

Clarion Magazine

Reborn Free



Migrate Your Topspeed Application To Firebird, Part 2

Faced with a conversion from Topspeed to Firebird, Jimmy Rogers wrote an extensive template to automate the process as much as possible. Part 2 of 2.

Posted Monday, June 07, 2004

AutoComplete In An On-Demand Drop Down Combo

Why would you want to learn how to code AutoComplete into a Drop Down combo when a Drop Down Combo already does that? The big answer is speed. If you have a number of Drop Down Combos (DDCs) on a page, each referencing a file that has a growing number of records, then even just opening the window will become very slow. Stuart Andrews demonstrates his approach to coding on-demand drop down combos.

Posted Monday, June 07, 2004

ETC Keynote Address Covers Clarion 7, .NET

Bob Zaubere, SoftVelocity's president, made the keynote address at etc2004 on Wednesday morning. Zaubere began by giving attendees a roadmap to SoftVelocity's Clarion 6.x development efforts, and then

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
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discussed Clarion 7 as well as technologies on the immediate horizon such as the IP, dynamic, and in-memory database drivers. Zaunere also discussed plans for .NET, and demonstrated a Clarion-generated .NET application. In a Q&A session Zaunere covered topics from command line compilers to the number of Clarion licenses worldwide.

Posted Wednesday, June 09, 2004

etc2004 Report: Carl Barnes on Threading

One of the primary features of Clarion 6 is a new, pre-emptive threading model. The operating system can interrupt any thread at any time, allowing it to enforce priorities and prevent a hard-working thread from hanging the system. Nik Johnson reviews Carl Barnes' Wednesday presentation on threading in Clarion 6.

Posted Thursday, June 10, 2004

etc2004 Report: Russ Eggen & Templates

Abe Jimenez reports on Russ Eggen's template writing presentation at etc2004.

Posted Wednesday, June 16, 2004

etc2004 Report: Third Party Presentations

Tom Hebenstreit reports on third party presentations by RADVENTure (Fenix) and CapeSoft.

Posted Wednesday, June 16, 2004

etc2004 Report: Bob Foreman's

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Three Years Ago In CM

["Sometimes" Lookups](#)

[Implementing Read-Only Checkboxes](#)

[Using MATCH In Filters and Regular Expressions](#)

Clarion 6.x Tour

Mark Riffey reports on Bob Foreman's whirlwind tour of the new Clarion 6.x features.

Posted Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Date Filtering with MSSQL

Working within the Clarion source with Clarion language statements, and translating the filter to that needed by the SQL engine, can become more complex than is really necessary. John Griffiths describes a neat trick for filtering dates in MS SQL.

Posted Tuesday, June 22, 2004

etc2004 Report: Jono Woodhouse on COM

Jono Woodhouse from Capesoft did an excellent job filling in for Andy Ireland, who could not make the conference. Michael Lawson reports.

Posted Tuesday, June 22, 2004

etc2004: The Cajun and the Hillbilly

etc2004 is the last of a series of wonderful East Tennessee Clarion conferences. Andrew Guidroz shares his thoughts on this conference, and on how etc came to be.

Posted Wednesday, June 23, 2004

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This site now contains more than 700 articles and a total of over a million words of Clarion-related information.

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Migrate Your Topspeed Application To Firebird, Part 2

by Jimmy Rogers

Published 2004-06-07

[Last time](#) I introduced a template I've written to help with the conversion of a Topspeed database to a Firebird (Interbase) database. I looked at many of the template prompts, and also provided some basic Firebird information. Now it's time to look at the code generated by the template.

The Scripts

There are many SQL scripts created by the template. Separating the functions of the scripts into separate files gives you more flexibility in what script or part of one you may need.

The scripts are:

- Tables with drop.
- Tables without drop
- Tables with drop and triggers
- Indexes
- Drop Indexes
- Single Indexes of each column of multi column Keys
- Drop single Indexes of each column of multi column Keys
- Auto No triggers
- Auto No triggers with null check
- Stored Procedure returns next auto no

- **Foreign indexes**
- **Constraints**
- **All columns with NOT NULL text file**
- **All tables, indexes, foreign keys, etc...**

The following rules are used for creating Firebird scripts.

- BLOB -> BLOB SUB_TYPE 0 SEGMENT SIZE 80
- BYTE -> SMALLINT
- CSTRING/PSTRING -> VARCHAR
- DECIMAL/FLOAT -> DECIMAL
- LONG/ULONG -> INTEGER
- MEMO -> BLOB SUB_TYPE TEXT SEGMENT SIZE 80
- REAL/BFLOAT8 -> DOUBLE PRECISION
- SHORT/USHORT/BYTE -> SMALLINT
- SREAL/BFLOAT4 -> FLOAT
- STRING -> CHAR
- STRING/CSTRING/PSTRING - **utility setting allows you to change to blob based on size, i.e. BLOB SUB_TYPE TEXT SEGMENT SIZE 80**
- **STRING/CSTRING/PSTRING over 32765 in size -> BLOB SUB_TYPE TEXT SEGMENT SIZE 80**
- "Not Null" applied to columns marked as NON ZERO or BOOLEAN

Reports

The reports include:

- **Report of table and column types**
- **Report of all Initial Values and Validity Checks entered into dictionary**

Relational integrity constraints

RI Constraints are created as foreign keys. You need to at least change your relationship between files in the Clarion dictionary to Server.

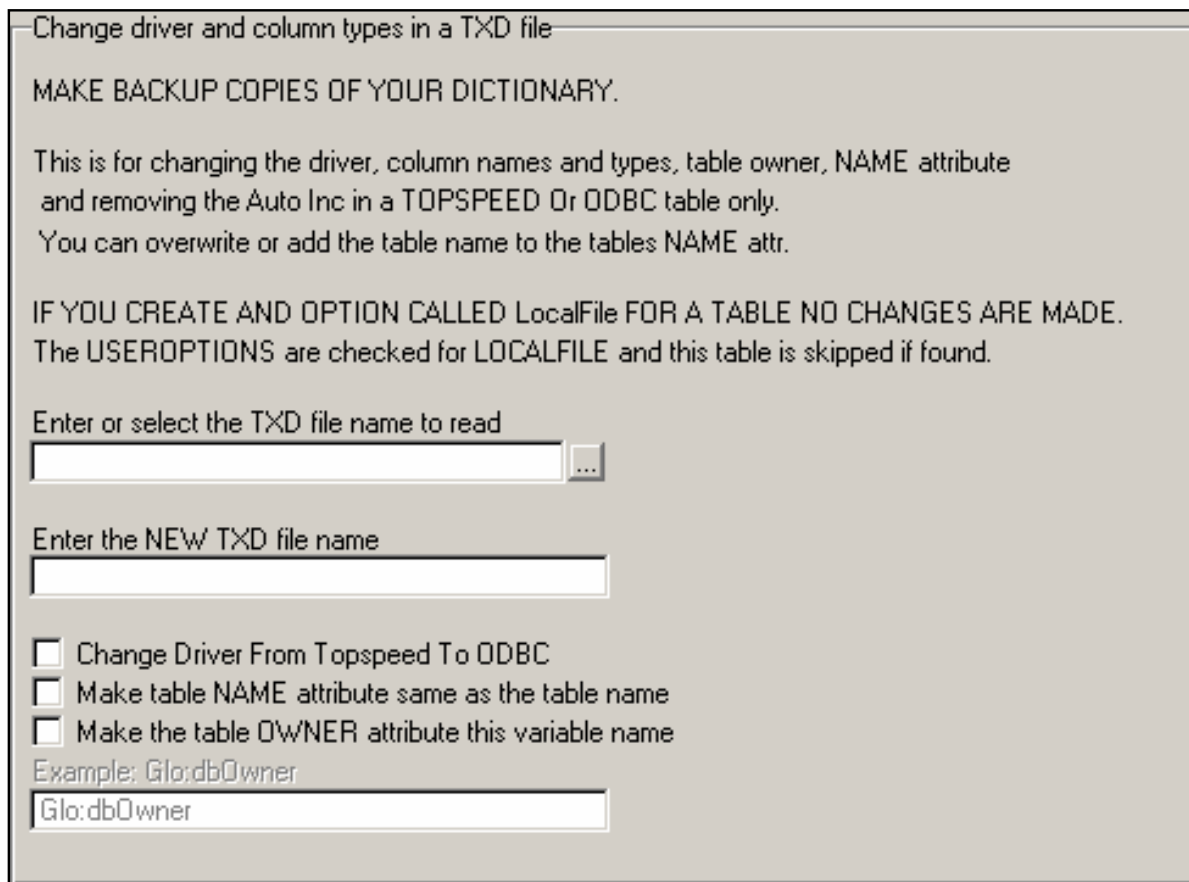
Step 3: Dictionary change - modify A TXD

This utility will change the driver, column external names and types, table owner, table NAME attribute and remove the Auto Inc from a key in a TOPSPEED Or ODBC table only.

If you create a UserOption of LOCALFILE for a table no changes are made to that table. The USEROPTIONS are checked for LOCALFILE, and this table is skipped if found.

Utility options and prompts

Figures 1 and 2 show the TXD options.



Change driver and column types in a TXD file

MAKE BACKUP COPIES OF YOUR DICTIONARY.

This is for changing the driver, column names and types, table owner, NAME attribute and removing the Auto Inc in a TOPSPEED Or ODBC table only.
You can overwrite or add the table name to the tables NAME attr.

IF YOU CREATE AND OPTION CALLED LocalFile FOR A TABLE NO CHANGES ARE MADE.
The USEROPTIONS are checked for LOCALFILE and this table is skipped if found.

Enter or select the TXD file name to read

Enter the NEW TXD file name

Change Driver From Topspeed To ODBC
 Make table NAME attribute same as the table name
 Make the table OWNER attribute this variable name

Example: Glo:dbOwner

Figure 1. Page 1 of Step 3 – changing your TXD.

