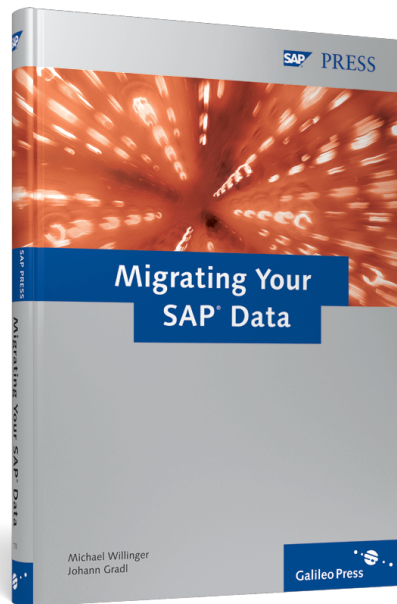


Michael Willinger, Johann Gradl

Migrating Your SAP Data




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Contents at a Glance

1	Introduction	13
2	Managerial Foundations for Migrating Data to SAP ERP	21
3	Technical Basics for Migrating Data to SAP ERP ...	41
4	Batch Input	51
5	Extended Computer Aided Test Tool (eCATT)	99
6	Computer Aided Test Tool (CATT)	147
7	Legacy System Migration Workbench	167
8	SAP Accelerated Data Migration	263
9	Techniques for Avoiding Programming	281
10	Assessment of Data Migration Techniques	303
11	Migrating Fixed Assets with Microsoft Excel	315
12	Outlook and Related Areas	341
A	SAP ERP Tables for Selected Master and Transaction Data	353
B	Glossary	357
C	The Authors	365

Contents

1	Introduction	13
2	Managerial Foundations for Migrating Data to SAP ERP	21
2.1	Data Migration as a Subproject	21
2.2	Preliminary Considerations	23
2.2.1	Defining the Dataset for Migration	23
2.2.2	Identifying Dormant Data	24
2.2.3	Measures for Reducing the Data Volume	25
2.2.4	Preparatory Measures for Extracting the Legacy Data	26
2.2.5	Addendum: Accounting Considerations	26
2.3	The Data Migration Process from the Project Perspective	33
2.3.1	Basic Customizing	33
2.3.2	System Presentations in SAP ERP	33
2.3.3	Business Reengineering	33
2.3.4	Simulating the Data Migration	34
2.3.5	Mapping (Field Matching)	34
2.3.6	Data Extraction from the Legacy System	36
2.3.7	Manual Postprocessing of the Extracted Data	36
2.3.8	Selecting a Data Migration Technique	37
2.3.9	Uploading the Data in SAP ERP	37
2.3.10	Testing the Business Processes in SAP ERP	38
3	Technical Basics for Migrating Data to SAP ERP	41
3.1	Basic Terminology	41
3.2	The Data Migration Process from a Technical Perspective	42
3.2.1	Exporting the Data	42
3.2.2	Reading the Data	43
3.2.3	Converting the Data	43
3.2.4	Importing the Data	46
3.2.5	Verifying the Data	47

3.3	Overview of Technical Procedures for Data Migration	48
3.3.1	Batch Input	48
3.3.2	Extended Computer Aided Test Tool	48
3.3.3	Legacy System Migration Workbench	49
4	Batch Input	51
4.1	What Is Batch Input Processing?	51
4.2	How Does Batch Input Work?	51
4.2.1	What Is a Batch Input Session?	52
4.2.2	How Do I Process a Batch Input Session?	55
4.2.3	How Do I Create a Batch Input Session?	58
4.3	Standard Batch Input Programs	59
4.3.1	RFBIDE00 – Customer Master	60
4.3.2	RFBIKR00 – Vendor Master	61
4.3.3	RFBISA00 – G/L Account Master	61
4.3.4	RFBIBL00 – Financial Documents	61
4.3.5	RCSBI010, RCSBI020, RCSBI030, RCSBI040 – Material BOMs	62
4.3.6	RM06BB10 – Purchase Requisitions	62
4.3.7	RM07MMBL – Material Documents	63
4.4	Batch Input Recording: General Approach	63
4.4.1	Creating the Batch Input Recording	63
4.4.2	Generating an ABAP Program from a Batch Input Recording	67
4.4.3	Modifying the Generated ABAP Program	72
4.4.4	Creating and Processing the Batch Input Session	80
4.4.5	Call Transaction and Batch Input Session in Case of Error	82
4.5	Batch Input Recording Combined with Microsoft Word Mail Merge Processing	84
5	Extended Computer Aided Test Tool (eCATT)	99
5.1	What Is the eCATT?	99
5.2	History of the eCATT	99
5.3	Availability and Functionality of eCATT and CATT	101
5.4	Preparing the System for Using the eCATT	102
5.5	How Does the eCATT Work?	105
5.5.1	Recording a Test Script	106
5.5.2	Executing a Test Script	113

