



# ora2know

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The German Oracle Database Community

## Oracle 23ai: JSON Features Beyond JSON Duality Views

Mittwoch, 22. Oktober 2025 15:30 - 16:15



**Robert Marz**  
**DATABEE**  
Die IT-Architekten



# Robert Marz – Independent Consultant

## Primary Role

Senior Technical Architect  
with database centric view of the world

## ora2know

The German Oracle Database Community.  
Database first. Community first. [ora2know.de](http://ora2know.de)  
Member of the Board



**DATABEE**  
Die IT-Architekten



**Databees.**



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**SYM<sup>L2</sup>**



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# SYMPOSIUM<sup>42</sup>

Created by the community, to support the community

Sharing of reliable knowledge

Supporting the various user groups and individuals



@sym\_42



<https://sym42.org/>

A dramatic, low-key photograph of Jason Voorhees from the Friday the 13th franchise. He is wearing his iconic white hockey mask with black eye holes and a dark, heavy jacket. He holds a large, curved machete in his right hand, which is raised. His left hand is extended forward, palm facing the viewer. The lighting is split: a cool blue light on the left and a warm, yellowish light on the right, creating a stark contrast. The background is dark and indistinct.

# JSON Document Format



# Setting the Stage: Who is Jason?

## JSON Acronym

Java **S**cript **O**bject Notation

## Lightweight Format

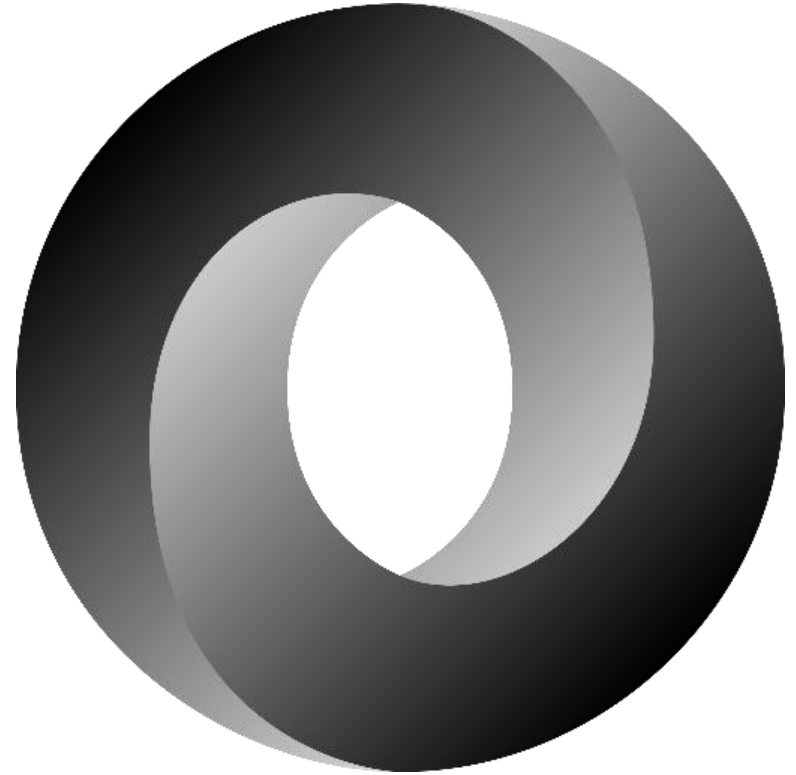
Text-based  
Data Interchange  
Document Format (can be stored as Files)