Add external name to all columns as table prefix column name
 Add external name to a column/key reserved word as table prefix column/key name
 Move all Memo declarations to the file structure as strings
 Remove Auto Increment from keys

Be consistent with the next 2 column Date and Time types.
If you did not change them to a Date and Time type in the Firebird Script then do not change them in Step 3 that changes the TXD.

Change All LONGs With @D To DATE field type
 Change All LONGs With @T To TIME field type

Be consistent with the next column type and size change for a Firebird TEXT BLOB.
If you do not change them to a BLOB type in the Firebird Script then do not change them here to a string 63990 that changes the TXD. If you do, create the scripts again.

Check the box to change all STRING CSTRING PSTRING above the entered size below

Make all STRING CSTRING PSTRING a STRING 63990 - a BLOB for text in Firebird
 Example: 2000 makes any of these strings that are 2000 or more in size into a STRING 63990
 Enter a number or uncheck the box:

Figure 2. Page 2 of Step 3 – changing your TXD.

The following are the prompts available to change your TXD to make it ODBC ready. Create your scripts after making changes to your TXD and importing into a new dictionary.

1. Enter or select the TXD file name to read
2. Enter the new TXD file name
3. Change driver from Topspeed To ODBC
4. Make table NAME attribute same as the table name
5. Make the table OWNER attribute this variable name. Example:
Glo:dbOwner
6. Add external name to all columns as table prefix + column name
7. Add external name to a column/key reserved word as table prefix + column/key name
8. Move all Memo declarations to the file structure as
STRING(63990)
9. Remove Auto Increment from keys

Be consistent with the next two column Date and Time types. If you did not change them to a Date and Time type in the Firebird Script

then do not change them in Step 3 that changes the TXD.

10. Change All LONGs with @D to DATE field type

11. Change All LONGs with @T to TIME field type

This will make any string above the size set below to a `STRING(63990)`. This will then allow the string to be converted to a Firebird `TEXT BLOB` in the scripts. Create the scripts again after the changes.

11. Check the box to change all `STRING CSTRING PSTRING` above the entered size below. This will change all `STRING CSTRING PSTRING` to a `STRING(63990)` – this becomes a `BLOB` for text in your Firebird scripts. Example: 2000 makes any of these strings that are 2000 or more in size into a `STRING(63990)`

12. Enter a number for the size of string to change

Step 4: Create conversion files for Topspeed to Firebird

The create conversion in step 4 can be done at any time if the table type in the dictionary has been changed to ODBC. No conversion file is created for any table declared as a Topspeed driver type or set with the rule below.

A subdirectory off the tested application directory named `..\convert` is required. This is where the global DLL and LIB file need to be if you use them. This also where the `TpsToOdbc.Inc` file needs to be located with the Topspeed declarations.

If you create a `UserOption` of `LOCALFILE` for a table no conversion file is created.

The `USEROPTIONS` are checked for `LOCALFILE`, and this table is skipped if found.

The following may sound like a lot of time but this can all be done in about the time it takes to read about three SQL messages on `comp.lang.clarion` from Jack Toering. The man has a lot of information

on SQL. The news group is where to go for SQL information.

Conversion information

A convert program is created for each table. Each convert program first deletes any data in the existing database table before converting the Topspeed data to the Firebird database.

A program is created to compile and run all convert files. When you compile `CompileAndRunAllConverts.Exe`, all convert programs are compiled. When you run `CompileAndRunAllConverts.Exe`, it starts each tables convert program for you. You can run a single tables convert program at any time. I needed to do this to fix some problems.

I did not run the scripts for triggers until after converting my data. You should *not* have a trigger for a table if you are going to be converting data. Wait to run the scripts for your triggers after conversion.

I waited until data had been converted before loading the Index scripts.

I also had a problem with the template written check constraints in the scripts. The dictionary had validity checks that the program did not use. The Topspeed data would not convert. I turned off the validity checks in the dictionary and remade my scripts. I then removed the check constraint from the table in the database with the `IBExpert` program. In case you may need them each table column in the dictionary with validity checks gets commented out assignments in the convert programs.

Two conversion methods are available.

Conversion option 1: Data DLL

Create a Data DLL of just your Topspeed tables with the required procedure and prototype. You do not need any templates installed for this DLL. You will need to check Generate all file declarations and Export all file declarations. If your existing program is multi DLL then you have already created one. The conversion for each table needs to know the path and the name of the table on the disk. The template describes what needs to be done.

For each Topspeed table you are going to convert you will need to declare its path and name. This is done in the dictionary in the Full PathName property for each table. Declare a variable like !Glo:TableName. Now follow the next two steps:

- a. A procedure named SetFileNamePath must exist in the DLL. This procedure sets the passed path and the file name for each table. It has a prototype of a string passed by address. Example: SetFileNamePath(*string psPath)
- b. Each table needs to be set according to path passed and the actual name on the disk. Access:FileName.SetName = clip(psPath) & '\Sys1.tps'

Each tables convert program calls this DLL using the table declaration imported from the include file created in [Step 1](#)

Conversion option 2: Dictionary table names

With this option your Topspeed tables use the same table name in the dictionary as the ones on the disk or they use the Name attribute(Full PathName)in the dictionary as the path and name of the file on the disk. You can have these mixed in the dictionary, but if you set a path this would be for all tables with a variable in the Name attribute

Can you get an error when compiling? Yes! And here are at least six ways:

1. You did not have a primary numeric key for a Topspeed table, but you had to add one to the dictionary for the ODBC table. Here is an example of what was created and what you will need to do:

New:SysId = Prefix:SysId where Prefix:SysId does not exist but is in your conversion file for this table

So you add this code to this convert file

```
Prefix:SysId# += 1  
New:SysId = Prefix:SysId#
```

2. **Your Data DLL did not compile exporting the tables. You get unresolved export errors.**
3. **Your Validity checks in the dictionary created Constraint Checks in your Firebird scripts. When converting your data your old Topspeed data files are invalid. So the add of the record into the Firebird database table returns an error. You can turn an error message on or off for all your created conversion files. This message will inform you of these errors.**
4. **You have set the owner attribute with a variable for your Topspeed table. The convert file will have a variable declared and set to = with no assignment. Fix this by entering the owner string in your Topspeed dictionary for the file/s. Repeat step 1 again and then repeat step 4. You can also edit the convert file you got the error on with your string value.**
5. **Problems with the Name attribute entry or finding your Topspeed files.**
6. **You did a very bad thing. You changed the column names or your external name does not match your script name.**

Utility options and prompts

Figures 3 and 4 show the template options for selecting tables to convert, as well as some conversion settings.

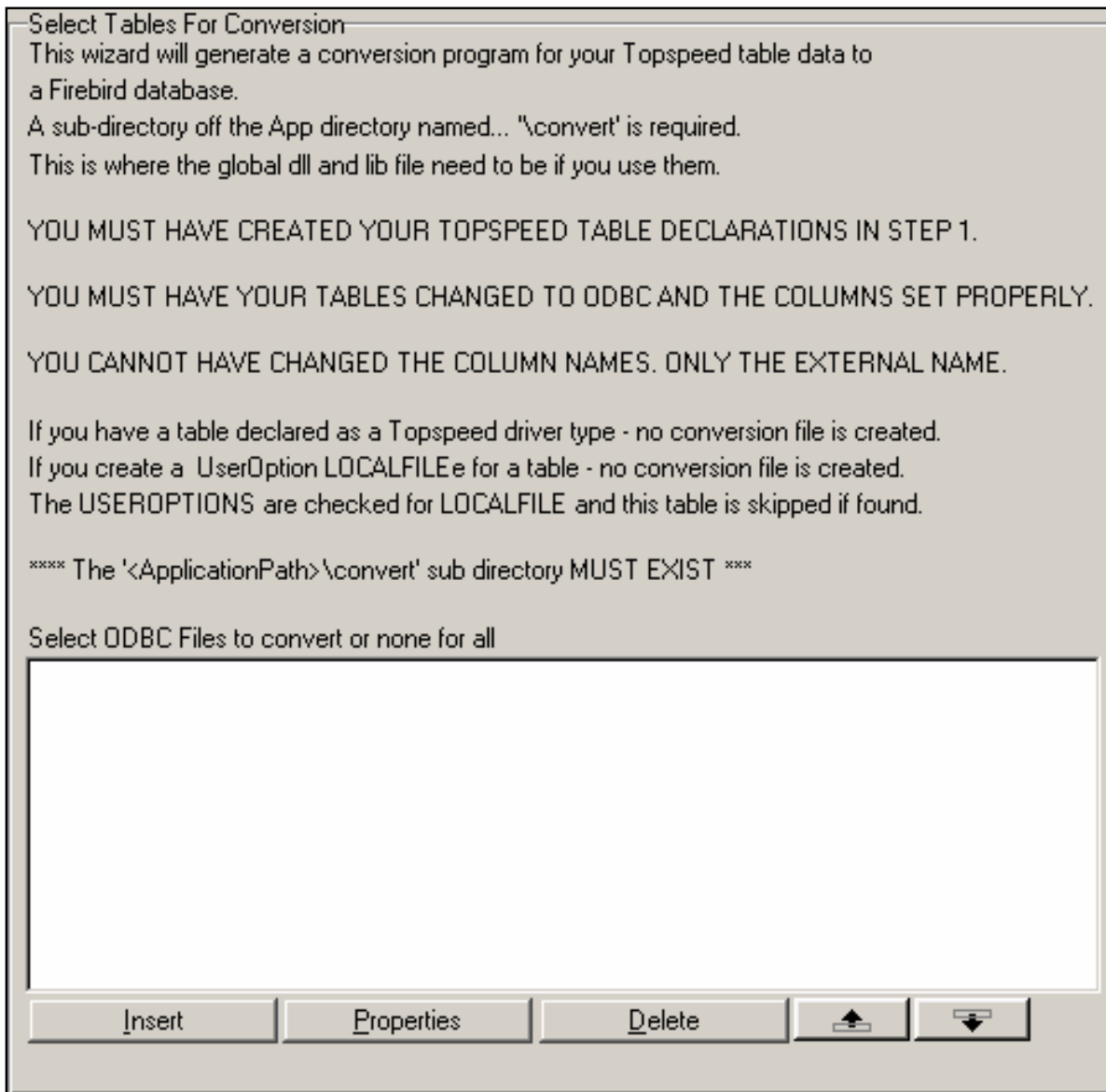


Figure 3. Page 1 of Step 4 – create conversion files.

