do items, favorite SQL commands, FTP and local folders and files — all in a single interface.

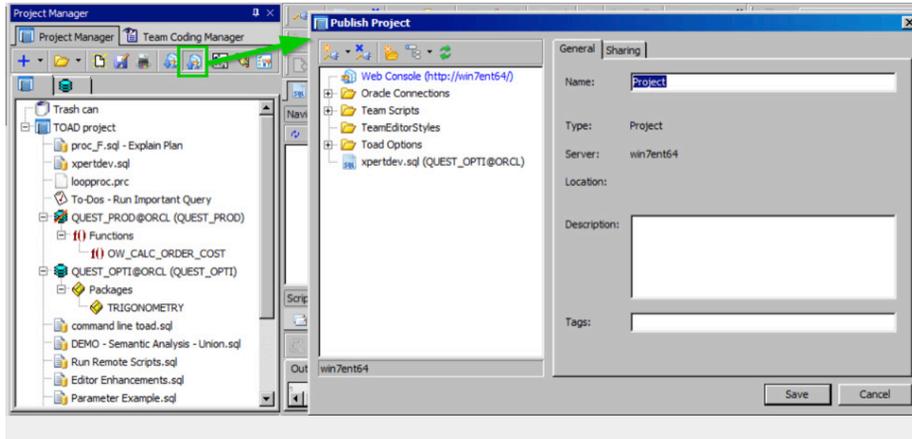


Figure 16a. Toad's Project Manager utility allows you to organize databases, connections, database objects, scripts, data models, to-do items, favorite SQL commands, FTP and local folders and files — all in a single interface.

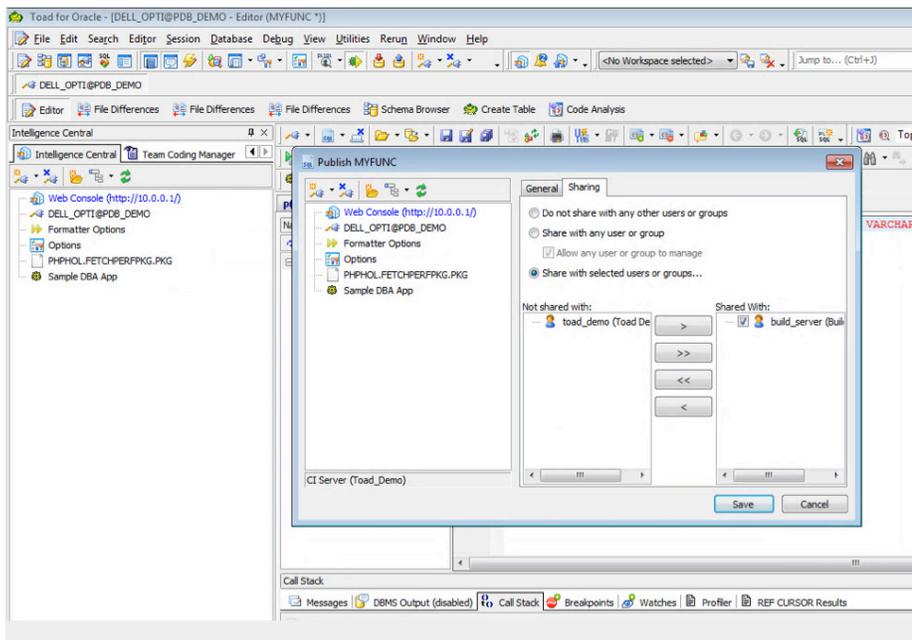


Figure 16b. Toad for Oracle 2015 Suite introduces the optional Toad Intelligence Central to serve as a hub for easily and securely sharing files, code standards or other settings with individuals or groups.

Good teamwork can improve application quality, reduce program bottlenecks and minimize maintainability issues.

Customers often say, “Toad helps me get on with what I need to do without getting in my way.”

