

## Topic Page: [Ellison, Larry \(1944 - \)](#)

Summary Article: **Ellison, Larry**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

US computer entrepreneur and founder in 1977 of Oracle Corporation, one of the world's largest software companies. Ellison, whose biography is entitled *The Difference Between God and Larry Ellison: Inside Oracle Corporation* (1997), was estimated in 2011 to have a personal fortune of \$33 billion.

Ellison launched the first version of his relational database Oracle in 1979. The product was immediately successful and generated \$12 million in sales by 1984. A large part of Oracle's success was attributed to what has been described as one of the most aggressive sales forces in history. In the 1990s Ellison concentrated on writing Oracle software for the Internet and launched E-Business Suite in 2000 – a single package allowing businesses to manage all their data-related operations online. Subsequently Oracle has made a series of strategic acquisitions of technology companies, for example Sun Microsystems.

Born in Manhattan, New York, Ellison was adopted by relatives and raised in Chicago, Illinois. He left South Shore High School in 1962 and dropped out of two university courses before relocating to California in the mid-1960s. There he moved from job to job as a computer programmer for various financial companies.

In the mid-1970s he started working for Ampex, a computing firm that undertook contract work for the US federal government, and then for Amdahl, where he was part of the team that developed the IBM mainframe. At the age of 32 he started the Software Development Laboratories consultancy with two former IBM colleagues to build a commercially viable relational database, as opposed to the hierarchical models of the time, for businesses. Ellison moved the company into Silicon Valley in 1978 and changed the name to Relational Software Inc. (RSI) to explain the company's activity. The first version of the software, called Oracle, was launched in 1979. The company, renamed in 1982 for the product, was generating \$12 million in sales within five years and was floated in 1986. Ellison's 34% stake was then valued at \$93 million.

However, in the early 1990s accounting irregularities caused by over-booking of orders nearly brought the company down. The share price reached an all-time low in autumn 1990; sales were restated, resulting in a loss of \$12 million in 1991, and several executives left the company. Ellison, who was then reputed to boast about how much time he spent away from the office, regained control and appointed a new operating officer, Ray Lane.

From the mid-1990s, Ellison focused his strategy on the Internet (which, he said, 'changed everything'). He decided to write all Oracle's software for the Internet, rather than for the traditional client-server infrastructure, and in May 2000 launched the E-Business Suite. In that year, Ellison agreed to cash bonuses for stock option shares instead of receiving a salary. This move followed the departure of key company executives, including Lane, and the revelation in the press of an alleged spying campaign against software rival, Microsoft.

Ellison was a member of former US president Clinton's Export Council and has held directorships of, and financial stakes in, technology companies, including Apple and Netsuite.

His awards include Entrepreneur of the Year from the Harvard Business School in 1990 and the Smithsonian Information Technology Leadership Award for Global Integration in 1994.

His leisure interests include Japanese architecture, flying his own planes and sailing. As a keen yachtsman, he financed the BMW Oracle racing team which went on to win the 2010 America's Cup.

### quotations

Ellison, Larry

#### **APA**

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Ellison, Larry. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/ellison\\_larry\\_1944](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/ellison_larry_1944)

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## APA

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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