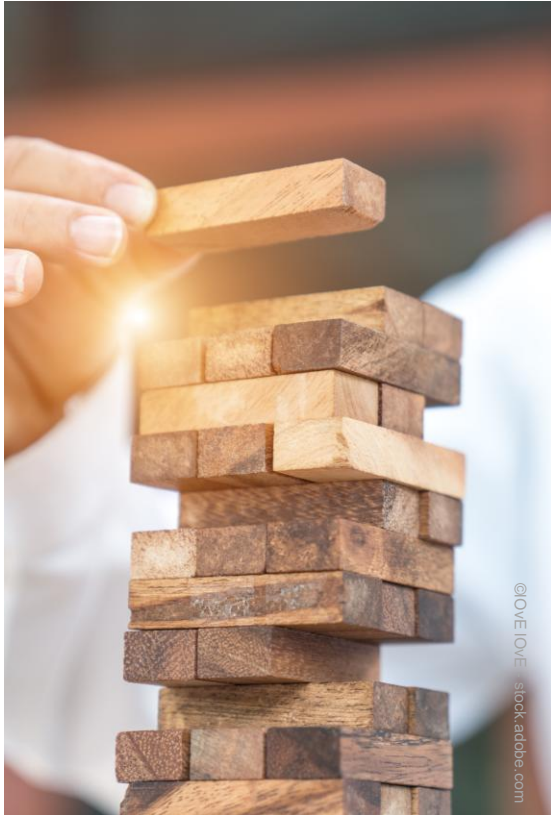
## Original Design Goal

persisting JavaScript Objects

## Standards:

[json.org](https://www.json.org)  
[ECMA-404](https://www.ecma-international.org/standards/63/)





# Structures

**unordered**  
collection

“key”:”value” pairs

separated by commas

enclosed by braces { }

also realized as **object**, record, struct, dictionary, hash table, keyed list or associative array

**ordered**  
list of  
values

separated by commas

enclosed by square brackets [ ]

also realized as **array**, vector, list or sequence



# JSON: Data Types

```
{  
  "string": "String are quoted",  
  "escape": "\n control chars",  
  "number": 1234,  
  "boolean": true,  
  "collection": {  
    "object": "fields",  
    "can": "nested"  
  },  
  "array": [ "one",  
            "two",  
            {"three": true} ]  
}
```

## Data Types

string

“always enclosed in double quotes”

number

Integer	-256
Float	256.123
E-notation	2.3e3

Boolean

true  
false  
null

Object

Simple types (Scalars)  
Nested Objects  
Arrays

Array

Simple types (Scalars)  
Objects  
Nested Arrays



# JSON Document Format: Odds & Ends



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## Character set

always Unicode

## Number encoding

always English, Decimal Point

## Whitespace

between Tokens is ignored  
space, linefeed, carriage return, tab

## Dates are represented as strings

usually ISO 8601 Zulu (UTC) Time  
"2019-11-19T15:13:23Z"

## JSON is Schemaless

no constraints for your implementation  
Developers Hell - when dealing with documents not produced by your code  
[JSON Schema](#) addon – not yet a standard



# Storing JSON Data



# Storing JSON Docs in the Database



## Text-based columns

- Varchar2
  - ⚠️ Limits document length
- CLOB
  - ⚠️ NLS-Layer
  - ⚠️ Doubles Space Usage

## BLOBs

- eliminate NLS-Layer (JSON is always UTF-8)
- Database character set should be AL32UTF8

## Check constraints (is\_json)

- Sanity
- enables dot Notation for querying

## Native JSON Data Type “OSON” Format

- 21c New Feature



# OSON Binary Format

## Stores JSON

- binary encoded

## JSON-Schema

- field names are stored at beginning
- → Speeds up searching

## Pointers to data

- → efficient storing and faster retrieval

## Adds scalar Datatypes

- returned by JSON Path method type()
- → better SQL Operations

OSON Type	SQL Type
binary	RAW or BLOB
date	DATE
daysecondInterval	INTERVAL DAY TO SECOND
double	BINARY_DOUBLE
float	BINARY_FLOAT
timestamp	TIMESTAMP
timestamp with time zone	TIMESTAMP WITH TIME ZONE
vector	VECTOR
yearmonthInterval	INTERVAL YEAR TO MONTH



# Binary JSON Formats - Overview

	BSON	JSONB	OSON
Used by Database	MongoDB	PostgreSQL	Oracle
Open Source Format	✓	✓	✓
Keeps field ordering / streaming format	✓	✗	✗
Single byte encoding for booleans	✓	✗	✓
Maximum size after encoding	16 MB	256 MB	32MB
Inline threshold	4 kB	2 kB	8 kB
...			

Taken from Loïc Lefèvre <https://medium.com/db-one/a-deep-dive-into-binary-json-formats-oson-e3190e5e9eb0>



# The JSON Datatype

## JSON data type

stores JSON natively  
in OSON binary format

→ no more textual  
parsing

compatible  $\geq 20$

## conversion

`json()`

constructor

text to

JSON

`json_serialize()`

function

JSON back

to text





## Create Table with JSON column

---

```
create table if not exists json_demo (  
  id number primary key,  
  data_vc varchar2(4000)  
    check (data_vc is json),    -- VARCHAR2 column with JSON validation  
  data_j json  
    check (data_j IS JSON VALIDATE '{"type" : "object"}'),  
  data_o json(object),        -- JSON column limited to object type  
  data_a json(array),        -- JSON column limited to array type  
  data_s json(scalar)        -- JSON column limited to scalar type  
);
```