5.6	How Can You Use the eCATT for Data Migration?	121
5.6.1	Parameterizing Input Fields	121
5.6.2	Generating the File Format	124
5.6.3	Arranging the Data According to the File Format	129
5.6.4	Loading Data	134
5.7	Tips and Tricks	138
5.7.1	General Recommendations	138
5.7.2	Modifying Test Scripts	139
5.7.3	Initializing Field Contents	142
5.7.4	Table Maintenance with the eCATT	145
6	Computer Aided Test Tool (CATT)	147
6.1	Basic Terminology	147
6.2	Preparing the System for Using the CATT	148
6.3	How Does the CATT Work?	148
6.3.1	Recording a Test Case	149
6.3.2	Parameterizing the Input Values	155
6.3.3	Executing a Test Case	163
7	Legacy System Migration Workbench	167
7.1	Overview of the LSM Workbench	167
7.2	Data Migration with the LSM Workbench	170
7.2.1	Getting Started with the LSM Workbench	171
7.2.2	User Guidance: The Main Steps of Data Migration	175
7.2.3	Maintaining Object Attributes	178
7.2.4	Maintaining Source Structures	181
7.2.5	Maintaining Source Fields	182
7.2.6	Maintaining Structure Relations	187
7.2.7	Maintaining Field Mapping and Conversion Rules	189
7.2.8	Maintaining Fixed Values, Translations, and User-Defined Routines	202
7.2.9	Addendum: Files	209
7.2.10	Specifying Files	211
7.2.11	Using Wildcards in File Names	215
7.2.12	Assigning Files	216
7.2.13	Reading Data	217
7.2.14	Displaying Read Data	219

7.2.15	Converting Data	221
7.2.16	Displaying Converted Data	223
7.2.17	Importing Data	224
7.2.18	Object Overview	226
7.3	Recordings	228
7.3.1	Creating and Editing Recordings	230
7.3.2	Using a Recording	235
7.4	Long Texts	237
7.4.1	Long Texts in the SAP ERP System	238
7.4.2	Target Structures and Field Mapping	238
7.4.3	Importing Long Texts	242
7.5	Periodic Data Transfer	243
7.6	Transporting Projects	247
7.6.1	Creating a Change Request	247
7.6.2	Exporting Projects	247
7.6.3	Importing Projects	248
7.7	Preparations for Using IDoc Inbound Processing	249
7.8	Advanced LSM Workbench Features	252
7.8.1	Display Variant and Processing Times	252
7.8.2	Global Variables	253
7.8.3	Global Functions	254
7.8.4	Reusable Rules – Naming Conventions	255
7.9	Tips and Tricks	256
7.9.1	Determining the Transaction Code at Runtime	257
7.9.2	Skipping a Record	257
7.9.3	Skipping All Records of a Transaction	258
7.9.4	Duplicating a Record	258
7.9.5	Assigning Multiple Source Structures to a Target Structure	259
7.9.6	Error Messages in the Conversion Log	260
7.10	Summary	261

8 SAP Accelerated Data Migration 263

8.1	Availability	263
8.2	Overview of SAP ADM	264
8.3	Specific Features	265
8.4	Overview of the Typical Process	267
8.5	Typical Process in Detail: Process Cockpit	268
8.5.1	Start	268
8.5.2	Defining the Scope	269

8.5.3	Migration Customizing at Project Level	271
8.5.4	Work Steps per Migration Object	274
8.6	Development Cockpit	276
8.7	Checklist for SAP ADM	280
8.8	Additional Information on SAP ADM	280

9 Techniques for Avoiding Programming 281

9.1	Problem Area: Data Conversion	281
9.2	Techniques for Converting Data	282
9.2.1	Modifying Structures	282
9.2.2	Modifying Field Contents	286
9.2.3	Accessing Data in the SAP ERP System	297
9.3	Summary	301

10 Assessment of Data Migration Techniques 303

10.1	Advantages and Disadvantages of the Procedures	303
10.1.1	Batch Input	303
10.1.2	eCATT	306
10.1.3	LSM Workbench	307
10.2	Reasons for Favoring a Certain Procedure	308
10.2.1	Complexity of the Migration Task	309
10.2.2	Quality of the Legacy Data	309
10.2.3	Data Volume	309
10.2.4	The Importance of Data Security	310
10.2.5	Reusability	310
10.2.6	Restrictions	311
10.2.7	User-Friendliness	311
10.2.8	Summary	312

11 Migrating Fixed Assets with Microsoft Excel 315

11.1	Assessment of Procedures for Migrating Fixed Assets ..	315
11.2	Types of Legacy Data Transfer	319
11.2.1	Legacy Data Transfer at End of Fiscal Year	319
11.2.2	Legacy Data Transfer in Mid-Year	320
11.2.3	Other Options for Transferring Asset Data	321
11.3	Case Example: Migrating Fixed Assets with Microsoft Excel	322
11.3.1	Which Data Should You Transfer?	323
11.3.2	Data Format for the Transfer to SAP ERP	324

