Two ways to reduce the size of the SOFFCONT1

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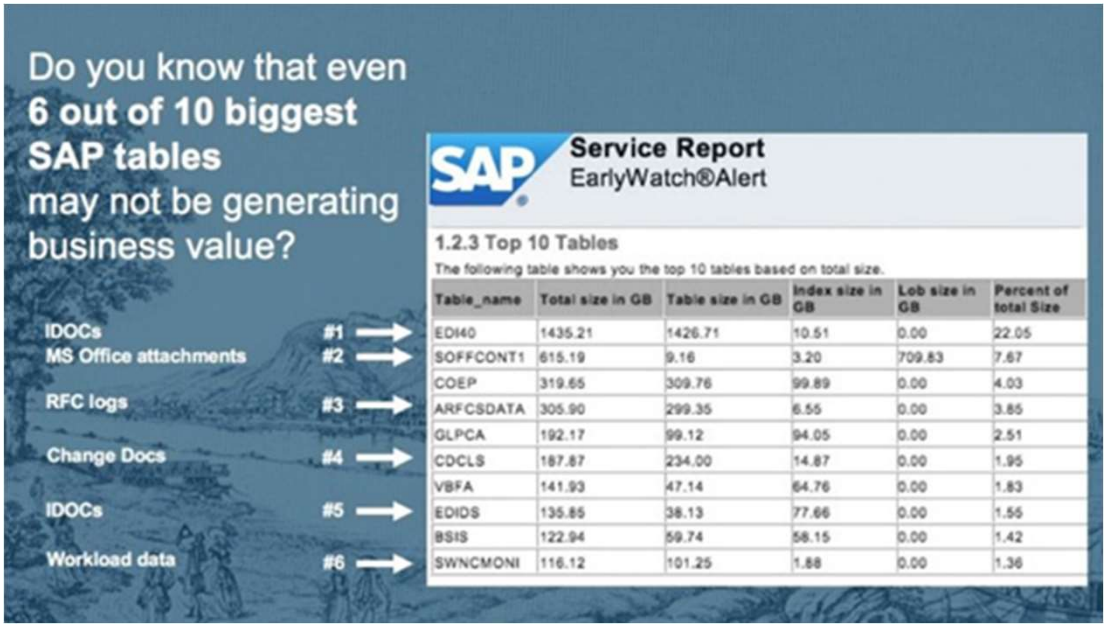
SOFFCONT1 table grows quickly in SAP landscapes and is often found in the top 10 largest tables in the system (TIP: check the list of largest tables in DB02 transaction). This table belongs to SOC3 and contains SAP Business Workplace/SAP office Documents attachments or attachments created via the Global Object Service (e.g. PDF scan of the purchase order or invoice).

SOFFCONT1 is one of many SAP tables that contain aged data, that is data that lose business value after legal hold or when reaching retention time. Often these tables grow rapidly because data is not handled properly after serving its purpose.

The size of SOFFCONT1 depends significantly on how these types of documents / attachments are used in the system and how they are stored. If an external storage is not used, SAP stores the office attachments directly in the SOFFCONT1 table. That's why it grows so quickly. To stop it from getting bigger, SAP recommends using an external storage system (e.g., archive storage).

Six out of 10 biggest SAP tables may not be generating business value

Did you know that up to six out of ten biggest SAP tables may not be generating business value? The below example is an SAP Early Watch output that shows Top 10 tables based on total size. Six of them (highlighted) could be significantly smaller if regular housekeeping was in place.



Proper SAP housekeeping and archiving must be in place to keep the amount of this data under control. If aged data is not properly archived, stored, and destroyed, it not only affects the storage costs, but also opens up a myriad of risks, such as legal compliance, business disruption, reputational damage and revenue loss.

Two ways to keep the SOFFCONT1 table size under control

There are two ways to keep the SOFFCONT1 table small.

Option 1: The first and recommended option is to store attachments and access them from an external storage. Bear in mind that the default SAP setting is to store attachments directly in SOFFCONT1 which is often the root of the problem. It is not possible to archive SOFFCONT1 data records with an existing standard archiving object. Instead, the document's content (e.g., Microsoft or PDF attachments) should be migrated first and new content continuously stored in an external content server.

Moving attachments from table SOFFCONT1 to an external content server is possible with Outboard ERP Archiving which supports multiple storage options (cloud based – e.g., Azure BLOB, AWS S3, Google Cloud Storage, on-premises – e.g., file system, Hadoop or other corporate data lake storages). For more information, see SAP Notes 389366 (SAP R/3 4.6B – SAP Web AS 6.10).

To allow the content server option you need to create a new storage category (transaction OACT) and assign it to class SOFFPHIO (transaction SKPR08). If the SOFFPHIO class is not visible refer to SAP Note 668271. As of that moment, new documents will be stored in the content server and existing documents in the system will be kept in SOFFCONT1. This will keep your SAP system lean and clean. If the SOFFCONT1 table is too big we recommend you check SAP note 389366 to migrate existing data from SOFFCONT1 to the content server. Similarly, to SAP Note 389366, Outboard ERP Archiving offers an improved migration cockpit, enhanced with performance, monitoring, parallelization options and validation to secure the data integrity between SOFFCONT1 and the external content server. As Outboard ERP Archiving offers multiple affordable storage options as an external content repository (cloud based or on-premises), this is the best way to reduce the SAP database size and reduce the overall costs of running an SAP landscape.

Option 2: The second option, a less effective one, is to delete documents which are no longer referenced. Nevertheless, it is recommended to perform the deletion before the migration to reduce the amount of data. Deletion of documents or mails (with or without attachments) from a folder only removes the references between the folder and the documents. The content of the document remains in the database, including the header data and the send logs. This data can be physically deleted from the database (e.g., SOFFCONT1) using program RSBCS_REORG (Note 966854). This process is part of SAP housekeeping activities recommended by SAP and is one of the many housekeeping jobs available in Outboard Housekeeping software that automates all SAP housekeeping activities in one central cockpit.

Best practices for archiving and housekeeping SAP systems

Regular SAP housekeeping and archiving is essential, but according to our research covering over 300 SAP systems, only a low percentage of organizations are housekeeping their SAP systems to the fullest extent.

It is best to start by analyzing your systems data volume. Proper analysis helps with identifying quick wins as well as building a solid platform for kick starting system housekeeping practices and implement regular archiving of aged data to comply with legal requirements and mitigate business disruption, reputational damage or revenue loss.
To summarize, archiving and housekeeping SAP systems is an important task that often doesn't get the attention it deserves. It is important to clean up the data automatically, which not only reduces the overall effort, but also improves system performance and lowers storage costs.

Find out more about Outboard Housekeeping the holistic solution to clean up no-value data from SAP landscapes and Outboard ERP Archiving to archive aged SAP data to comply with legal requirements and keep the system lean and clean from aged data.

Contact us for a quick demo to learn how migrating SOFFCONT1 to an affordable external storage with Outboard can help you mitigate compliance risks and reduce your SAP TCO.

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