Conversion Options

Use a Data DLL of your Topspeed files you wish to convert
We need to select the Lib file to compile the convert modules
and the data dll needs to be seen when running them.
Select the Lib file of the Data DLL to use for your conversion
 ...

If you use a variable in the Name attribute or not but you use the table name as the file name
you may need to set the path to your topspeed files

I need to set the path to my topspeed files

Select the location of the Topspeed files to convert by selecting one file
 ...

Enter the SQL Connect String
This can be a DSN or a DSN-less string
A DSN-less example
Firebird/InterBase(r) driver:UID=SYSDBA;PWD=masterkey;DBNAME=Bigdog:D:\TEST.FDB

WHEN CONVERTING EACH RECORD.
If the index scripts have been loaded into the database and you have invalid data to convert.
an Add should not allow any bad data in the database.
Not 100% sure about this one.

I want to ADD a new record to the Firebird database table. It will APPEND if left unchecked.

I want to turn on the error message procedure for each record converting.

Figure 4. Page 3 of Step 4 – create conversion files.

1. These are the prompts that allow you to create your conversion files. Only ODBC tables get conversion files created. Select ODBC Files to convert or none for all
2. Use a data DLL of your Topspeed tables for conversion
3. Select the lib file of the data DLL to use for your conversion (if data DLL used)
4. Select the location of the Topspeed files to convert by selecting one Topspeed file from the location
5. Enter the SQL connect string. See connection information
6. Add new record to the Firebird database table. It will append if left unchecked.
7. Call an error message procedure when adding a record. I found some Firebird check constraint problems that this template had

put into the script file from dictionary settings by allowing an error message. Before that it would just add no data. Whichever one you chose the other is there but commented out. You can then edit a specific tables conversion program and recompile.

Requirements

Keep in mind the following requirements for converting Topspeed tables to Firebird:

- You must have created your Topspeed table declarations in [Step 1](#).
- You must have your tables changed to ODBC and the columns set properly.
- You cannot change the column names, only the external name.

The template is open source. If you would like to contribute changes please [send them to me](#) so I can upload to the proper locations.

Summary

Firebird and a free open source ODBC driver can give you the opportunity to distribute your applications with a robust SQL that puts more money in your pockets and your customers' pockets. With this template you can create your Firebird scripts, make ODBC changes to your dictionary and convert your existing Topspeed data to a Firebird database. In this way you can test your existing Topspeed application in Firebird with as little work as possible.

[Download the source](#)

[Jimmy Rogers](#) has been using Clarion since the 2.1 days. His projects include manufacturing and sales software for hot sauce and a software product for dispatch and tracking of fire extinguisher equipment. Jimmy is presently involved in the never ending sales and improvement to his consignment retail software. He is always waiting to win

the lotto.

Reader Comments

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Jimmy, Thanks for these articles! I have a question...
This setting was a carry over from 2 or 3 years ago(time...

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AutoComplete In An On-Demand Drop Down Combo

by Stuart Andrews

Published 2004-06-07

To paraphrase the words of the famous Mr. Dirty Harry, you gotta ask yourself one question. Except the question isn't about being lucky. And no one is holding a .44 Magnum. I think.

"Why do I want to learn how to code AutoComplete into a Drop Down combo when a Drop Down Combo already does that?"

The big answer is speed. If you have a number of Drop Down Combos (DDCs) on a page, each referencing a file that has a growing number of records, then even just opening the window will become very slow.

My goal was to be able to control exactly what appears in the DDC. I needed the DDC to filter out *most* of the records in a file being accessed by multiple DDCs. I began with absolutely no idea of how DDCs worked, and ended a couple of days straight work with AutoComplete functionality that would please the Client *and* wasn't too difficult to implement.

In this code I will describe, the DDC begins with no records, and adds records only once the user begins typing. Initializing the DDC is not hard; it's a simple matter of filling the Queue with whatever records you wish. But this code doesn't show how to do it, because I haven't tested it myself, and there are other issues to consider.

The example uses the `COUNTRY` file.

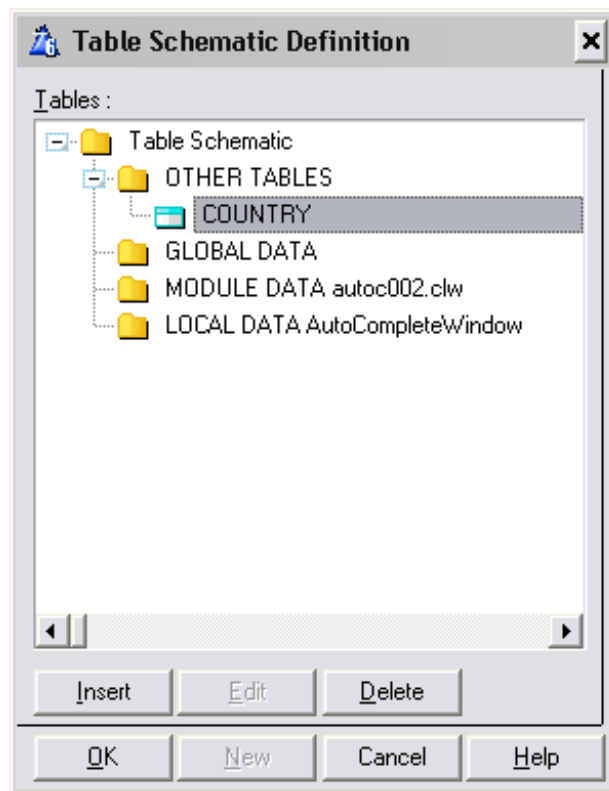


Figure 1. Adding the COUNTRY file to the schematic

The Control and Window

So, in a procedure (a window of some kind) you have a bunch of local variables, a DDC control, and a little [swag](#) of embedded code.

On your window (Browse, Update, whatever) add a new DDC, as shown in Figure 1. Do *not* give it a file, but leave it blank.

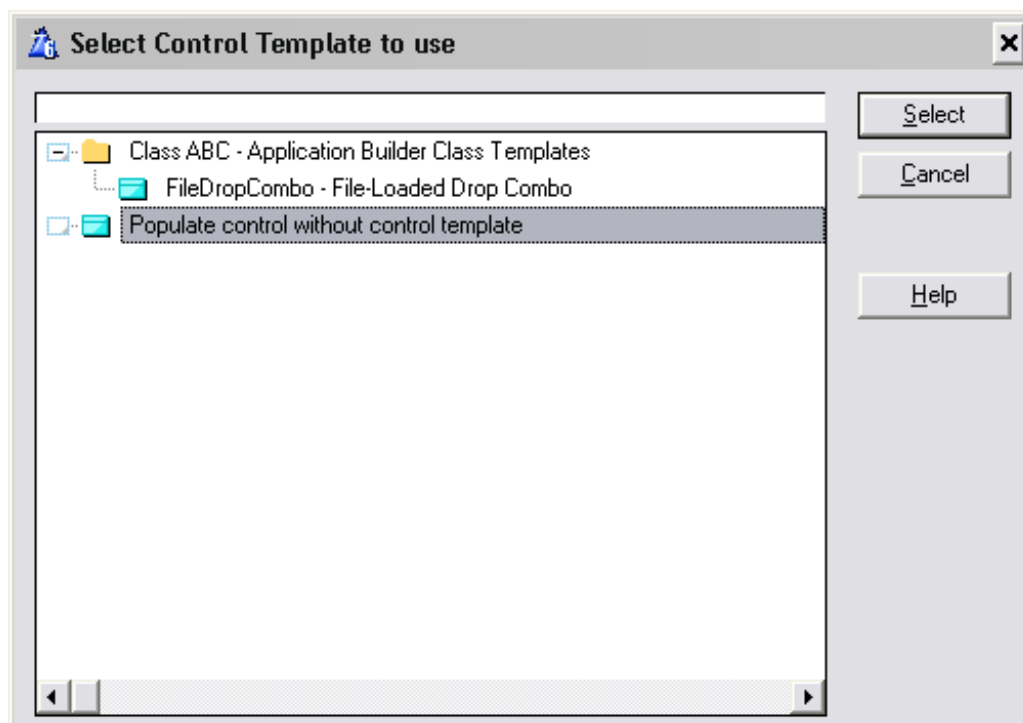


Figure 2. Populating just the control

The local variables

```
xFieldQueue      QUEUE
xFieldValue       STRING(50)
                 END
xFieldPointer     BYTE
xFieldTyped       STRING(50)
xFieldLength      DECIMAL(10)
SaveField         STRING(50)
CountryField      STRING(50)
```

The queue (and its xFieldValue string) make up the contents of the DDC.

The xFieldPointer variable is used by the code to establish where the logic is up to in the string being typed by the user.

The xFieldTyped string contains exactly that, what has been typed (not what has been "AutoCompleted").

The xFieldLength variable tracks how long the xFieldTyped string is.

And the SaveField variable is used to check whether the actual value of the DDC use variable has changed.

As Figure 1 shows, the file you are going to fill from (if it is a file) needs to be added to the Other Tables section of the File dialog. For example, if I wanted to have a DDC listing Person Names, I would add the PEOPLE file to the Other Tables section.

Control properties

On the General tab, as shown in Figure 3, set the Use variable and the From field to appropriate values.

