

Open Database Connectivity (ODBC)

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Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) is a standard [Application Programming Interface \(API\)](#) for accessing [dDataBase Management System \(DBMS\)](#). The designers of ODBC aimed to make it independent of database systems and [Operating System \(OS\)](#). An application written using ODBC can be ported to other platforms, both on the client and server side, with few changes to the data access code.

ODBC accomplishes DBMS independence by using an ODBC driver as a translation layer between the application and the DBMS. The application uses ODBC functions through an ODBC driver manager with which it is linked, and the driver passes the query to the DBMS. An ODBC driver can be thought of as analogous to a printer driver or other driver, providing a standard set of functions for the application to use, and implementing DBMS-specific functionality. An application that can use ODBC is referred to as "ODBC-compliant". Any ODBC-compliant application can access any DBMS for which a driver is installed. Drivers exist for all major DBMSs, many other data sources like address book systems and Microsoft Excel, and even for text or [Comma Separated Values \(CSV\)](#) files.

ODBC was originally developed by Microsoft and Simba Technologies during the early 1990s, and became the basis for the Call Level Interface (CLI) or [Command Line Interface \(CLI\)](#) standardized by SQL Access Group in the Unix and mainframe field. ODBC retained several features that were removed as part of the CLI effort. Full ODBC was later ported back to those platforms, and became a de facto standard considerably better known than CLI. The CLI remains similar to ODBC, and applications can be ported from one platform to the other with few changes.

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