- 11.3.3 Formatting Data with Visual Basic 327
 - 11.3.4 Assigning the Data to ERP Fields (Mapping) .. 334
 - 11.3.5 Uploading the Data to SAP ERP and
Log File 336
 - 11.4 Preparing to Go Live 338
 - 11.4.1 Setting Reconciliation Accounts 338
 - 11.4.2 Transferring Balances 339
 - 11.4.3 Activating the Company Code 340
- 12 Outlook and Related Areas 341**
 - 12.1 Data Transfer Workbench 341
 - 12.1.1 Features 341
 - 12.1.2 Particular Strength: Data Import via BAPI 343
 - 12.1.3 Combination with the LSM Workbench 344
 - 12.2 Data Migration Between SAP ERP Systems or within
an SAP ERP System 345
 - 12.3 Data Migration in SAP CRM 347
- Appendix..... 351**
 - A SAP ERP Tables for Selected Master and Transaction Data 353
 - A.1 Financial Accounting 353
 - A.2 Controlling 354
 - A.3 Logistics 354
 - B Glossary 357
 - C The Authors 365
- Index 367

This chapter introduces you to the basic concepts that you need to understand during any data migration, regardless of which technique you select. It also describes the major process steps involved in data migration from a technical perspective.

3 Technical Basics for Migrating Data to SAP ERP

3.1 Basic Terminology

The following terms will appear throughout this book:

- **Data migration, migration**

The term *data migration* refers to the transfer of business data (master and transaction data) from any application system to an SAP ERP system. The term *migration* is used as a synonym. Please note that this term is also used in other contexts, such as migrating from one technical platform to another; however, this is not the intended meaning here.

Data migration is sometimes also referred to as *data transfer*.

- **Legacy system**

The application system that contains the data to be transferred before the migration is referred to as the *legacy system* (or source system).

- **Legacy data**

The data that is to be migrated from a legacy system to the SAP ERP system is referred to as *legacy data* (or *source data*).

- **Data object, business data object, business object**

A data migration is usually based on data objects. A *data object* is a business data unit such as a customer master, material master, an FI document, and so on. Such objects are sometimes called *business data objects* or simply *business objects*.

► **Data migration object, object**

When data objects are mentioned in the context of data migration, the terms *data migration object* or simply *object* refer to a data object that has additional attributes that are relevant for the data migration, for example, the structure of the data object in the legacy system and the SAP ERP system, along with the mapping that connects the two structures.

► **File, text file, table-like file, sequential file**

All of the data migration techniques described in this book assume that the legacy data is available in one or more files. These files are usually *text files*, that is, files that are divided into several lines. The structure of these lines is differentiated as follows: If all the lines in a file have the same structure, that file is called a *table-like file*. In this case, the sequence of the lines in the file is usually not important for data migration. If all the lines in the file don't have the same structure (header and item records, for example), the file is called a *sequential file* (see Section 7.2.9).

► **Frontend, SAP Application Server**

In the SAP ERP system, files can be saved in one of two places: either on a *frontend*, that is, the end user's workstation, or on an *SAP Application Server*, the computer that runs the application logic of the SAP ERP system (or a storage medium accessible to the SAP Application Server).

3.2 The Data Migration Process from a Technical Perspective

Regardless of which migration procedure you select, every data migration project involves certain basic technical steps. The following five steps are characteristic of almost every data migration procedure.

3.2.1 Exporting the Data

First, the data you want to transfer to the SAP ERP system (i.e., the legacy data) has to be exported from the legacy system. This step is also referred to as *extracting* or *unloading* the legacy data.

The data migration procedures introduced in this book don't provide any support for exporting the legacy data from legacy systems. You will need to determine whether your legacy system offers functions for this purpose. If not, you will need to write suitable programs for data extraction in the legacy system.

Data extraction is the responsibility of the legacy system

In the process of exporting data, you must define how you want to store the legacy data. In particular, you must decide whether you want to group all the legacy data together in one file or divide it into several smaller files. You'll also need to define whether you want to write the legacy data to table-like files or to sequential files.

3.2.2 Reading the Data

Technically speaking, the legacy data exported from a legacy system can be saved in different files (see Section 7.2.9). It may therefore make sense to transform the data to a technically standardized format initially. However, most of the data migration procedures don't support this option. Instead, it is assumed that the legacy data will be provided in a predefined format.

Transforming the data to a technically standardized format

Of all the data migration procedures introduced in this book, only the *Legacy System Migration Workbench* (LSM Workbench) offers this option. In this case, the files, which can exist in different formats, are merged into a single sequential file. For more information, see Section 7.2.9.