# JSON Constructors



# JSON Data Type Constructor (Textual)

WITH jtab AS

(SELECT JSON(

```
{ "name" : "Alexis Bull",  
  "Address": { "street" : "200 Sporting Green",  
               "city" : "South San Francisco",  
               "state" : "CA",  
               "zipCode" : 99236,  
               "country" : "United States of America" } })
```

AS jcol

```
)  
SELECT j.jcol.Address.city FROM jtab j;
```

ADDRESS

"South San Francisco"

Returns	JSON Data Type
	json-functions return varchar2(4000)
Textual Input	VARCHAR2, CLOB, or BLOB
Null Input	results in SQL Null
Non-Textual Input	Vector SQL object type
PLSQL Input	Varray, record, index by binary_integer collection (IBBI), nested table, associative array



## JSON Datatype Constructor – Objects and arrays (1/4)

```
select json{*}  
  from dept  
 where deptno=20;
```

```
JSON{*}
```

```
-----  
{"DEPTNO":20,"DNAME":"Research","LOC":"Dallas"}
```

```
/*
```

One JSON object per row, with all columns included.  
The column names are used as keys in the JSON object  
as defined in the table. --> Upper case, mostly.

```
*/
```



## JSON Datatype Constructor – Objects and arrays (2/4)

```
select json{eName, job}
  from emp
 where empno in (7839,7698);
```

```
JSON{ENAME,JOB}
```

```
-----
{"eName":"Blake","job":"Manager"}
{"eName":"King","job":"President"}
```

```
/*
```

if the column names are specified, resulting keys have the same spelling and case.

```
*/
```





## JSON Datatype Constructor – Objects and arrays (3/4)

```
select json{'id': empno, 'last name': ename, 'job role': job} as emp_json  
from emp  
where empno in (7839,7698);
```

EMP\_JSON

---

```
{"id":7698,"last name":"Blake","job role":"Manager"}  
{"id":7839,"last name":"King","job role":"President"}
```

/\*

you have full control over the keys in the JSON object  
by using the key-value syntax json{'key' : value}.

Note, that SQL style single quotes are used for the keys

\*/

# JSON Datatype Constructor – Objects and arrays (4/4)

```
select json[
  json{dname,
    loc,
    'emps' : json[ select json{ename, sal}
                  from emp
                  where deptno=dept.deptno
                ]
  ] as dept_json
from dept
where deptno = 10
group by deptno, dname, loc;
```

/\* JSON arrays and objects can be nested as needed.  
Sub-queries can be used to create the nested JSON objects. \*/

DEPT\_JSON

```
[{"dname":"Accounting","loc":"New York","emps":[{"ename":"King","sal":5000},
{"ename":"Clark","sal":2450},{"ename":"Miller","sal":1300}]}
```



## json{} and json[]

are shortcuts to

- json\_object( ... returning json)
- json\_array( ... returning json)

they work

- only in SQL
- but not in PL/SQL





# JSON Functions



# Comparing JSON Documents

---

```
select case
  when json_equal({'one': 1, 'two': ['three', 4]}
    , {'two': ['three'
      , 4]
      , 'one': 1 }
    )
  then 'EQUAL'
  else 'DIFFERENT'
end as compare;
```

COMPARE  
-----  
EQUAL

```
select case
  when json_equal({'one': 1, 'two': ['three', 4]}
    , {'one': 1, 'two': [4, 'three']})
  then 'EQUAL'
  else 'DIFFERENT'
end as compare;
```

COMPARE  
-----  
DIFFERENT



# JSONPath - Reference

JSONPath is Xpath for JSON

Used all over the place

Uses dot-Notation: `$.store.book[0].title`

Returns JSON Document or single element

[JSONPath Online Evaluator](#)

Expression	Description
\$	the root object / element
@	the current object / element
. or []	child operator
[start:end:step]	array slice operator
?()	filter expression

JSONPath	Result
<code>\$.store.book[*].author</code>	the authors of all books in the store
<code>\$..author</code>	all authors
<code>\$.store.*</code>	all things in store, which are some books and a red bicycle.
<code>\$.store..price</code>	the price of everything in the store.
<code>\$..book[2]</code>	the third book
<code>\$..book[(@.length-1)]</code> <code>\$..book[-1:]</code>	the last book in order.
<code>\$.book[0,1]</code> <code>\$..book[:2]</code>	the first two books
<code>\$..book[?(@.isbn)]</code>	filter all books with isbn number
<code>\$..book[?(@.price&lt;10)]</code>	filter all books cheaper than 10
<code>\$..*</code>	All members of JSON structure.



