



**WHITE BOX**  
TECHNOLOGIES, INC

# The Data Conversion Process: Partnering for Success

The analysts at White Box Technologies start the data conversion process by diving into the source database. When the end-users are an active part of the conversion process (*roughly half to two-thirds of our conversion projects*), we schedule a call with them to request screenshots of their current program and talk through their normal use process.

Getting an initial understanding of how users have been utilizing the data helps us ensure that the data conversion process creates the best possible results.



The screenshots help our analysis team piece together the source database while our DataSearch tool tracks down difficult-to-find information.

For conversion projects where the end-users are not an active part of the project, we have several Q&A sessions with the partner and subject-matter experts (*SMEs*) with whom we will be working for the duration of the project. These conversion projects usually require more work from our analysis team—similar to an archeologist analyzing fossils and buildings versus an anthropologist who can interview the people they are studying.

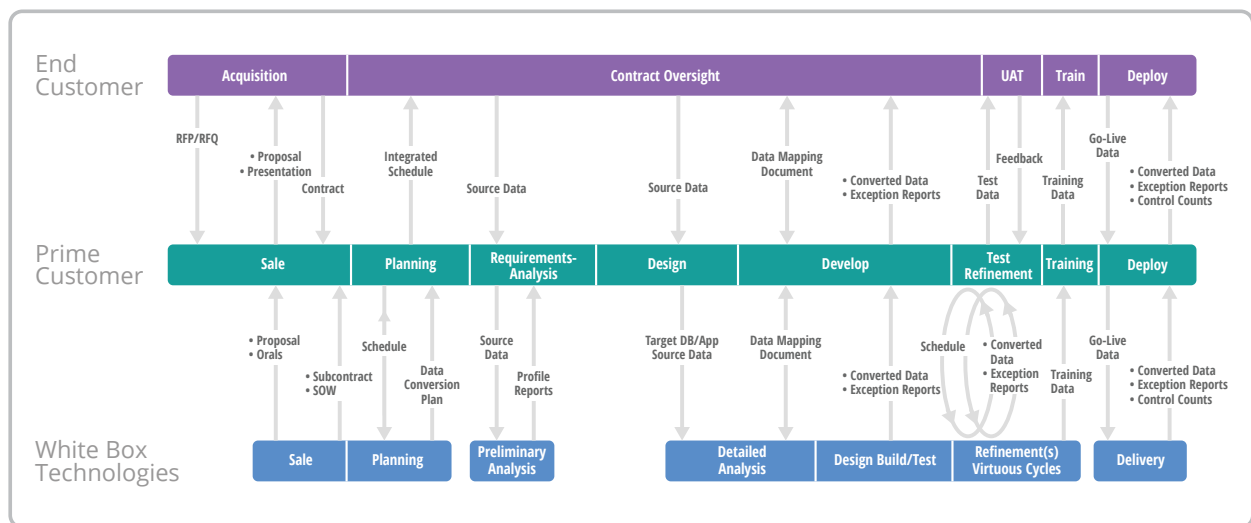
After some initial analysis, our team sends the Table Mapping Document (*TMD*) to the client or partner for review. This is a high-level look at the planned conversion, showing which source tables will be used to populate specific target tables. Once these tables are approved by the client or partner, our team starts to put together a Data Mapping Document (*DMD*) which shows the conversion plan in more detail. The DMD builds upon the approved TMD and shows the specific fields which will be used from the source, what (*if any*) changes will be made as part of the conversion, and where the data will end up in the target system.

While our analysis team is building these mapping documents, we send our Code Mapper tool to the client or partner. They will use this tool to match codes from the source database to the new codes for the target database. The Code Mapper updates with our conversion software in real time, so any time we run a part (*or all*) of the conversion, we are using the most up-to-date codes from the client.

Once the mapping documents have been built by our analysis team and approved by the client or partner, the conversion moves to our engineering team. Our engineers use the TMD and DMD to create the necessary SQL queries and views for the conversion. These queries become the modified source used by our Data Migration Navigator (DMN) tool. Using these queries as the source, our engineers build the conversion code in a modified C#—designed and built in-house so that the conversion code can be pieced together, like building a program in Scratch (*scratch.mit.edu*). The 'babel' file created for the conversion (*named for the babel fish in Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) will go through hundreds of iterations or versions as the conversion is built and tested.

Conversions are delivered to the client or partner in a series of mocks or test runs. These mocks give the client the opportunity to see the converted data in their new application. A standard data conversion project usually includes 3 separate mock conversions before the final or go-live conversion. Our DMN tool runs conversions quickly and accurately—with many full systems converting in a matter of hours. With each mock, the client or partner has time to review and provide feedback or make requests for changes. Over the course of the several mocks included in the standard conversion, the conversion code is refined and perfected. The go-live conversion run is always an exciting finish to the project.

*See the illustration below for a step-by-step view of the entire data conversion process.*



*To find out more about the Whitebox Difference, or to receive a quote on an upcoming data migration or conversion process, please call **801.386.5013***