



UNIFIER or ACONEX: WHICH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

How your organization deals with projects will drive your decision.

While it may appear that Oracle offers two solutions for the same problem, once you have a clear understanding of how each works it should be clear which is best in your environment.

UNIFIER was developed to meet the "forever need" of project-based organizations. As an example, a Transportation Agency will have many large projects or programs, and perhaps hundreds of small, ongoing Capital and Maintenance projects that span many years. As an example, a Capital project may take 3 to 5 years to go through the design and construction process and then have a 20-to-50-year useful life requiring ongoing maintenance and upgrades. All of the information related to the facility needs to be organized, secured and accessible for multiple generations of team members. As your organization's project management processes mature the system needs to be flexible enough to support not only changes in business processes but also changes in underlying technology. While many project based organizations have dedicated people and business processes in-house, they often bring in specialized teams to help manage projects and groups of **projects (programs, portfolios...)** that also must integrate with the in-house teams. By having an in-house standard already in place to support both internal and external teams, the organization can be assured that all relevant project information is properly captured, categorized, secured, stored and available for any team member that may need it. In the past, many organizations have brought in large consulting firms with their own internal tools resulting in a disjointed data environment that is not uniform across all projects. When Unifier is deployed you are deploying a tool that will become the foundation of how your Program/Portfolio/Project based organization and your supporting internal and external teams' function for many years.

ACONEX was developed to provide a secure, shared environment where all companies working on the **project** can directly interact with one another during the life of a single project in an environment where ALL project related interactions are captured, secured and stored. While Aconex does support multiple projects its greatest benefit is on a single, high-risk project.

Aconex example 1: A professional football team, whose primary business operations is a football team, is embarking on a \$1.4B (+?) project to build a new stadium. The Team is not a project-based organization. They have few, if

any, internal business processes or team members in place to manage new complex capital projects. The Team has received some external funding for their project but they are responsible for all cost overruns beyond the \$1.4B budget. Aconex would be a very good environment for the Team (Bill's) to protect their interests by deploying a project-based environment to support (capture, categorize, secure and store) all communications between everyone involved during the life of the stadium project.

Aconex example 2: A large public agency may have the occasional, very large and complex project that they decide to contract for in a manner that puts most of the risk on a third party (Design/Build). It is common for several companies to join forces in a joint venture effort to build these large "mega" projects. Rather than using one of the team members in-house tools (very common) it would be in the owner's best interest to deploy Aconex just for this special project/project team. The owner's team can then participate in either the Aconex environment or develop special business processes or business process driven integration points where final or approved information can be captured from Aconex and stored in the owners own everyday system. Oracle and DRMcNatty provide integration utilities that that can help Unifier and Aconex "talk" to each other and share data.

The "*un-talked about*" benefit to the owner for an Aconex environment is that should (when?) the project ends up with claims situations, all of the internal interactions for each project participant should be discoverable during legal proceedings.

Additionally, both products have a "never delete" rule that preserves all data.

LICENSING

This can be another factor in your decision as Unifier supports both Subscription (SaaS) and Perpetual licensing while Aconex only supports Subscription licenses. The choice of subscription vs perpetual license is based on some key considerations. Additionally, Oracle often uses "project value pricing" for Aconex rather than the number of users, as in Unifier.

Subscription vs Perpetual: What's the difference?

In a subscription software model, the customer accesses software owned by the vendor via an ongoing agreement, and pays regular amounts to access the software. The vendor retains ownership of the software. Also with subscription software, there will be some elements built into the software which you can configure to your own requirements. By and large, however, a subscription product is provided as an 'off-the-shelf' solution. This means that it may not be possible to make changes to the software specific to your own business and

reduces the benefit of customized configuration and integration. In a cloud subscription environment access to data to support integration with other organization tools can be limited while in a self/hosted perpetual license environment, you decide what can or cannot be accessed.

In a perpetual license software model, the client buys the software outright. This means that they own the software for the lifetime of the product, albeit sometimes retaining an agreement with the vendor regarding annual maintenance and upgrades that are usually needed on an ongoing basis. In this model you can self-deploy or have a professional third-party team host it for you. In this model you have complete control over configuration and integration. DRMcNatty provides hosting and integration support.

There are a few additional points of difference between Unifier and Aconex that may impact your decision.

Function	Unifier	Aconex	Comments
Multiple licensing options	Yes	No	Aconex only supports subscription licenses based on project value with some flexibility to license based on number of users. Unifier is based on user licenses.
Cloud Subscription	Yes	Yes	Both have limitations on configuration and data access for integration in this deployment model
Perpetual	Yes	No	Unifier provides complete control of configuration & integration support in this license model
Self-deployed	Yes	No	Unifier can be deployed locally or in private cloud environments. (Azure, AWS, Oracle...)
Hosted	Yes	No	Unifier can also be third party hosted. (DRMcNatty hosts Unifier on the Azure Cloud platform for clients).
Unlimited Projects	Yes	Yes**	**Aconex charges per project. No limit in Unifier.
Can projects be self created?	Yes	No	In Aconex projects can only be created by Aconex Support. Unifier allows you to create as many of your own projects as needed. There is no additional charge for projects in Unifier

Can anyone participate in business processes?	Yes	Maybe	Only participants who register with Aconex can be invited to an Aconex project. They can be full Aconex users or "Guest users".
External emails (Cc)?	Yes	No	See above... (how is licensing handled?)
Integrate with P6	Yes	Yes	Unifier has built in cost and schedule integration with P6 Pro and P6 EPPM. Aconex/P6 is more limited.
Does it have a BIM module?	No*	Yes	Aconex has a built-in BIM model. Unifier supports integration with any databased BIM solution.
Store or archive completed project data	Yes	Yes*	With Unifier perpetual licenses all data is stored in your own local databases. *Unifier or Aconex <u>Cloud</u> , DRMcNatty can facilitate migration to local, secure, searchable, SQL data warehouse
Built-in "No Delete"?	Yes	Yes	Once data is entered into either database it can never be deleted, only hidden from view.

At DRMcNatty our **customer service record sets us apart**, and we offer **significant benefits from our own hosting solutions**. Get in touch today for a conversation about how our expertise can help you make the correct software choice.