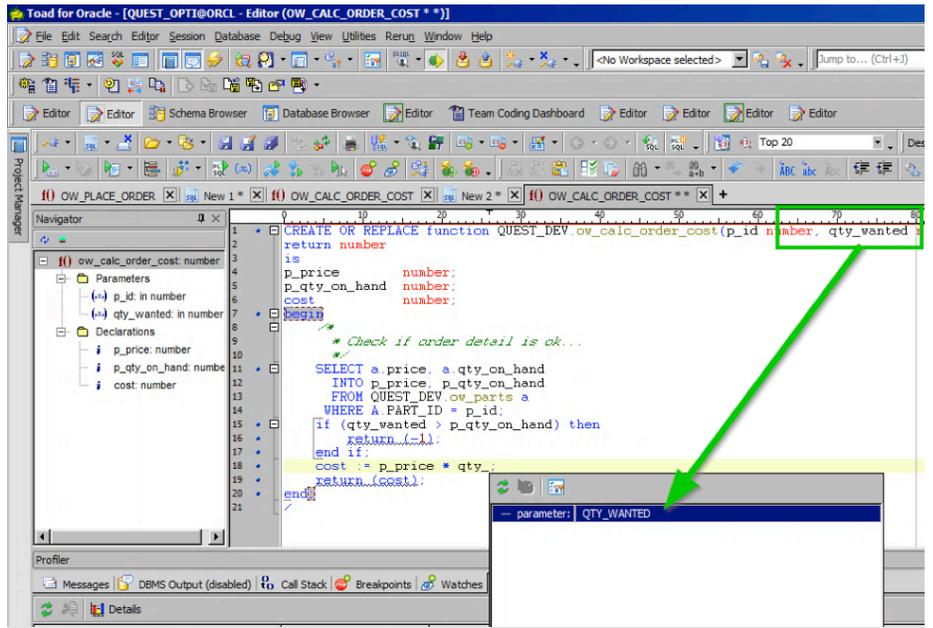


Figure 17. Toad for Oracle provides auto-lookup of parameter and variable names.

and local folders and files — all in a single interface. This makes it extremely easy for a team lead to bootstrap new developers with everything they need to hit the ground running.

Increasingly, we find developers distributed geographically. This adds to the already significant challenge of collaboration. To remedy this situation, Toad for Oracle 2015 Suite introduces the optional Toad Intelligence Central to serve as a hub for easily and securely

sharing files, code standards or other settings with individuals or groups. Toad Intelligence Central even integrates with existing Active Directory infrastructure, so users and groups that have already been defined can be leveraged to securely and confidently share resources.

Toad also provides everyone on your team with instant access to frequently used database objects, so they can perform routine tasks in a single click

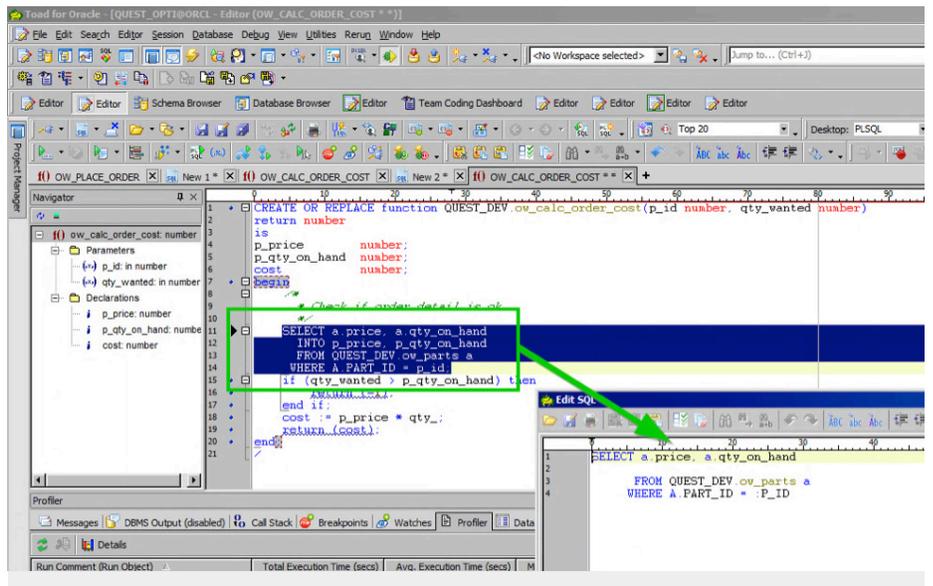


Figure 18. Toad automatically extracts and executes embedded SQL from PL/SQL code.