## JSON\_TABLE

Lives inside the SQL-From-Clause

Produces **Rows** and **Columns**

Accepts LOBs or JSON data

Included in SQL:2016 Standard





## Querying JSON: The JSON\_TABLE Operator (2/2)

The JSON Document

```
select wert
  from json_table( ['Eins", "Zwei", "Drei",
                  "Vier", "Fünf", "Sechs"]
                , '$[*]'
                columns wert varchar2 path '$'
                )
/
```

Produces rows  
(JSONPath Object)

Produces columns  
(JSONPath Element)

WERT

-----  
Eins  
Zwei  
Drei  
Vier  
Fünf  
Sechs

6 rows selected

Elapsed: 00:00:00.011



# Session Parameter JSON\_BEHAVIOR

```
select coalesce(json_value('Robbie', '$.*'), 'NULL') as data;
```

DATA

-----

NULL

```
alter session set json_behavior='on_error:error';  
select coalesce(json_value('Robbie', '$.*'), 'NULL') as data;
```

Error starting at line : 1 in command -

```
select coalesce(json_value('Robbie', '$.*'), 'NULL') as data
```

Error report -

ORA-40441: JSON syntax error

JZN-00078: Invalid JSON keyword 'Robbie' (line 1, position 1)

<https://docs.oracle.com/error-help/db/ora-40441/>



# Caveat: JSON Functions return varchar2(4000)

All functions returning JSON documents default to varchar2(4000)

omitting „returning json“

- textual json is returned
- reparsing needed
- error if JSON is too large

Most of them accept a returning clause as argument

In nested json calls, every function needs “returning json”

Test your code with large documents to find missing clauses

Rule for dblinter is in the making





## Patching JSON – json\_mergepatch()



```
json_mergepatch({'FirstName':"Eric", "LastName":"Cartman"}, {'LastName':"Fox"})  
{"FirstName":"Eric", "LastName":"Fox"}
```

```
json_mergepatch({'FirstName':"Eric", "LastName":"Cartman"}, {'Salary':1000})  
{"FirstName":"Eric", "LastName":"Cartman", "Salary":1000}
```

```
json_mergepatch({'FirstName':"Eric", "LastName":"Cartman"}, {'FirstName':null})  
{"LastName":"Cartman"}
```



## JSON Mergepatch Trick: remove null values (1/2)

```
/*  
    when generating json from tables, null values are common.  
    Most JS-based applications do not like null values in JSON.  
*/
```

```
select json{ename, comm} as emp_commison  
from emp  
where empno in (7839, 7698, 7499, 7521);
```

EMP\_COMMISON

```
-----  
{"ename":"Allen","comm":300}  
{"ename":"Ward","comm":500}  
{"ename":"Blake","comm":null}  
{"ename":"King","comm":null}
```



## JSON Mergepatch Trick: remove null values (2/2)

/\*

a call to `json_mergepatch` with two identical JSON objects as source and patch returns the JSON document with all null values (and their keys) removed.

with e as \*/

```
(select json{ename, comm} as emp_commison
  from emp
  where empno in (7839, 7698, 7499, 7521)
)
select json_mergepatch(emp_commison,
                      emp_commison returning json) as emp_commison
  from e;
```

EMP\_COMMISON

```
-----
{"ename":"Allen","comm":300}
{"ename":"Ward","comm":500}
{"ename":"Blake"}
{"ename":"King"}
```



# Manipulating JSON - json\_transform()

```
select json_transform(  
  json{dname, 'emps': json[select ename  
    from emp  
    where emp.deptno=dept.deptno]}  
  , set '$.dname' = 'R+D'  
  , append '$.emps' = 'Robbie'  
  , sort '$.emps'  
  , set '$.empsCount' = path '@.emps[*].count()'   
  returning json) as jdata  
from dept  
where deptno=20;
```

## JDATA

```
{"dname": "R+D",  
  "emps": ["Adams", "Ford", "Jones",  
    "Robbie", "Scott", "Smith"],  
  "empsCount": 6}
```

### Array Operations

- append / prepend / add\_set / insert
- Intersect / union / minus
- copy
- sort

### More Operations

- Merge / keep
- set / insert / remove / remove\_set
- rename / replace
- nested path
- case
- arithmetic / aggregate functions