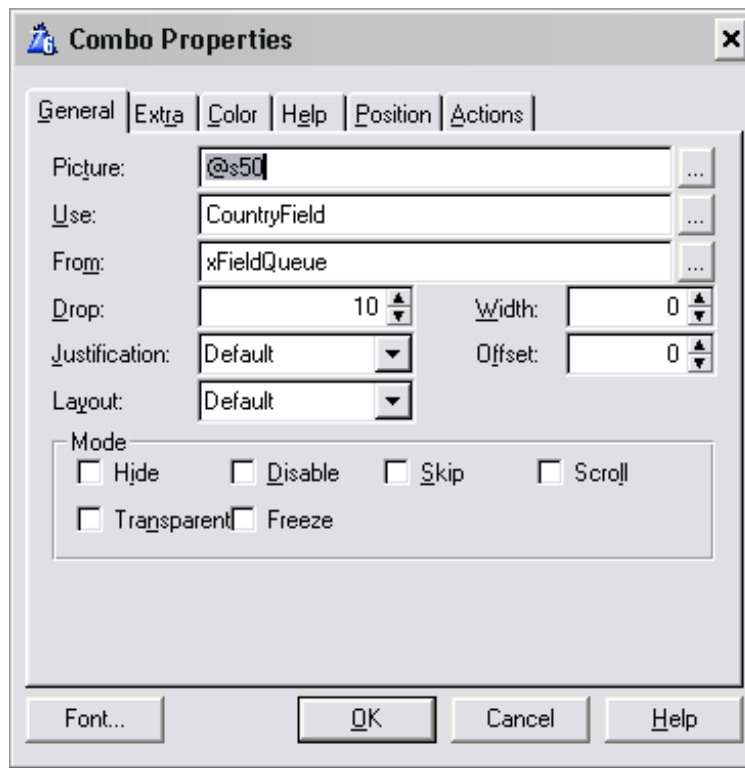


Figure 3. Setting the Use and From attributes

On the Extra tab, the Immediate attribute *must* be set, as shown in Figure 4.

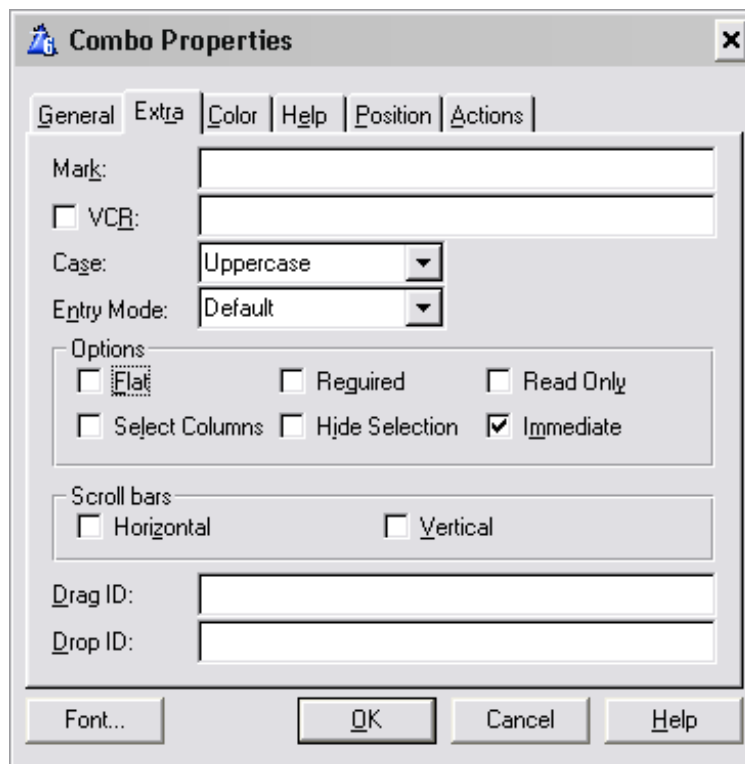


Figure 4. The Uppercase and Immediate attributes

I use Uppercase in my system, because it establishes a continuity in the fields, but your specific instance may not.

Embeds

All of the following embedded code lies within the DDC control's embed points. As I mentioned in the intro, further functionality would require code in the WindowManager's INIT method, and perhaps elsewhere.

In the Selected, BEFORE Generated Code embed:

```
!- Set:Country -
!-
!- GENERAL -
!-----
SaveField = CountryField
xFieldTypeed = ''
xFieldLength = 0
xFieldPointer = 1
!-
!- SELECT ENTIRE FIELD -
!-----
select(?,len(?{PROP:ScreenText}))
?{PROP:SelStart} = 1
?{PROP:SelEnd} = len(?{PROP:ScreenText})
```

The above code initializes the variables, and selects the entire field (all blue). This restricts the user a little, but adding code for more complete functionality would only require keeping track of where the cursor was placed with the left mouse button when the user selects the field.

In the Accepted, AFTER Generated Code embed:

```
!- Check:Country -
if (CountryField ~= SaveField)
  cou:Name = CountryField
  if (Access:COUNTRY.Fetch(cou:keyNAME) ~= Level:Benign)
    !-
    !- INSERT NEW COUNTRY -
    !-----
    if (message(clip(CountryField) & |
      ' does not exist. Would you like to add it to the Country file?',|
      'New Country?',ICON:Question,BUTTON:Yes+BUTTON:No,BUTTON:No) = BUTTON:Yes)
      cou:Name = CountryField
      if (Access:COUNTRY.Insert() ~= Level:Benign)
        message('COUNTRY.Insert() - Insert New Country - ?CountryField,Accepted',|
          'AutoCompleteWindow')
      end
      SaveField = CountryField
      cycle
    !-
    !- NO INSERT -
    !-----
  else
    CountryField = ''
    select(?CountryField)
  end
end
end
end
```

This code allows for the adding of a new record to the FILE in question. If it doesn't exist in the file, ask the user whether or not they would like it to be added to the FILE, as shown in Figures 5 and 6.

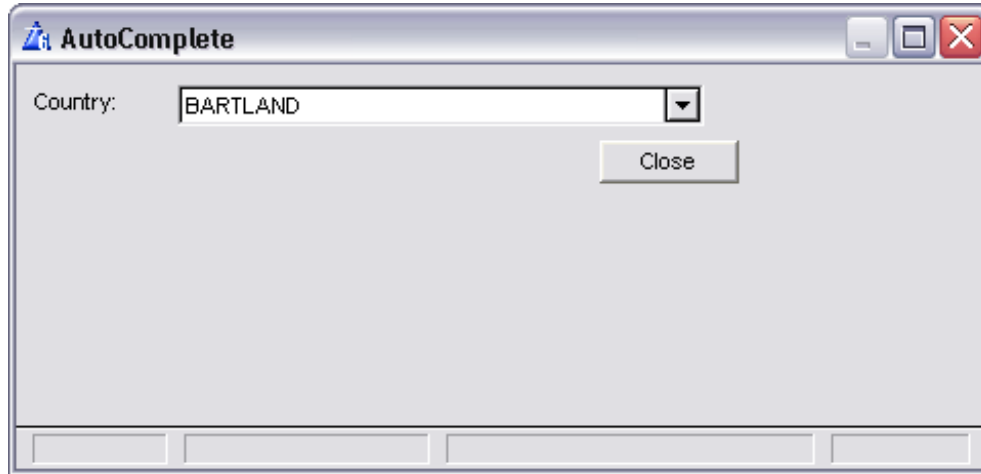


Figure 5. Entering a value not in the list.

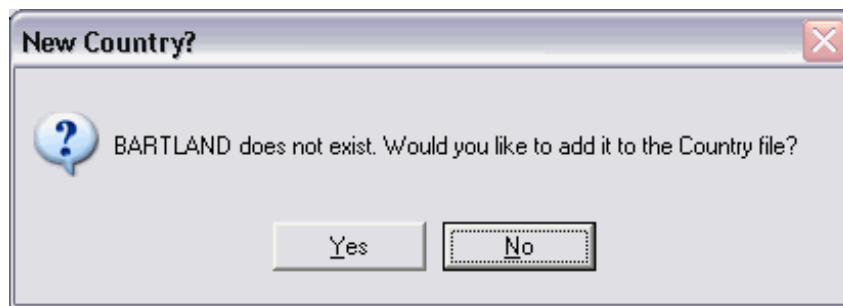


Figure 6. Asking the user whether to add the new value to the list.

Add this code in the DroppingDown, AFTER Perform Field Level Validation embed:

```
!- DownKey for Combo to Drop Down -  
select(?,xFieldPointer)
```

This code pushes the DDC to actually drop down. There was some trouble getting this to happen automatically because, I think, it was a blank DDC.

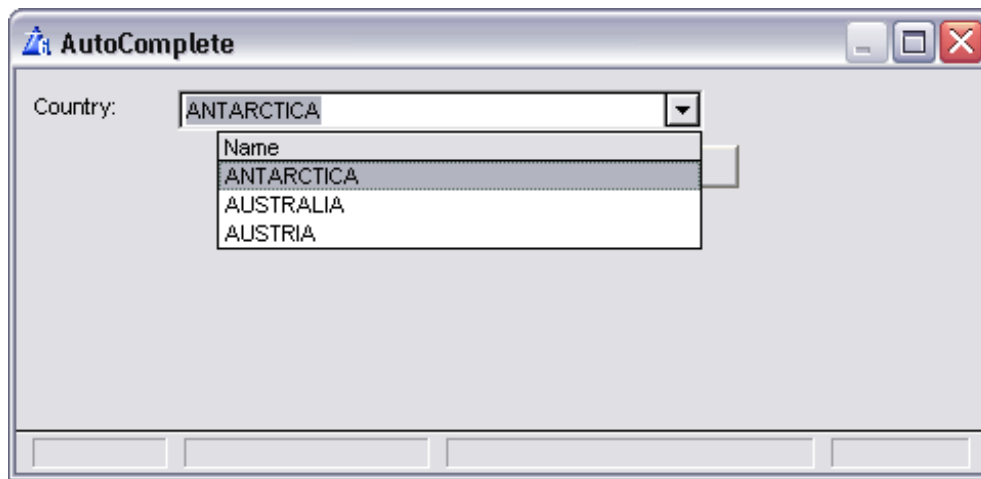


Figure 7. Dropping down the list.