3.2.3 Converting the Data

Application systems can model business data in many ways. You cannot assume that the data you export from a legacy system can be easily imported into an SAP ERP system without additional processing. Consequently, you usually have to convert the exported data to the appropriate format.

Converting the legacy data to SAP format

Note

The term *convert* is used synonymously with *transform*. The terms *data conversion* and *data transformation* are also used in this context, as well as *mapping*, *field mapping*, and *transformation*.

The data conversion can be as complex as is necessary. The effort required depends on how different the source and target formats are from one another. In order to make the work less cumbersome, however, you can define typical conversion tasks that must be performed repeatedly.

- Value conversion** ▶ Value conversion involves translating a known set of possible field values to a different set of values. This can apply to the country codes, for example, if the legacy data stores this information in a one-place field ("D" for Germany, "U" for the U.S., "I" for Italy, etc.), while the SAP ERP system uses ISO codes that can be up to three places long ("DE" for Germany, "USA" for the U.S., "IT" for Italy, etc.). In this case, the following conversion must be defined:
- ▶ D → DE
 - ▶ U → US
 - ▶ I → IT
 - ▶ And so on

This process is also referred to as translation.

- Converting field attributes** ▶ The conversion of field attributes involves changing the representation of certain field contents. Let's assume, for example, that your legacy system saves date values in the format DDMMYY (such as 311295), while the SAP ERP system expects these values in the format YYYYMMDD (such as 19951231). You must convert these values accordingly. You can do so with custom programming, or by using a tool that supports such standard cases at the touch of a button.

- Default field values** ▶ You may also need to define default values for certain field values. You should always keep the following fact in mind: The data objects in the SAP ERP system are usually quite extensive. In most cases, your legacy system will contain only a fraction of the fields that are available in the SAP ERP system for a given data object. Frequently, you'll encounter situations in which the SAP ERP system expects a value for a field, but your legacy system doesn't have an equivalent for that field; for example, the company code used in the SAP ERP system is a variable that is unknown in many legacy systems.

There are two basic ways of dealing with such situations:

- ▶ If the desired value can be derived from other available data, then you can fall back on a simple conversion of values (translation).
- ▶ If the desired value is always constant (or at least for long periods), you can set it to a constant. The technique of using fixed values, which provides a greater degree of flexibility than working with constants, is introduced in Chapter 7, together with the LSM Workbench (see Section 7.2.8).
- ▶ In some cases, you must not only convert field contents and field attributes on the way from the legacy system to the SAP ERP system, but also change the overall structure of the data object.

Converting
structures

For example, let's assume that a legacy system can save a maximum of three contact persons for a customer. Let's also assume that these (maximum) three contact persons are saved in the header record of the customer master record. You can define any number of contact persons in the SAP ERP system. A separate table record is created for each contact person. Therefore, in this case, you must convert the structure as shown in Figure 3.1.

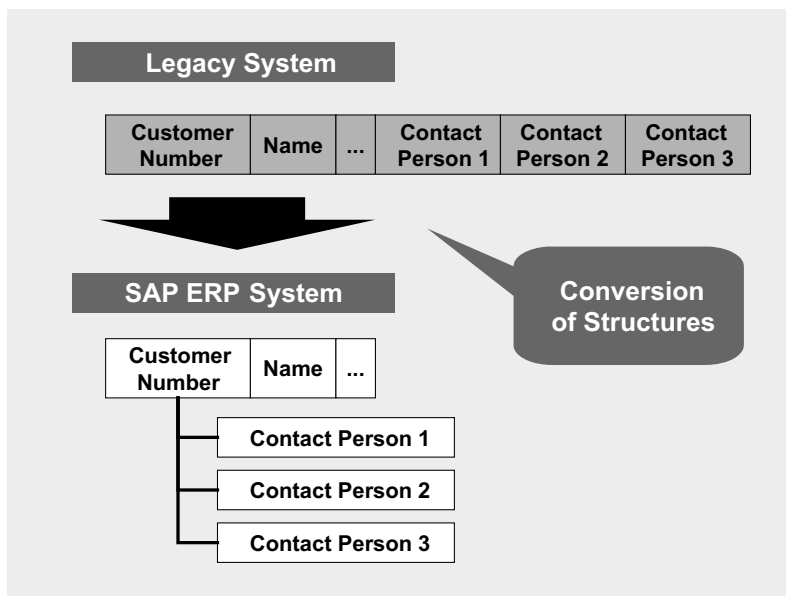


Figure 3.1 Converting Structures – Example

3.2.4 Importing the Data

All the previous steps serve to successively convert the legacy data into a format that the SAP ERP system can process. The next logical step is to transfer this converted legacy data to the database of the SAP ERP system. In addition to *importing data*, the term *loading data* is also used, as well as *uploading to SAP ERP*. There are generally two options for importing data:

Direct writing to the database

If you fully understand how the structure of database tables works in the SAP ERP system, you can use an ABAP program to write the legacy data directly to the database tables, at least theoretically. When it comes to throughput — the number of data records processed in any given time unit — this method is unbeatable. However, we don't recommend using this procedure because of the incalculable risk involved, namely, if this technique is used, that the database of the SAP ERP system could be filled with data that is inconsistent according to the rules of the SAP application. Consequently, you might not be able to process it further, or even display it, in the SAP ERP system.