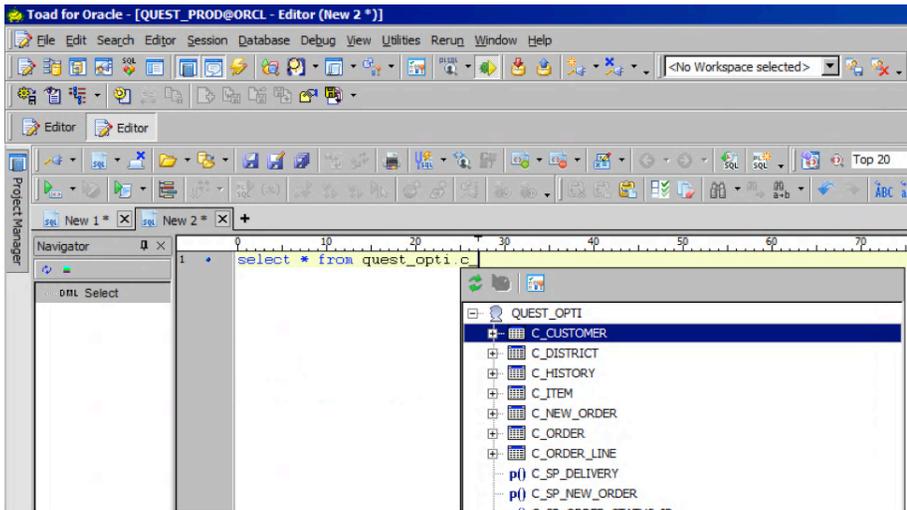


Figure 19. Toad's Editor can be configured to suggest keywords and expected tokens for commands that are written; experts can disable this feature.

Toad can automate tedious tasks, such as writing the same SQL over and over again.

instead of navigating the vast database looking for what they need.

Oracle SQL Developer, as mentioned earlier, was designed as a development tool for the single developer, so it provides minimal abilities to share things with other developers; these are limited to code snippets, code templates and formatter templates, and there is limited support for version control systems.

**REASON 5: PRODUCTIVITY MATTERS**

**Seamless functionality**

Toad is a productivity tool at heart. Quest recognizes that database professionals spend as much time outside the database as they do inside, so when you need to back up your code or objects, Toad allows you to simply drag and drop an object to an FTP folder.

For developers, the essential Toad window is the Editor, where they build and edit code. Productivity features in the Editor aren't limited to keyboard shortcuts; the Editor provides the time-saving features and functions of Toad in such a seamless manner that you don't even have to think about it. When customers are asked what they like about Toad, they often reply, "Toad helps me get on with what I need to do without getting in my way." This could easily be the mantra of Toad's development team.

For example, SQL Developer's Worksheet and Toad Editor both provide contextual lookups for developers as they type. Toad for Oracle even provides contextual lookups on parameter and variable names in PL/SQL programs, as well as lookups for PL/SQL package calls containing multiple arguments.

Toad for Oracle also enables developers to quickly extract embedded SQL statements from their PL/SQL for execution (<Shift><F9>) or tuning without having to manually reform it, saving time and reducing errors.

**Customizable interface**

Because Toad is used by so many people in a variety of roles, we provide a simple way to customize the user interface to suit your needs. Items can be quickly removed from, moved within or added to the standard toolbar and menu to suit your individual style and maximize productivity.

You can configure other Toad features as well. For instance, if you want help on specific database object and column names while developing code, but only on demand, you can configure that behavior. If you are new to Oracle and/or SQL, the Editor can be configured to suggest keywords and expected tokens for commands that are written; experts can disable this feature.