The following code is where most of the action (logic) happens. There are basically (at the moment) four sections, apart from Initializing any variables. You have an Alpha keypress (A-Z), the Backspace keypress, the Spacebar keypress, and the Left Mouse Button click.

The idea is that the Queue (xFieldQueue) is cleared at every keypress, and then refilled depending on the keypress.

All of the following sections go in the NewSelection, BEFORE Generate Code embed:

```
!- AutoComplete:Country -
!-
!- INIT -
!-----
free(xFieldQueue)
clear(COUNTRY)
```

The Alpha keypress is obviously when the user is typing in what they want to see.

```
!-
!- ALPHA KEY (1-9, A-Z) -
!-----
if ((keycode() >= Key0) and (keycode() <= ZKey))
  if ((xFieldTyped = '') or (len(?{prop:ScreenText}) = 1))
    xFieldLength = 1
    xFieldTyped = ?{prop:ScreenText}
    xFieldPointer = 1
  else
    xFieldLength += 1
    xFieldTyped[1:xFieldLength] = ?{prop:ScreenText}
  end
!-
!- AUTOCOMPLETE FIELD -
!-----
cou:Name[1:xFieldLength] = xFieldTyped
set(cou:keyNAME, cou:keyNAME)
loop
  next(COUNTRY)
  if (errorcode() or (cou:Name[1:xFieldLength] ~= xFieldTyped))
    !xFieldLength -= 1
    !xFieldTyped = xFieldTyped[1:xFieldLength]
```

```

        ?{prop:ScreenText} = xFieldTypeed
        break
    end
    ?{prop:ScreenText} = cou:Name
    ?{prop:SelStart} = xFieldLength + 1
    ?{prop:SelEnd} = len(clip(cou:Name))
    break
end
!-
!- FILL QUEUE -
!-----
cou:Name[1:xFieldLength] = xFieldTypeed
set(cou:keyNAME, cou:keyNAME)
loop
    next(COUNTRY)
    if (errorcode() or (cou:Name[1:xFieldLength] ~= xFieldTypeed))
        break
    end
    xFieldValue = cou:Name
    add(xFieldQueue)
end

```

The Backspace allows for the removal of characters, thus broadening the actual Queue.

```

!-
!- BACKSPACE -
!-----
elseif (keycode() = BSKey)
    xFieldLength -= 1
    xFieldTypeed = xFieldTypeed[1:(len(clip(xFieldTypeed))-1)]
    ?{prop:ScreenText} = xFieldTypeed

```

The Spacebar allows the space character into the field (new or existing).

```

!-
!- SPACE -
!-----
elseif (keycode() = SpaceKey)
    xFieldLength += 1
    xFieldTypeed = xFieldTypeed & ' '
    !-
    !- AUTOCOMPLETE FIELD -
    !-----
    cou:Name[1:xFieldLength] = xFieldTypeed
    set(cou:keyNAME, cou:keyNAME)
    loop
        next(COUNTRY)
        if (errorcode() or (cou:Name[1:xFieldLength] ~= xFieldTypeed))
            break
        end
        ?{prop:ScreenText} = cou:Name
        ?{prop:SelStart} = xFieldLength + 1
        ?{prop:SelEnd} = len(clip(cou:Name)) + 1      !- Space is +1 -
        break
    end
    !-
    !- FILL QUEUE -
    !-----
    cou:Name[1:xFieldLength] = xFieldTypeed
    set(cou:keyNAME, cou:keyNAME)
    loop

```



```

    next(COUNTRY)
    if (errorcode() or (cou:Name[1:xFieldLength] ~= xFieldTyped))
        break
    end
    xFieldValue = cou:Name
    add(xFieldQueue)
end

```

The Left Mouse Button gives some added functionality for when the user is doing something within the field (e.g. typing) and then clicks somewhere in it with the Left Mouse Button (e.g., further along the field).

```

!-
!- MOUSE LEFT -
!-----
elseif (keycode() = MouseButton)
    xFieldLength = choose({PROP:SelStart}>1, {PROP:SelStart}-1, 1)
    xFieldTyped = ''
    xFieldTyped[1:xFieldLength] = ?{PROP:ScreenText}
    ?{PROP:SelEnd} = len(clip(?{PROP:ScreenText}))
    !-
    !- FILL QUEUE -
    !-----
    cou:Name[1:xFieldLength] = xFieldTyped
    set(cou:keyNAME, cou:keyNAME)
    loop
        next(COUNTRY)
        if (errorcode() or (cou:Name[1:xFieldLength] ~= xFieldTyped))
            break
        end
        xFieldValue = cou:Name
        add(xFieldQueue)
    end
end
end

```

The next two embeds give the code to allow the user to arrow down through the records contained in the Queue at that specific instance.

In the ScrollDown, BEFORE Generated Code embed:

```

!- Down Arrow -
xFieldPointer = choose(xFieldPointer<pointer(xFieldQueue), |
    xFieldPointer+1, pointer(xFieldQueue))
select(?,xFieldPointer)

```

In the ScrollUp, BEFORE Generated Code embed:

```

!- Up Arrow -
xFieldPointer = choose(xFieldPointer>1, xFieldPointer-1, 1)
select(?,xFieldPointer)

```

And **BAMF!** There you have it. A basic AutoComplete functionality added to a single DDC control. At the time of writing, there are still a number of issues with the code, some minor functionality does not work as it should, but it satisfies my client's needs at the moment.

I hope this has helped someone. I still feel like I am grasping at straws when working with

Clarion. All of this would be much better in a template, but I've yet to add the "making a template" notch to my belt. In good time.

May you code be ever refined.

[Download the source](#)

[Stuart Andrews](#) has been using Clarion since 2000, when he and his wife Rach moved north from Sydney, Australia to began a family. Fresh out of university, Stuart began a "computer" business, which in that part of the country means a guy who will fix any problem that has any link whatsoever to a computer. A company saw his flyer and asked him if he knew databases, and that led to his first Clarion contract. Stuart is now working full-time on his Freight System, which is gaining momentum amongst transport companies, and will, God willing, flourish.

Reader Comments

[Add a comment](#)

Thank you Stuart to share this code. I tested it in C55,...
Guy, Thanks for the addition to the code. Am glad it...

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[Clarion Magazine](#)

Reborn Free

CLARION
outline

ETC Keynote Address Covers Clarion 7, .NET

by Mark Riffey

Published 2004-06-09

Bob Zaukere, SoftVelocity's president, gave the keynote address at etc2004 on Wednesday morning. Zaukere began by giving attendees a roadmap to SoftVelocity's Clarion 6.x development efforts, and then discussed Clarion 7 as well as technologies on the immediate horizon such as the IP, dynamic, and in-memory database drivers. Zaukere also discussed plans for .NET, and demonstrated a Clarion-generated .NET application. In a Q&A session Zaukere covered topics from command line compilers to the number of Clarion licensees worldwide.

Clarion 6.x

SoftVelocity's plans for Clarion 6.x include continued work on the new thread model, killing more bugs than in any other version of Clarion, adding over 600 new features and improvements, reliable services, and a reflection of the increased demand for more control when working

with SQL backends (view level support for sql aggregates, sql() command, etc). The Clarion (legacy) template chain continues to be extended with new features and support for some ABC classes.



Photo by Rocky Phelps

Specific goals for Clarion 6.1 include better theme support, a more polished look for controls; watch() control at the field level, driver trace output to the debug output (OutputDebugString) API, some 50 new features, and a commitment to deliver critical and trivial bug fixes and overall better performance.

Zaunere also mentioned the Windows MDI bug, saying "Now that the MDI [thread safety] bug (thousands of hours invested, including disassembly of Win9x/ME/2k) is out of the way, mods for 6.1 could be coming out every 5-6 weeks." Zaunere asked how many attendees were using TPS vs SQL, and the response was about 50/50.

Clarion 7

Zaunere spent some time talking about what to expect in Clarion 7. This next major release of Clarion will feature an all-new IDE. The source code editor and formatters will also all be completely new. There are also some "very significant enhancements coming in the dictionary...great opportunities here....search for things, change data types, tighter SQL integration." Specific improvements include faster dictionary creating/editing, as well as models and views. The AppGen will get faster and faster still, and the "main focus is to improve performance."

The project system will allow for multi-project solutions, and C7 will "open up some of the project system language, add UI, script the build process, set flags/variables and determine what gets compiled and what doesn't get compiled." Look for reduced applet modality, "more things open, [you can] do some dragging and dropping."

Changes to the file drivers in C7 promise more low-level SQL access, better high-level SQL access, and continued improvements to ISAM access (TPS files).

There will also be more improvements to the core templates (ABC and Clarion), as well as to the template language and the tools used to write/debug/distribute and maintain templates. The overriding goal is better development productivity – Z says keep the suggestions coming.

In-memory database driver

On the immediate horizon is the in-memory database driver. "With this technology, global data is no longer an issue. Its not [a major] issue now, but it's something the developer must be aware of." The in-memory driver lets developers treat global data the way they treat file data. This driver is an aggregate set of all driver data types, and supports client-side triggers (callbacks). Memory tables work with any clarion entity or template that works with files (browse, form, process, etc), so you can use a memory table a global lookup table, but unlike a global queue, you do not have to write code to synchronize threaded access because synchronization is built into the driver. Like an alias structure, the memory driver can emulate the structure of any defined file in the dictionary, but unlike the alias, it can be modified with additional columns and indexes.

IP driver

The new IP-enabled driver/server is a "smart client" system that "takes your Clarion app and makes it client-server [for] remote

access...with every feature intact, MDI, SDI, any third party program." The driver supports open SSL, and provides IP-based access to all drivers (with or without SSL encryption support). Processing is done on the server side so it avoids oplocks issues. All Clarion file access operations are supported. The driver can use the entire runtime driver library, any supported data driver, and both MDI and SDI or a mix. An admin component (written in Java) allows you to remotely shutdown the server, register/unregister data manager DLLs, monitor connections, specify user and access rights to tables, and more.