### Parameters (typical)

- json, operation path\_expr = value
- passing keyword for bind vars in path expression
- operation sequence is possible



## JSON Transform caveat: functions are only evaluated once

```
with json_data as (  
  select json('{"array": [{"a":1}, {"a":2}, {"id":"xxx"}], "b":"additional data"}') as j  
)  
select json_transform(j,  
  set '$.array[*].id' = format_uuid(sys_guid())  
  ignore on existing  
  returning json) as j_transform  
from json_data;
```

J\_TRANSFORM

```
-----  
{"array":[{"a":1, "id":"36d0a9ea-6e21-05b6-e063-0200590af751"},  
  {"a":2, "id":"36d0a9ea-6e21-05b6-e063-0200590af751"},  
  {"id":"xxx"}],  
  "b":"additional data"}
```

custom function



# differences between sql and plsql functions

PL/SQL and SQL functions are developed independently

Behavior differs especially in `json_path` expressions

Undocumented changes in every RU (23.4,23.5,24.6, ...)

Use  
`select json_... () into my_var;`  
Instead of  
`my_var := json_...();`

A close-up photograph of a blacksmith working. A glowing red-hot metal rod is held in a blacksmith's tongs and is being struck by a hammer on an anvil. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the action in the foreground. A semi-transparent orange and red banner is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'JSON Schema and Domains'.

# JSON Schema and Domains



# Data Use Case Domains: Validate JSON

```
create table jobs
  (job json validate
   '{ "type": "object",
     "properties": { "job_id": { "type": "string"} }
   }');
```

```
create domain json_job as json validate '{
  "type": "object",
  "properties": {
    "job_id": {
      "type": "string",
      regexp: "^[0-9a-f-]"
    }
  },
  "required": ["job_id"]
}';
```

```
create table jobs2(job json_j
```

```
select table_name, SEARCH_CONDITION
  from user_constraints
  where table_name Like 'JOBS%'
        and constraint_type = 'C';
```

TABLE_NAME	SEARCH_CONDITION
------------	------------------

JOBS	"JOB" IS JSON VALIDATE '{ "type": "object", "properties": {
JOBS2	"JOB" IS JSON FORMAT JSON (LAX VALIDATE '{"type":"object","properties":{"job_id

```
select *
  from user_json_domain_schema_columns;
```

DOMAIN_NAME	COLUMN_NAME	CONSTRAINT_NAME	JSON_SCHEMA
-------------	-------------	-----------------	-------------

JSON_JOB	JSON_JOB	SYS_DOMAIN_C0052	{"type":"object","properties":{"job_id":{"type":"s
----------	----------	------------------	--



# Flexible Data Use Case Domains (1/2)

## Define

multiple (multi column) Domains

## Choose

for every table row  
what Domain to use

## Endless Possibilities

e.g. Addresses:  
•choose check constraints and  
•display\_function  
based on country code

## Killer Feature for JSON Validation

- Choose JSON Schema based on content
- Handle different API-Versions
- ....

```
create domain job_type_a
as -- this is a multi-column domain
(job_details as json validate '{
    "type": "object",
    "properties": {"type_a": {"type": "string"}},
    "required": ["type_a"]
}');

create domain job_type_b
as -- add as many column and constraints as needed
(job_details as json validate '{
    "type": "object",
    "properties": {"type_b": {"type": "string"}},
    "required": ["type_b"]
}');

create FLEXIBLE domain job_types
-- number of columns must match subdomains
(job_details)
choose domain using (job_mode varchar2(2 char)) from
-- options: decode() and case statements
-- case with full comparison expression only
case
    when job_mode = 'A' then job_type_a(job_details)
    when job_mode = 'B' then job_type_b(job_details)
    else job_type_a(job_details) -- default
end;
```



