The Amisys Migration Tip Sheet

An exclusive collection of crucial insights for technology executives facing an Amisys migration

By Eric Two Bears

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M igrations are never easy, but some migrations are less daunting than others. Moving from one version of an application to another certainly poses less risk than moving a mission-critical system, such as Amisys, from a legacy mainframe OS to a contemporary cloud platform. Upping the risk: In many cases, an Amisys migration also requires leapfrogging multiple versions.

Even for an IT team with migratory experience, an Amisys migration is not for the faint of heart. Time after time we have seen organizations and consultants plunge ahead assuming their best migration practices will serve them well, only to run headfirst into multiple "gotchas" they didn't anticipate.

These gotchas inevitably cost time and money—and sometimes a job. But that doesn't have to be the case. I've compiled an exclusive collection of crucial insights that every IT leader pondering an Amisys migration needs to know. These insights, including the top ten gotchas to avoid, are based on my team's experience successfully future proofing Amisys implementations for multiple clients.

I'll be sharing all ten gotchas in this and future newsletters. Here are three of the most important ones. If you have a tip to share, or have a question that needs answering, please feel free to [write to me](#).

Gotcha #1: LICENSING LANDMINES
Get this right or the cost overruns will flow

The first surprise most, if not all, IT organizations discover during an Amisys migration is that licenses are costing them far more than they anticipated. The reason: They renewed HP-UX licenses for Micro Focus and Robelle, assuming those renewals would carry over to the new Linux cloud environment. Surprise! They won't.

First, buy the longest-term Linux licenses for Micro Focus and Robelle that your budget can support. This is your future environment, so a 3, 5, or even longer deal is justified. Most organizations pay list price. Don't. The licenses are highly negotiable, and the savings can be up to 50% when negotiated assertively.

Next, calculate how long your legacy HP-UX system will need to run in parallel with the new Amisys-on-Linux environment. Then, don't renew the licenses—because that fee is not refundable or transferable if you unplug the HP-UX system before the end of the license period. Rather, switch to a month to month rental agreement until you're ready to retire the HP-UX system.

This way, you'll pay only for the time you need, and you won't be making a donation to Micro Focus and Robelle. The savings can be enormous: in the low-five to high-six figures.

Gotcha #2: SURROUND CODE CONUNDRUMS
You're surrounded by more surround code than you think

Pop quiz: How much surround code has your organization integrated with your Amisys environment over the years? Trick question. Most IT leaders are shocked to discover they have far more surround code to deal with than they thought.

It's easy to lose track of much surround code has been accumulated over time. I'm usually told, "Yes, we just have a little bit of surround code." Then I start digging. Surprise! They've been adding functionality to their Amisys environment for 10, 20, even 30 years. And in most cases, they haven't kept up with it, and they don't have it documented.

An IT leader told me they had "about 200 applications" in surround code. When we finished a surround code census, it turned out there were nearly 500. That has obvious implications for the migration plan, timing, and cost.

But when you're doing an Amisys migration from HP-UX to Linux, there's another, often unexpected wrinkle: *none of your existing surround code interfaces will work on Linux*. They must be inventoried and compared to the Amisys 8.x feature set. Code that will need to be migrated because its functionality isn't present in 8.x will have to be refactored.

Budget six months or more to conduct a surround code analysis. If that seems like a lot, consider that surround code remediation is minimal when migrating from Amisys 6.1 to 6.3 or 6.4 on HP-UX. But when lifting-and-shifting 5.x or 6.x to 8.4 on a Linux cloud, underestimating the complexity or allowing surround code analysis to be an afterthought can be a critical error.

Gotcha #3: THE ORACLE DOMINO EFFECT
Misconfigure Oracle now, pay the performance piper later

I'll state the obvious: Setting up the Oracle database incorrectly now will result in myriad performance issues later. But what's not always obvious is what "incorrectly" means.

IT organizations have talented DBAs skilled at maintaining databases. What they usually don't have are experienced database builders, which requires a completely different skill set and, in the case of an Amisys migration, a highly specialized one.

Most Amisys HP-UX implementations are using Oracle versions between 11g and 12c, and some up to 19c. As with Gotcha #2, it's not a simple matter of moving the code and data over. The indexing, database sizing, character sets—it all has to be completely redone. If it's not done well by someone who knows how to build a new Oracle database for Amisys 8.4 from scratch, the negative impact on system performance can be dramatic.

Moreover, because it's a completely new database on a completely new operating system in a completely new cloud environment hosting a completely new version of Amisys—surprise!—backup processes, disaster recovery processes, and related plans all have to be completely rebooted as well.

The Oracle domino effect doesn't stop there. The migration will require running the old databases on HP-UX and the new databases on Linux concurrently. These licensing issues are similar to Gotcha #1, and that's a huge expense that, in my experience, most organizations don't budget properly for. The organization will have to fund multiple licenses for multiple versions on two different instances for some period of time.

GOTCHAS ARE NOT INEVITABLE

Support for the Amisys claims processing system is winding down, and health plan CIOs face a tough choice: rip and replace their core operational platform for something new or migrate to a contemporary cloud environment.

Now the choice is easier. SourcEdge has the focus, experience, strategic plan, and specialized IT talent to help you confidently modernize your Amisys environment. You can ensure optimal cost containment, high system performance, and move into the future with a platform that continues to meet your evolving requirements.

Avoid the gotchas. Mitigate the technical, financial, and operational risks of migrating Amisys to a new environment by partnering with SourcEdge. Our approach to Amisys modernization works, and we'll be happy to share the plan and the customer references that prove it.

Thanks for reading. I hope to be back in your inbox with more Amisys tech tips soon.

Eric

About Eric Two Bears
Eric Two Bears is Vice President of Client Services for SourcEdge, and one of the healthcare IT industry's preeminent AMISYS experts. Prior to establishing the AMISYS Modernization Practice at SourcEdge, Two Bears was Vice President and Senior Lead Architect at DST/SS&C, the company behind AMISYS. There he led the Health Solutions Consulting Division and Project Management Office, where he established a best-in-class PMO, and orchestrated concurrent implementation projects for customers across the company's payer products and services. Two Bears has more than 30 years of healthcare IT experience.

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