Using standard ERP interfaces

All the procedures introduced here employ a different method. They are based exclusively on the interfaces provided in the SAP ERP system. In the following sections, these interfaces are called *standard ERP interfaces*. The standard ERP interfaces used in this book are outlined below.

► Batch input

Batch input refers to both a standard ERP interface and a procedure for data migration. This mature, proven technology “feeds” dialog transactions with the provided data (usually in the background). This ensures that all input checks are run, ensuring that all data imported with batch input is correct and consistent in the SAP ERP system. Of course, this certainty has its price: The data checks reduce throughput.

► Direct input

Because throughput from batch input is not always sufficient, direct input programs have been written for some data objects. In a sense, direct input involves the controlled, direct writing to the database of the SAP ERP system.

► **BAPI**

Business Application Programming Interfaces (BAPIs) were originally developed to open the SAP ERP system for external access. Data objects usually have read and write BAPIs. The latter can also be used to transfer data to the database of the SAP ERP system during a data migration.

► **IDoc**

Intermediate Documents (IDocs) come from the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) environment. The challenge here is to transfer documents (such as purchase orders) electronically from one application system to another, possibly very remote, system. To do so, the structures of these documents first had to be defined for business purposes. This resulted in the development of IDocs, or more precisely, IDoc types. Secondly, a technique for processing these documents in the SAP ERP system had to be developed, namely, inbound processing. As you'll see in Chapter 7, you can also use this technique for data migration.

An important connection exists between BAPIs and IDocs. At the touch of a button, you can generate an IDoc type from a BAPI in the SAP ERP system. SAP already supplies the generated IDoc types for some BAPIs. In general, inbound processing of IDocs involves the following sequence: The data received in an IDoc is passed on to the corresponding BAPI, which updates the data in the SAP ERP system. This process is described in more detail in Chapter 7.

Connection
between BAPIs
and IDocs

3.2.5 Verifying the Data

Of course, once the legacy data has been imported into the SAP ERP system, you want to ensure that the process is complete and accurate. Unfortunately, there is no blanket solution for measuring the success of a data migration.

No blanket
solution

Ultimately, you will have to rely on random samples and plausibility checks, such as comparing key figures (balances, for example), or comparing the number of records between the legacy system and the SAP ERP system.

3.3 Overview of Technical Procedures for Data Migration

This chapter concludes with a summary of the major data migration techniques introduced in this book.

3.3.1 Batch Input

As mentioned in Section 3.2.4, *batch input* is both a type of standard ERP interface and a procedure for data migration. Batch input can be used for data migration in two ways:

- **Standard batch input programs**

The SAP ERP system contains various batch input programs that transform prepared legacy data into a format that dialog transactions can process. These programs are called *standard batch input programs*.

- **Batch input recording**

In addition to the standard programs, the SAP ERP system enables you to record the process flow of a dialog transaction and generate an ABAP program from this recording at the touch of a button. While these generated programs theoretically work just like standard batch input programs, they lack the flexibility to react to changing screen sequences. The clear benefit of a batch input recording is that you deal only with the input fields of a dialog transaction that are relevant for your specific case. You can ignore all other input fields.

3.3.2 Extended Computer Aided Test Tool

Migrating data
with the test tool

The *Extended Computer Aided Test Tool* (eCATT) is a tool that was originally developed to test business processes. Technically, a business process always consists of a sequence of dialog transactions. To avoid having to enter each transaction manually, the eCATT enables you to automate transaction processing and supply the transactions with appropriate values. Ultimately, the data generated in this manner forms the foundation for the system, integration, and mass tests that are essential to every ERP implementation project.

But, where is the connection to data migration? Data migration also involves creating data records with a specific transaction — such as

Transaction FK01 (*Create Vendor*) — and copying them automatically to SAP ERP. If you use the eCATT for data migration, you aren't interested in whether the dialog transactions respond accordingly with your expectations; you simply assume that this is where things are in the migration process. At this point, you are concerned only with transferring the legacy data to SAP ERP automatically, simply, and reliably.