Zaunere showed the changes necessary to change the People app to an IP-enabled People app. The default port is 2339, but that can be changed via the extension or programmatically at runtime. A different port is used for SSL. Applications can be a mix of IP-based and not IP-based. This driver will be available in a few more weeks – delivery was delayed by the Windows MDI thread safety bug. This driver is in no way, shape or form intended to replace SQL, however it can work with SQL.

The IP driver sometimes benchmarks faster than local TPS access, never slower than TPS. There is no compression as yet, but it may offer compression to memos and blobs. Supports server-side triggers.

Dynamic driver

The dynamic driver has the ability to programmatically create a file definition at runtime using file property syntax. It can use PROP:SQL to create the file structure definition. And you can change PROP:Driver after using PROP:SQL, so you can use this to create an in-memory data table that can be used to contain the results of an SQL statement. There was a demo of the dynamic driver in a Clarion 6.1 hand coded project.

Application broker

There have been changes to the application broker technology. It now

installs as a service, is multi-threaded, and has built in security using certificates (and can use open SSL certificates). The "primary reason for dropping support for IS was Microsoft security issues, [we] couldn't get info out of Microsoft."

PHP templates

The PHP templates have been completed, and will be available shortly.

Multi-child relation tree

There is a new multi-child relation tree template for "self to self relations."

New output generators

There are new report output generators for Excel files (csv, xls).

ASP.NET

SoftVelocity has ASP.NET templates "under development."

Clarion .NET Language Compiler (CLC)

Attendees were treated to a demonstration of a simple, console-mode Clarion .NET language application. CLC is the Clarion .NET Language Compiler, with support for Common Language Runtime. ASP.NET, WinForms, and WinFx (which replaces Win32 for graphics) . CLS is "100% interoperable with any .NET assembly (c#, vb.NET, etc), [and the] intent is to achieve 100% managed code. It means that when Longhorn comes out, Clarion will be there [on] day one and [will] support all Longhorn features immediately. Interoperability issues and

calling convention issues will be gone." The CLC.EXE compiler shell is 53k.

First, Bob showed a console .NET Hello World. Running PEVerify (Microsoft's .NET QA / compatibility tester) on helloworlddotnet.exe yielded the message "all classes and methods in helloworlddotnet verified". He then showed hellodotnet in IL DASM, and displayed the IL code for the Clarion language program he wrote, as well as the generated C# code that the generator made from the Clarion source. This implementation has the ability to use embedded Clarion language as the code in ASP.NET, and can deliver on new OS platforms like Longhorn. "There are a few million .NET programmers and we're gonna do a lot for them." This opens the door to use Clarion under Mono (Linux, Mac OS/X). "We are talking to Novell with the possibility to license/use/work alongside them." Note that CLC is *not* Clarion 7. CLC will require Clarion 7, but Clarion 7 will still target traditional Windows applications.

Summary slide

Clarion 6.x meets the requirements to deliver apps on both the older operating systems like W9x/ME and the current de facto standard of WinXP

Clarion 7 "will be all the IDE you've dreamed about and more. That is a guarantee."

Question: "That is 32 bit?"

Answer: "Or greater".

Summary of the summary

"We need the community to support us. You do that by buying product. One of the reasons we are looking at C# and .NET is revenue. "

Question: "How many users on Clarion?"

Answer: "11000 licenses of C6. There are at least double that C5x. No one knows how many more in older versions."

Comments indicate Bob Z is a bit disappointed in the calls for support of old (CPD on XP, C4, C5) versions of Clarion from those who haven't chosen to buy C6 and support the company.

Question: "Will there be a light version for newbies like personal version?"

Answer: "Yes, but not till version 7. When I think of light, I think of easy to get into, not missing features."

Question: "Are we going to see a command line compiler for C6?"

Answer: "Not likely. Possible on C7, but we have something better in mind."

"CLC is a .NET compiler. It is NOT C7."

"V7 is gonna really be everything you ever wanted in an IDE. You can look forward to *not* picking up a few tomes to produce .NET code. CLC is targeted to come out *after* C7 as a full blown product."

[Mark Riffey](#) has worked in the software industry, primarily in development and technical support for two internationally known enterprise software vendors, the world's premier information systems services company, a Fortune 100 manufacturer, and now Granite Bear Development. His business philosophy is simple: Be fair to your customers and yourself, surround yourself with brilliant people, work hard, be a good listener and have a little fun. Mark and his wife Jacki have two boys, Alex and Jonathan. Mark's other interests include Boy/Cub Scouting, backpacking/hiking and almost anything else outdoors, classic blues guitar, golf and photography.

Reader Comments

[Add a comment](#)

Mark, Could you clarify something for me. Did the...

That question was specifically asked and it did do...

It's understandable that Bob Z. would be disappointed with...

11,000 users of C6 and 20,000 of C5.x is about double what...

Mark: Did Z indicate why they (apparently) chose to...

Larry, Youd have to ask Bob, but I suspect they had a...

Does this mean that the CLC product will take our existing...

Fred, I was there and saw it. It was clearly a first...

I have been watching C6 evolve with great interest. I...

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[Clarion Magazine](#)



Clarion News

[Search the news archive](#)

[Tracker Software Support Forums](#)

Tracker Software's support forums are now open. Also Version 3 of PDF-Tools is now in beta.

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

[BackFlash 50% Off Until June 30](#)

BackFlash is normally \$195 - until June 30 get it for \$97.50. Demo available.

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

[Clarion Batch Compiler Beta 7 \(Free Download\)](#)

The Clarion Batch Compiler beta release 7 is now available for download.

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

[New Clarion Jobs & Top Clarion Programmers](#)

The Clarion Jobs Page and the worldwide database of Clarion programmers and companies with Clarion RAD technology has been updated.

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

[SealSoft's xTipHotKey Class 6.1 \(RC4\) Compatible](#)

SealSoft's TipHotKey Class is now compatible with Clarion 6.1 (RC4).

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

New Lindersoft Email Addresses

Due to too much spam (up to 80,000 emails on "normal" day) Lindersoft has abandoned the lindersoftware.com email server. Please use the following instead: friedrich (at) lindersoft.com; support (at) lindersoft.com; sales (at) lindersoft.com; : info (at) lindersoft.com; reseller (at) lindersoft.com.

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

Clarion 6.1 RC4

Clarion Version 6.1 Release Candidate (RC4) is now available. The latest from Microsoft on the MDI thread safety issue is that they have decided that rather than fix the API they will change the documentation. On a positive note, it appears that the MDI Synchronization Template and the related RTL synchronization changes released during the RC phase have avoided all reported OS-related MDI failures/errors. This release includes numerous other changes/fixes.

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

CPCS v6.11 Supports SV Report Target Output

CPCS release of v6.11 supports Clarion6.1, and adds support for all four of the SV Report Target output types. These output types can be configured to work one at a time, with a messagebox interface (as per the SV approach), or by association with

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

ImageEx 3 Beta Expected July 1

A first beta version of ImageEx 3 will be available on July 1, 2004. Everyone who bought ImageX after March 1 will receive the upgrade to version 3 for free. This means that you can purchase ImageEx 2 now for the old price of US\$199 and get version 3 which will sell for US\$249. The upgrade price for those who purchased before March 1st will be US\$59.

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

ABC Free Updated

Changes to the ABC Free templates include: Changed Misc: Save

Window Position When Moved' template so that DoResize' embed point is used in C6.1 and up.

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

eMerge 6.11

eMerge version 6.11 by Vivid Help has been released. In comparison with 6.1 it has only one new feature - the option to email CC and BCC copies. Registered users can get it with the old link/password.

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

DevCon Discounts

The "Super Early Bird" discount pricing for DevCon and the Pre-Conference Training ends June 30.

Posted Wednesday, June 30, 2004

New Example Server Apps Released To CHT Subscribers

The Clarion Handy Tools Page has released to all current subscribers the source code for the following applications: HNDSVLV.APP - This is a similar server to the one CHT uses to service LIVE-UPDATE; HNDLIVUP.APP - This is a similar client app to the one CHT uses to service LIVE-UPDATE; HNDMTSNG.APP - This is the identical server to the one CHT provides as a data interactive, study server for individuals who are taking the CHT Server Builder's Course.

Posted Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Gitano \$50 Summer Sale

Most Gitano Clarion utilities are currently on sale for \$50 each, including gCal, gCalc, gNotes, gQ, gSec, gFileFind, and the Look Good Package. gReg is not included in the \$50 offer, but is currently offered at \$100 off the regular price.

Posted Wednesday, June 23, 2004

xWordCOM Library 1.0 Beta

xWordCOM Library 1.0 Beta is now available. This release does not have the full documentation, and the demo is still a bit simplified. The price of xWordCOM is \$149. Registered Users of xWord Library can buy xWordCOM for \$39.

Posted Wednesday, June 23, 2004

[Compiled Examples For PiFolio Wordreporter](#)

Compiled examples for the PiFolio Wordreporter are now available for download. Also included in the main package.

Posted Wednesday, June 23, 2004

[EasyCOM2INC 1.1](#)

New in EasyCOM2INC 1.1: Tree view mode shows a hierarchical structure (Tree) of the Interfaces, Methods and its Parameters for the generated INC file. This is two synchronized text boxes, for example, clicking on the Interface name in the Left (tree) box will shows its in the Right (inc) box.

Posted Wednesday, June 23, 2004

[Clarion 6.1 Release Candidate 3](#)

SoftVelocity has released Clarion 6.1 release candidate 3 (RC3). There is no change in status of the MDI bug. Microsoft has confirmed that the MDI API is not thread-safe but have stated that currently their concentration is on security fixes. On a related note it appears that the MDI Synchronization Template and the related RTL changes released during the RC have avoided all the OS related MDI errors. Changes in RC3 include a DebugHook function which takes one parameter, and which forces the compiler to obtain an instance of the passed variable which can be shown by the debugger. This function can be called multiple times, and templates will be added in the next release. As usual there are numerous other changes and fixes.