## Flexible Data Use Case Domains (2/2)

```
create table jobs_flex
  (id number primary key,
   job_mode varchar2(2 char),
   job_details JSON);

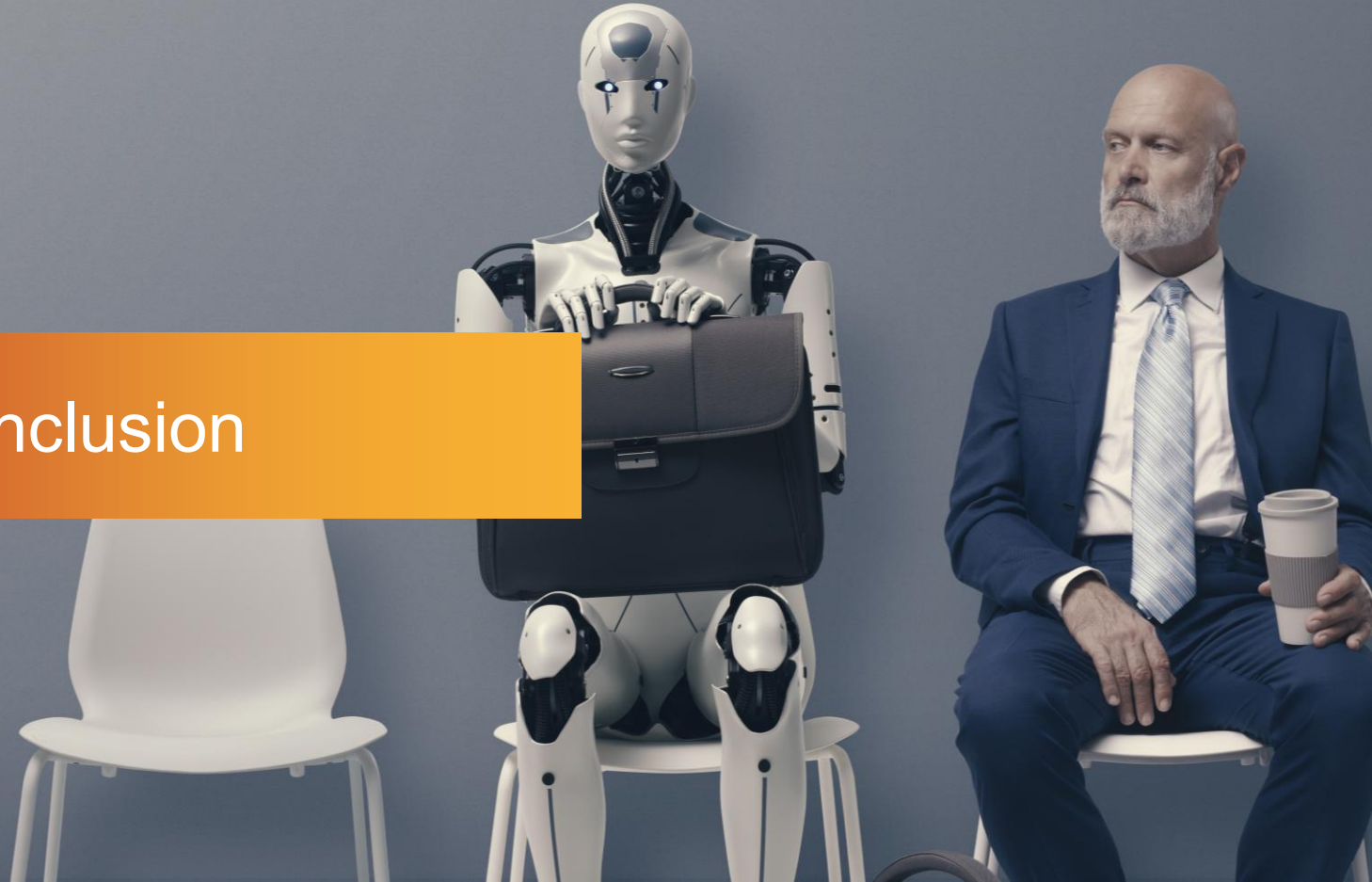
alter table jobs_flex
  modify (job_details, job_mode) add domain job_types;

insert into jobs_flex (id, job_mode, job_details)
  values (1, 'A', '{"type_a": "A job"}'),
         (2, 'B', '{"type_b": "B job"}');
-- 2 rows inserted.
insert into jobs_flex (id, job_mode, job_details)
  values (3, 'A', '{"type_b": "A job"}');

-- ORA-11534: check constraint (ROBBIE.SYS_C008451)
--   involving columns JOB_MODE, JOB_DETAILS
--   due to domain constraint ROBBIE.SYS_DOMAIN_C0059
--   of domain ROBBIE.JOB_TYPES violated
```



# Conclusion





## 23ai JSON Features beyond Duality Views

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- Duality Views are not the only cool JSON Feature
- Store JSON Docs in JSON Columns
- JSON is very efficient
- JSON Constructors are helpful
- Never omit „returning json“
- Check your docs against JSON-schemas

**PLEASE**

**DO  
TRY THIS  
AT HOME**