3.3.3 Legacy System Migration Workbench

The *Legacy System Migration Workbench* (LSM Workbench) is an ERP-based tool for the one-time or periodic transfer of data from legacy systems to SAP ERP systems. It provides easy-to-use functions to convert legacy data and import it into the SAP ERP system, using standard ERP interfaces. The LSM Workbench is based on the following principles:

- ▶ Business data objects are migrated, not individual tables or field contents.
- ▶ The most frequent conversion tasks (see Section 3.2.3) are predefined and available at the touch of a button. Conversions can be added via the suitable ABAP statements.
- ▶ No ready-made conversion programs are provided. Instead, the conversion programs are generated from the defined conversion rules.
- ▶ Quality and consistency of the data imported into the SAP ERP system are more important than speed and throughput. Therefore, only the standard ERP interfaces are used.
- ▶ Conversion rules that have been defined once can be reused.

Principles of the
LSM Workbench

These three techniques are introduced in exact detail in the following chapters.

Index

A

ABAP 67, 71, 357
ABAP Dictionary 52, 187, 357
Absolute amount 292
Accelerated Data Migration → SAP ADM
Account 65, 357
Account balances 339
Account determination 338, 357
Account group 357
Account type 31, 35, 357
Administration 174
APC 319
Application server 169
Asset
 class 324, 325, 326, 336, 338, 357
 classification 315
 list 339
 master record 315
 number 324
 section 324
 subnumber 316, 357
 values 28
Asset Accounting 315, 325, 338, 339, 357
Authorization
 concept 175
 profile 175

B

Background processing 307
Balance 23, 358
Balance sheet account 28, 338, 339, 358
Balance sheet accounts 24
Balance sheet asset account 338, 358
Balance sheet item 27
BAPI 47, 167, 287, 288, 308, 309, 310, 316, 343, 344, 358
Base insurable value 321
Batch input 16, 46, 63, 167, 286, 303, 316, 344, 358
 background processing 81
 batch input session 308, 311
 include bdcrcx1 71

interface 316
 overview 81
 PERFORM close_group 71
 PERFORM open_group 70
 recording 58, 63, 64, 66, 308, 311
 session 52, 58, 71, 76, 77, 81
Batch input interface 303
Batch input processing 51
Batch input session 71, 303, 358
 blocked 57
 blocking and releasing 58
 deleting 58
 display errors only 55, 81
 error 57
 in background 57
 in process 57
 in the background 55
 new 57
 nodata indicator 80
 process in foreground 55, 81
 processed 57
 processing automatically 57
 retain 80
 small log 80
Batch-Input
 batch input session 70
 PERFORM bdc_dynpro 70
 PERFORM bdc_field 70
 PERFORM bdc_transaction 71
BDCDATA 52
BDoc format 348
Bottom line 27
Browser 100
Business data object 41, 358
Business object 41, 341, 358
Business processes 38
Business reengineering 22, 33, 34, 36

C

Call transaction 71, 72, 82, 304
Capitalization date 325, 336
CATT 99, 358
Change request 247
Character field 75

- Chart of accounts 25, 358
- Client 66, 358
- Client table 102, 148
- Column formatting 132
- Company code 324, 325, 326, 334, 336, 340, 358
 - production status* 340
 - test status* 340
 - transfer status* 340
- Computer Aided Test Tool (CATT) 99, 358
- Concatenation 200
- Constant 331, 359
- Conversion 44, 311, 359
- Conversion rule 49, 190, 308
- Convert Text to Columns Wizard 290
- Converting 167
- Cost center 324, 359
- Credit posting 35
- CRM Middleware 348
- Currency formats 290
- Customer account 65, 359
- Customer master 60
- Customer namespace 106, 149
- Customer Relationship Management 348
- Customizing 338, 359

D

- Data
 - conversion* 43, 169, 308, 359
 - converting* 43
 - exporting* 42
 - extracting* 42
 - importing* 46
 - Loading* 46
 - migration* 359
 - quality* 307, 309
 - reading* 43
 - security* 37, 304, 310
 - transfer* 41, 359
 - transformation* 43, 281, 359
 - transforming* 43
 - type* 75
 - unloading* 42
 - volume* 309
- Data Browser 298, 345
- Data element 255

- Data format 132
- Data migration object 42, 171, 172, 359
- Data object 41, 168, 255, 286, 308, 359
- Data Transfer Workbench 169, 359
 - error handling* 343
 - project* 341
 - run* 342
 - run definition* 341
 - subproject* 341
 - task* 341
- Database 65, 66, 337
 - database tables* 46
- Database server 303
- Date format 286, 336
 - European format* 336
 - ISO format* 336
 - North American format* 336
 - SAP format* 336
- Date values 286
- DDMMYY 44
- Debit posting 35
- Decimal point 288
- Decision matrix 313
- Default value 123
- Delete function 266
- Depreciation 315, 359
 - accumulated* 319
 - depreciation posting run* 321, 357, 360
 - extraordinary* 321
 - scheduled* 321
- Depreciation area 321, 324, 359
 - independent* 321
- Development class 68
- Development cockpit 268
- Dialog processing 65, 303
- Direct input 46, 167, 308, 310, 315, 344, 360
- Direct input session 225
- Display variant 252
- Document 360
 - document header* 64, 65, 360
 - document line items* 353
 - document type* 31, 360
- Domain 185, 255, 360
- Dormant data 23
- DX Workbench 169, 310, 341, 360
- Dynpro 66, 70, 360

