

# Finding dodgy numbers stored in an Oracle varchar field

## Using Oracle 'dbms\_output'

I was recently required to process a large amount of data using Oracle - and for whatever reason - a field that was to be interpreted as a number was actually stored as a varchar. Which although not ideal, is generally fine of course until some non-numeric characters find their way into that field. When the table contains a few million records - how do you easily identify the offending records?

Below is the simple script I used...

```
declare
CURSOR c1 IS SELECT * FROM my_table;
n number;
BEGIN
  FOR r1 IN c1 LOOP
    begin
      n := To_Number(r1.offending_field);
    EXCEPTION
      WHEN OTHERS THEN
        dbms_output.put_line('bad=' || r1.offending_field);
    END;
  END LOOP;
END;
```

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<http://www.gojade.com.au/2012/03/15/1331785997156.html>