Posted Wednesday, June 23, 2004

[cpTracker Pro June Sale](#)

From now through the end of June get cpTracker Pro for \$75, regularly \$99. Select the Custom Solution order option and enter the \$75 price.

Posted Wednesday, June 23, 2004

[Developers Logo Special](#)

1stLogoDesign is offering a special including a logo, application icon,

splash screen, a product box image and wallpaper for \$299, \$150 off the regular price.

Posted Wednesday, June 23, 2004

[SB5 Beta Release 5.0.801](#)

A first SetupBuilder 5 Developer Edition (beta) is now available. Please use your SB5 beta login username/password and registration code to install SB5. Not all modules are implemented in this beta. There are still some known limitations and bugs, including IDE resizing, due to the Microsoft MDI bug. The Beta Program is expected to last about 6 weeks. Feedback during the Beta period will lead to fixes and enhancements in the product.

Posted Wednesday, June 16, 2004

[Duke 15th Year Anniversary Special](#)

You can buy the Duke Application Shell Enterprise Edition for \$1500.00 through the end of June, 2004. That's a savings of almost \$900.00 off the bundled price. The Enterprise Edition includes Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Appointment Scheduling, Contact Management, Check Reconciliation, Expense Report Tracking, General Ledger, Inventory, Job Cost Reporting, List Manager, Sales Order Entry , Purchase Orders, Payroll, and Point of Sale.

Posted Wednesday, June 16, 2004

[The Clarion Handy Tools Build 08B1.0](#)

The new CHT build 08B1.0 is available to all current subscribers. Also discussed on the June 2004 What's New page is the new, across-the-web installer called WEBLOADER, and some of the new features available in the 08B1.0 build.

Posted Wednesday, June 16, 2004

[Post ETC Rates On FotoKiss](#)

The special price for Clarion users of FotoKiss has been extended until midnight June 30th, 2004. This will be your last chance to buy FotoKiss for only \$25.00. FotoKiss is a production photo editor that makes it easy to prepare and use digital photos for an auction listing, shopping cart, photo gallery or catalog. It is simple to operate and

produces high quality professional results. Targeted at eBay Sellers, FotoKiss has built-in tools that make it easy for anyone to quickly create matching photo sets from pictures on their computer, digital camera or scanner. The resulting high quality photos are automatically optimized for use on the Internet.

Posted Wednesday, June 16, 2004

[Global Data Free Template](#)

Bob Zaubere, commenting on coverage of Carl Barnes' etc2004 threading session in Clarion Magazine, said: "Carl did a fantastic job of describing threading, from the details of safely accessing global (static) data in true preemptive multithreaded apps, on to the more esoteric instances. His presentation and the comments I received from developers after the session have convinced me of the need for us to create a template that can be used to synchronize access to global data (using the classes that we ship with C6) -- without having to understand all the low level details. Look for the template as a free download in ~2-3 weeks."

Posted Wednesday, June 16, 2004

[EasyListPrint 1.08](#)

EasyListPrint 1.08 is now available. Changes include: Added new CSV reports; Zero width columns are not printed; Support for the Ictips Cowboy SQL browse template; Using PROPLIST:FieldNo now it is possible to print any lists, queues etc including created dynamically and BrowseBox/LIST without the FROM attribute.

Posted Wednesday, June 16, 2004

[etc2004 Photos by Jeff Slarve](#)

More photos from etc2004.

Posted Monday, June 14, 2004

[etc2004 Day 6 Photos](#)

Photos from day 6 at etc2004, by Leroy Schulz.

Posted Monday, June 14, 2004

[etc2004 Day 5 Evening Photos](#)

Photos from the evening of day 5 at etc2004, by Leroy Schulz.

Posted Sunday, June 13, 2004

[etc2004 Day 5 Photos](#)

Photos from day 5 at etc2004, by Leroy Schulz.

Posted Friday, June 11, 2004

[Cajun Cookout Pictures](#)

Pictures from the Cajun Cookout, by Leroy Shulz.

Posted Thursday, June 10, 2004

[etc2004 Day 3 Photos](#)

Photos from day 3 at etc2004, by Leroy Schulz.

Posted Wednesday, June 09, 2004

[etc2004 Day 2 \(evening\) Photos](#)

Photos from day 2 at etc2004, by Leroy Schulz.

Posted Wednesday, June 09, 2004

[Three Days Left in ClarionMag Subscription Sale](#)

You have just three days left to save anywhere from \$25 to \$55 on your Clarion Magazine subscription or renewal.

Posted Wednesday, June 09, 2004

[More ETC pics](#)

More photos from etc2004, by Leroy Schulz

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

[ETC Pics](#)

Leroy Schulz has posted some pictures from day one at etc2004

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

[Clarion 6.1 Release Candidate Build 2](#)

Clarion 6.1 Release Candidate 2 is now available. Regarding the MDI Windows bug, Microsoft confirms that the MDI API is not thread safe. The MDI Synchronization Template released in this RC supports ABC and Clarion chains. Another change made to compensate for the

problems with the MDI API not being thread-safe: The WindowManager now posts POST(EVENT:DoResize) in the TakeEvent EVENT:Resized rather than call the resize code directly. This is to avoid one of the weak areas in the MDI API.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

DevCon 2004

DevCon 2004 will be held September 20-22, at Disney's Contemporary Resort in Orlando, FL. Discounts are available for early registration, and training will be available before the conference.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

Free Solitaire, Written In Clarion.

Neal Phillips has released a work in progress free solitaire program written in Clarion. Just expand to a folder & run from there. If you want a further demo of using the Windows Cards.dll you can get it from <http://ablesoftware.co.nz/cards.htm>.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

ThinkData 25% Off Sale Through June 20

ThinkData announces a 25% off sale on all products on the web site from June 5 - June 20 2004. All products are Clarion 5.5 and Clarion 6 compatible, contain both ABC and Legacy templates, and ship with complete source code. xmlFUSE for Clarion 6/5.5, regularly \$249, now \$186 - parse XML using DOM, SAX, XPath and consume XML web services with complete SOAP support and lots more. qbFUSE for Clarion 6/5.5, regularly \$199, now \$149 - import/export QuickBooks Accounts, Invoices, Customers, etc. and fully automate Intuit QuickBooks 2002 through 2004; OutlookFUSE for Clarion 6/5.5, regularly \$199, now \$149 - send E-mail, search Outlook Data Stores, Import/Export Mail, Tasks, Contacts, Appointments from all versions of Microsoft Outlook; EnhancedScrollClass for Clarion 6/5.5, regularly \$69, now only \$51 - high performance browse scrolling.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

EasyCOM2INC 1.00

The EasyCOM2INC utility is used to automatically creating Clarion

include files with the definitions of COM-interfaces from IDL file. The Microsoft Interface Definition Language (MIDL) defines interfaces between client and server programs. You can create a IDL file using MS Olevew.exe - OLE/COM Object Viewer. This administration and testing tool browses in a structured way, configures, activates, and tests all Microsoft Component Object Model (COM) classes installed on your computer. Requires Win98 or higher. To use EasyCOM2INC generated files you need Clarion 5.5 or higher. With the Trial (DEMO) version of EasyCOM2INC you can evaluate all possibilities of with one limitation: you cannot open an IDL file larger then 10Kb. To remove all limitation you should buy and register the program. EasyCOM2INC ships with the step-by-step example application "Using Microsoft VBScript Regular Expressions Interface". You can also use CWPlus with the generated COM-interfaces. CWPlus completely supports all standard structures of Clarion language including INTERFACE. Therefore CWPlus is ready to help you to take advantage of EasyCOM2INC results with maximum productivity, COM properties and procedures of objects always will be on hand because of CWPlus.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

[EasyAutoEntry 1.04](#)

New in this release of EasyAutoEntry: New style "Windows Shell" which allows to use standard Windows AutoComplete for URLs and File System. To type the files, paths and URLs in your applications it is very simple now. (the version 5.0 and greater of shlwapi.dll library (Internet Explorer) is required). You may use this style freely because AutoComplete will simply not work for users without shlwapi.dll library.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

[Clarion 6.1 Report Generators Patches](#)

If you purchased any of the Report Generator products for output of reports to PDF, XML, HTML or TEXT, there are patches available for download.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

[Windows MDI Bug Progress](#)

SoftVelocity reports that Microsoft is continuing to debug the SV-reported MDI problem. If a fix is made by MS, it will be applicable only to W2K and higher, as the only fixes being done for Win98 and WinME are security related. SV has made some RTL and template changes which fixes the MDI problem in the most common situations.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

CapeSoft Office Inside 1.43 Beta

A new beta of CapeSoft Office Inside is now available for download. What's new: Cleaned up / optimized oiExcel code; New oiExcel methods: SelectColumns, SelectRows, DeleteSelection; Six new virtual methods in the oiOutlook class to handle Outlook events; Updated the feoi.app example (Office Inside / File Explorer in same app); First build to support Clarion 6.1 CR1.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

SendTo 1.03

New features: Output supports colours (BG and Text); Output to PDF (for Clarion6 ABC apps); Use HyperActive to preview PDF files; XPlore support (you'll need to get a new release from Arnor for a fix to avoid loads of compile warnings). Fixes include: Formatting Numbers and potential formulas correctly into Excel; Progress Counter works correctly; The examples (compile errors in Clarion 6 due to incorrect prototype). Next up: Icons on reports; Third party PDF tools support.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

SealSoft's Third Anniversary Discounts

In honour of SealSoft's third anniversary, a 30% discount is available on all products. This offer ends June 15th.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

0-Mezz Update

This release fixes a bug where a double click in one of the selection lists would lead to a GPF if no text control was selected first.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

CapeSoft SendTo Bundle

A new bundle, called the "Send To" bundle, is now available on ClarionShop. This bundle includes SendTo, NetTalk, Office Inside, WinEvent and Draw. It costs \$699 (list price of the all five products separately is \$905).