E

eCATT 48, 99, 102, 148, 167, 306, 310, 360
 Editor 328
 Elementary data types 360
 ERP backend system 348
 Error file 344
 Error log 337
 Error messages 260
 Exception 75
 Extended Computer Aided Test Tool (eCATT) 48, 99, 102, 148, 167, 306, 310, 360

F

FB01 150
 Field 256
 Field mapping 43, 190, 361
 File 42, 209
 amount fields 218
 character set 210
 code page 210
 date values 218
 end-of-record indicator 209
 file format 124, 311
 fixed record length 209
 read authorization 213
 separator 209
 sequential 209
 table 209
 text file 209
 wildcards 215
 write authorization 213
 Financial Accounting 35
 Financial documents 61
 Fiscal year 319, 361
 Fixed asset card file 315
 Fixed values 121, 138
 Flag file 244
 Form routine 71, 73
 Frontend 42, 211, 361
 FSS0 143
 Function module 71, 74, 75, 361

G

G/L account 65, 339, 361

G/L account master 61
 General ledger 27, 338, 339, 361
 General ledger account 28, 31
 General ledger accounting 28
 Group asset 315, 361
 GUI control technology 100

H

Handshake 244
 Header data 336
 Header section 324, 326
 Historical data 266

I

Identifier 325, 331, 336
 IDoc 47, 167, 249, 287, 288, 308, 309, 343, 344, 361
 creating an IDoc overview 225
 format 343
 IDoc inbound processing 249, 251
 IDoc type 47
 inbound processing 343
 starting the IDoc creation 225
 starting the IDoc processing 225
 work item 226
 Import technique 179
 Inbound processing 47
 Income statement accounts 24
 Integer 331
 Intermediate Document (IDoc) 47, 167, 249, 287, 288, 308, 309, 343, 344, 361
 Internal number assignment 297
 Internal table 74, 361
 Investment support 316
 Invoice 65
 ISO codes 44
 Iteration 39

J

Join 283

L

Leading zeros 293
 Legacy data 41, 361
 Legacy system 41, 167, 361

Legacy System Migration Workbench 361
 Line item 23, 28, 361
 Loading 46
 Local object 107, 154
 Lock date 80
 Log 105, 138
 Logical file name 215
 Logical path 215
 Logical Unit of Work 343
 Long texts 237
 Loop 76, 331, 361
 LSM Workbench 45, 344
 LSMW 43, 45, 167, 288, 289, 304, 307, 309, 310, 362
 action log 178
 ALE-EDI Customizing 226
 assigning files 216
 attributes 179
 authorization concept 175
 authorization profiles 175
 conversion program 245
 conversion rules 168, 236, 240
 converting data 221, 243
 default setting 197
 display variant 197, 241
 equal rank 182
 exporting projects 247
 field length 184
 field mapping 236, 240
 field type 184
 fixed value 199, 202, 203
 fixed values 202
 flag file 244
 global data definitions 253
 global functions 254
 global variable 253
 identifying field value 184
 IDoc inbound processing 249
 import 167
 import technique 179, 235, 239
 importing data 224, 243
 importing projects 248
 labels 241
 main program 243
 main steps 175
 my objects 180
 object 172, 239
 object attributes 178, 239, 243

object overview 177, 226
 object type 179, 235, 239
 OK flag 205
 owner 180
 periodic data transfer 181
 personal menu 176
 processing times 241, 253
 profile 175
 project 171, 307
 project documentation 173
 read program 245
 reading 167
 reading data 217, 243
 recording function 167
 recordings 228
 required target structures 188
 reusable rules 255
 selection parameters 217
 source field 182, 190, 239
 source structure 181, 216, 282
 source structure 239
 specifying files 211
 structure relations 235, 240
 subordinate 182
 subproject 172, 307
 system-dependent file names 181
 target field 190
 target structure 282
 technical fields 197
 translation 200, 202, 203
 translations 202
 user-defined routine 201, 202
 version 174
 LUW 343

M

Macro 327, 331, 334
 Mail merge processing 16, 84, 305, 309
 Maintaining tables with eCATT
 Customizing tables 146
 Mapping 34, 35, 43, 334, 335, 362
 Master data 14, 23, 362
 Material BOMs 62
 Material documents 63
 Message type 180
 Microsoft Access 284
 Microsoft Excel 72
 Migration 41, 362