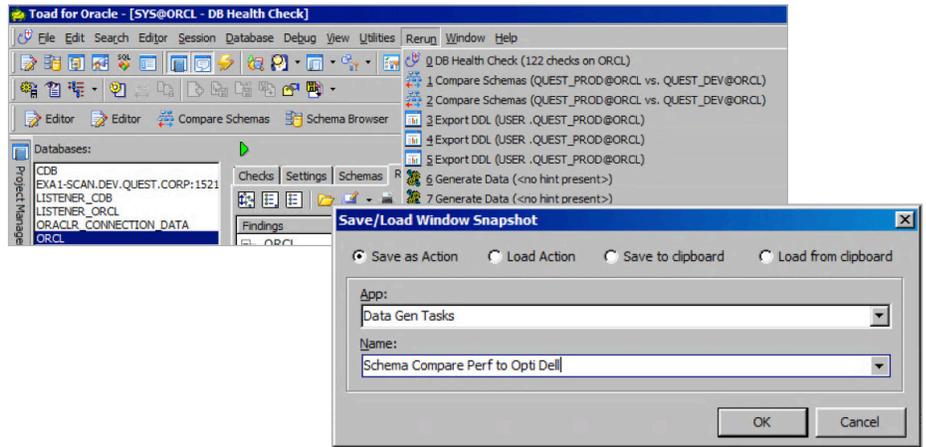


Figure 20. Many routine tasks can be stored and reused, saving hours.

Just because a tool is free doesn't mean it will save you money.

### Automation

Toad can automate tedious tasks, such as writing the same SQL over and over again. And it can also make complicated tasks as simple as one click. Toad's Rerun and Automation Designer features make any combination of the tasks shown in Figure 19 repeatable, either on demand or scheduled via Windows.

The following are some of the tasks you can automate with Toad:

- Executing one or more SQL statements
- Reviewing code using Code Analysis
- Saving the results of queries or contents of tables to Excel
- Importing data from a file to the database
- Comparing and synching databases and schema-level objects
- Performing database health checks
- Generating various reports
- Integrating email and FTP delivery of results and reports
- Generating DDL scripts for a single object or an entire schema

Automating these kinds of tasks marks the difference between a good developer and an expert developer. SQL Developer, which delivers none of this automation, might be an adequate tool for some, but if you are too busy to do all the work manually, then Toad can be invaluable.

### CONCLUSION

Just because a tool is free doesn't mean it will save you money. In fact, it could lull you into a false sense of security. If you're solely focused on productivity gains and cost savings, you may overlook other essential features like quality, performance and maintainability — and costly issues resulting in downtime or additional money spent may result. While SQL Developer struggles with delivering basic, must-have features, Toad goes beyond the necessities, delivering a wealth of invaluable features, plus many others that you never imagined were possible.

Quest saw a number of Toad customers move to SQL Developer when it was introduced because it's free and they hoped it would offer the same functionality as Toad. However, many of those customers have now returned to Toad because they cannot accomplish in SQL Developer what they can in Toad. This is proof positive that customers — and even Oracle — can't work effectively without Toad.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the latest release of Toad for Oracle, videos, case studies and more, [visit our product page](#).

Another excellent source of information on Toad for Oracle (and all the products associated with Toad) is [Toad World](#), your one-stop shop for all things Toad.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Pocknell is a senior manager of product management at Quest. Based at the European headquarters in the U.K., John is responsible for the Toad product portfolio. He has been with Quest since 2000, working in the

database design, development and deployment product areas, and he has run many Toad training courses for customers. John has spent the last 15 years successfully evangelizing Toad to customers at various events throughout Europe, the U.S. and the Asia-Pacific region. John writes many blogs and papers that are published on the Toad user community, [Toad World](#).

John has worked in IT for almost 30 years, most of that time in Oracle application design and development. He is a qualified aeronautical engineer with more than 10 years of experience in provisioning IT consultancy services and implementing quality assurance systems to ISO 9001.

Many customers that moved from Toad to SQL Developer have now returned to Toad because they cannot accomplish in SQL Developer what they can in Toad.

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#### **Quest Software Inc.**

Attn: LEGAL Dept  
4 Polaris Way  
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