Migration account 27
 Migration Workbench 264, 362
 Modification
 field contents 282
 MOVE 199
 MWB 264
 MWBSP 268

N

NetWeaver 101
 Nodata character 198
 Non-SAP GUI 100, 101, 102
 Non-SAP system 362
 Number formats 288

O

Object 42, 362
 Opening balance sheet 28
 Opening balance sheet account 28
 Optional entry field 36, 362

P

P&L account 29, 362
 Package size 343
 Parameter 71, 73, 122, 138, 139, 141
 Parameterization 310
 Parameters 362
 Partner 180
 Partner agreement 180
 Performance 82
 Periodic data transfer 243
 Port
 file port 250
 tRFC port 250
 Posting document 23
 Posting key 31, 35, 65, 292, 362
 Prefix 200
 Primary window 362
 Process cockpit 268
 Processing external variants 130, 133
 Production status 318
 Profit center 345
 Purchase requisitions 62

R

R/2-R/3 Migration Workbench 167
 RABEST01 339
 RCSBI010 62
 RCSBI020 62
 RCSBI030 62
 RCSBI040 62
 Reconciliation account 28, 338, 339, 362
 Reconciliation of balances 339
 Record type 181, 325
 record type 0 331
 record type 1 332
 record type 2 332
 record type 3 332
 record type 4 326
 Recording 48, 58, 106, 167, 305, 309
 Recording overview 67
 Regional options 289
 Replacement value 321, 363
 Required entry field 34, 35, 64, 325, 363
 Retained earnings account 29
 RFBIBL00 61
 RFBIDE00 60
 RFBIKR00 61
 RFBISA00 61, 228
 RM06BBIO 62
 RM07MMBL 63
 Runtime error 75
 Runtimes 179

S

SAP ADM 263
 availability 263
 checklist 280
 data import 275
 development cockpit 268
 migration customizing 271
 Migration Workbench 264
 MWB 264
 overview 264
 process cockpit 268
 runtime objects 275
 scope 270
 throughput 264
 SAP Application Server 42, 212, 363
 SAP Basis Release 169, 363

- SAP Change and Transport Management 247
- SAP change request 247
- SAP CRM System 348
- SAP ERP 6.0 169
- SAP GUI 99, 162
- SAP home directory 214
- SAP Service Marketplace 169
- SAP transport system 247
- SAPMF05A 70
- Screen 66
- Secondary index 353
- Select query 284
- Sequential file 26, 42, 363
- Simulation 337
- Simulation run 266
- SM30 145
- Source structure 181
- Source system 243
- Standard batch input 308
- Standard batch input program 48, 58, 59, 303, 309
- Standard interface 46, 169
- Standard SAP ERP interface 363
- Status bar 65, 363
- Subledger 28, 339, 363
- Subledger accounting 28, 363
- Subroutine 70, 363
- Suffix 200

T

- Table CEPC 345
- Table field 66
- Table maintenance 145
- Table maintenance with eCATT 145
 - customer-specific tables* 145
- Table-like file 42, 363
- Target structure 188
- Template 327, 330, 334
- Test 105
 - configuration* 105
- Test case 306
 - changing* 155
 - fixed values* 156, 158
 - Function Editor* 155
 - log* 163
 - processing mode* 164
 - recording* 149
 - transaction code* 150
 - transaction recorder* 150
- Test data 136, 342
- Test run 336
- Test script 105, 106, 107, 113, 136, 139, 141, 145, 146, 317, 363
 - attributes* 108
 - changing* 122
 - error behavior* 115
 - error messages* 120
 - executing* 113, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 138, 142
 - fixed values* 123
 - loading the file* 134
 - log* 120
 - modifying* 139
 - parameterization* 121, 144
 - recording* 138, 145
 - start mode* 114
 - variant* 133
- Testing
 - test configuration* 134, 145
 - test data* 125, 141, 307
 - test status* 318
- Text file 36, 42, 129, 141, 142, 363
- Text Import Wizard 131
- Text key 238
- Thousand separator 288
- Throughput 306, 343
- Tralation 295
- Transaction 66, 70, 363
 - AL11* 214
 - AS91* 317
 - code* 63, 364
 - data* 14, 23, 38, 324, 364
 - FB01* 70, 72
 - figures* 364
 - FS01* 229
 - recorder* 58, 63, 65, 105, 109, 143, 228
 - SE16* 298
 - SM35* 63, 81
 - SXDA* 169, 341
- Transfer status 318
- Transformation 35, 43
- Translation 44, 45, 364
- Transport request 68, 107, 146, 154, 364
- Transport system 247

U

Update run 336
Upload 46, 327
User profile 286

V

Variable 76, 331, 332, 364
Variant 331

Vendor master 61
Visual Basic module 327

W

Work item 226

Y

YYYYMMDD 44