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

[Firebird Magazine](#)

Chris Buechler points out a new Firebird magazine in PDF form, apparently free of charge for now.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

[EasyListPrint \(ELP\) Class and Template](#)

EasyListPrint (ELP) class and template is a set of classes and templates for automatic creation of tabulated reports, using queues or lists (for example, automatic printing of BrowseBox contents).

Creates: Standard WMF reports; Editable RTF reports (you can use also preformatted RTF code); Excel documents (all international settings are supported via COM interface); HTML, CSV, PDF and more formats in the pipeline. You may customize Title, Header, Footer, Total sections (fonts, sizes, alignments, colors etc), number of pages. Widths of columns will be automatically calculated during printing in case they obviously are not defined in the settings. You can print all BrowseBox contents. It works also for Legacy templates. Full customizable Page setup and Progress windows. You can use Color or Style attributes on the List-control. You can use Popup menu (text and icons) for print more then one report type. Localization - you can translate or write your own title, prompts, text and messages for dialog and progress windows. Code page for RTF report. Support for colors both for Standard and RTF report. Compatible with: Standard Report Viewer; TinTools Report Viewer; IceTips Report Viewer; EasyMultiTag. Requires Clarion 5.0b, Clarion 5.5 or Clarion 6, ABC, Legacy class template support, 32-bits only. Price is \$69.

Posted Tuesday, June 08, 2004

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[Clarion Magazine](#)



etc2004 Report: Carl Barnes on Threading

by Nik Johnson

Published 2004-06-10

Until Clarion 6, Clarion used a cooperative threading model in which the program, rather than the operating system, was in control. Processing on a particular thread was never interrupted; the thread decided when its slice of processing time ended.

This model worked adequately in most user-driven applications, but the code had to be written to be cooperative so that a busy thread would not hang the entire system. (The Clarion project “make” process is a good example of an “uncooperative” application.) But the limitations of the cooperative model made it difficult to write well-behaved programs which share resources gracefully with other applications.

One of the primary features of Clarion 6 is a new, pre-emptive threading model. The operating system can interrupt any thread at any time, allowing it to enforce priorities and prevent a hard-working thread from hanging the system.

This new power doesn't come free, of course. Putting the operating system in control carries with it the chance that different threads will, in a sense, step on each other's toes, corrupting data and producing other unpleasant side effects.

At ETC 2004, Carl Barnes gave us an extensive guided tour of the

implications of preemptive threading and the available tools, mechanisms and techniques for holding thread-related problems at bay. He started by identifying data which is at risk if separate threads accessing that data are not synchronized:

- Global data without the `THREAD` attribute
- Module and local data with the `STATIC` attribute but no `THREAD` attribute
- Class module data and properties of global classes without the `THREAD` attribute
- Files without the `THREAD` attribute
- INI files

In all of these cases, corruption is possible unless access to the data by multiple threads is synchronized. There are two kinds of potential problems:

- Incorrect data resulting from an incomplete value being read or written due to thread switch (Data Corruption)
- Result changes based on the execution order of threads (Race Condition)

Data corruption is possible when the transfer requires more than one machine instruction. Since pre-emption occurs at the assembler level, a thread change can happen in the middle of a transfer. `BYTE`, `SHORT`, `USHORT`, and `LONG` values are “thread safe” because their transfer can be accomplished in a single operation. `LONG` types `SIGNED`, `UNSIGNED`, `BOOL`, `DATE`, and `TIME` are similarly safe.

The `STRING`, `CSTRING`, `PSTRING`, `GROUP`, `REAL`, `BFLOAT`, `DECIMAL`, and `PDECIMAL` data types are not thread safe because they require more than one machine operation to transfer. `ULONG`, because it is processed with the `DECIMAL` library, is also unsafe.

Complex structures (`QUEUE`, `FILE`, etc.) are even more vulnerable.

Carl took the group through an extensive review of synchronization tools, demonstrating each with test code. Among the tools covered:

- Interlocked functions
- Critical sections
- C6 run-time library functions
- The ABC CriticalProcedure class
- An AppSync class, written by the presenter
- ReaderWriter locks
- Mutexes
- Semaphores

Carl emphasized the importance of choosing a single strategy for each situation and executing that strategy with care. Most of the synchronization tools present an opportunity to create a deadlock or other unpleasant condition.

He closed with a discussion of strategies for migrating to Clarion 6 from previous versions, and a bibliography of useful reference materials.

[Nik Johnson](#) stumbled into the programming racket in 1959 when his boss at Grumman Aircraft insisted on his attending a Fortran class. Since 1986 he has been using Clarion to help clients solve information handling problems.

Reader Comments

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**Carl did a fantastic job of describing threading, from the...
I was just thinking that. I have been using Clarion for...
Carl would be the first to say that he was trying to cover...
Carl would be the first to say that he was trying to cover...**

It would be great to see Carl write up his presentation as...
Carl has written a lot on threading for ClarionMag - use...

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[Clarion Magazine](#)

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etc2004 Report: Russ Eggen & Templates

by Abe Jimenez

Published 2004-06-16

There are two parts to Clarion, the programming language and the template language. The template language is used by Softvelocity, makers of third party products, and many developers to define the functionality of the various templates that make Clarion such a powerful programming tool.

Amazingly, there are many Clarion developers who have never written a template. I say amazingly because by writing templates to do some of the repetitive coding we do over and over again we can dramatically shorten the software development process.

At etc2004, Russ Eggen gave us a very detailed presentation on how to design and build templates. He started by explaining how to define the user interface for the templates, showing how to create sheets with tabs and how to put various controls on the tabs, such as entry controls, drop downs, checkboxes and radio buttons to prompt programmers for input information to be used by the template.

Secondly he covered how to define variables to be used in the template logic using `#DECLARE`, and explained some of the most commonly used commands in template language such as `#SET`, `#FIX`, `#SELECT`, `#ADD` and `#GROUP`. He also showed some examples of how to put logical expressions in your templates using `#FOR`, `#LOOP`, `#IF` and `#CASE..`

Finally Russ brought everything together by explaining how to make template wrappers around classes. To show us how to build a class wrapper, he used a very practical example. He built a wrapper over Debugview, a freeware debugging tool. By the end of the presentation, he ran an application and showed the debugger in action.

Russ also did a great job at documenting his presentation. The CD that was distributed to all the attendees of the etc conference included all the source code and a 60 page PDF document which was very well written.

[Abe Jimenez](#) started programming in the late 70s in RPG on the IBM System 34. Towards the late 80s he began using Clarion 2.1 for DOS. Over the years he has programmed in all versions of Clarion, but not continuously. He is now an independent consultant and programs PC applications in Clarion and AS400 applications in RPG.

Reader Comments

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**Abe, I totally forgot to tell you (and the rest of the...
Is there a chance to see the pdf document be published or...
You will need to contact the event organizers, which is...**

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etc2004 Report: Third Party Presentations

by Tom Hebenstreit

Published 2004-06-16

Prior to the official start of the conference on Tuesday evening, there were two afternoon bonus sessions. Hosted by CapeSoft and RADventure respectively, they were both well attended and very interesting.

CapeSoft

My guess is that anyone who has been using Clarion for more than a day or two has heard of CapeSoft, and it's a rare user who doesn't own at least one of their products. Their session was both an introduction to some of their newer products and a compendium of "did you know" style tips and tricks on others. The presentation alternated between the ever-popular Bruce Johnson and fellow CapeSoft developer Jono Woodhouse.

Replicate

First up was a section on Replicate, one of their newest products (so new, it's still officially in beta). Replicate adds multiple modes of data replication to Clarion apps, including LAN, WAN, email and FTP. Replication can be scheduled at whatever interval is required. Changes are logged on a field-by-field basis, which helps to keep down the size of the log files. Additionally, log files are automatically compressed for maximum transfer speed, and can also be encrypted

if desired.

One interesting application of Replicate that Bruce mentioned was to use it in basically a continuous mode between all of the machines on a local network. This would spread the data out to all machines, ensuring that even if one or more machines on the network failed, all of the others would still be able to continue with their own copy of the data.

SelfService

SelfService is another new product that enables you to run a Clarion program as a service under Windows 2000/XP/Server. Services are programs that are usually loaded into memory when the machine starts, and remain in memory until it is shut down. Designed for mainly behind the scenes processing, a service can respond quickly to requests since it is already loaded, initialized and ready to go. If you are designing a program to run as a service, it is important to remember that services can be running without anyone even logged into the machine. This means you would need to design it basically without a user interface – you wouldn't want it to pop up a message box and in essence hang up your program waiting forever for a mouse click.

As Jono demonstrated, turning a program in a service was pretty much a matter of dropping a template into the program and setting some options.

Note: SelfService requires Clarion 6.x, as services need true operating system threads.

Insight Graphing

Insight is a graphing program built on top of CapeSoft Draw, and it allows the developer and user to create nifty looking graphs in a variety of styles. Bruce ran through some of the options and showed how to get started with Insight.

NetTalk

Jono demonstrated some of the capabilities of NetTalk and covered building simple client/server communications between NetTalk-enabled programs.

WinEvent

WinEvent is a product that provides access to a number of lower level Windows functions, such as directly parsing Windows messages (events), use of COM ports and more. One useful set of function lets you minimize your program to the Windows Task bar tray, swap the displayed icon, pop up text messages, and more. Jono pointed out that a number of new features have been added to WinEvent.

More information and demo versions of many CapeSoft products can be found at the CapeSoft [web site](#).

RADventure

In contrast to CapeSoft, RADventure's presentation focused on one product, their Fenix ASP.NET Generator. Fenix is not just a horse of a different color, it is a whole new type of beastie altogether. It uses the Clarion IDE, dictionary, template code generation system and so forth, but the end result is a Microsoft ASP.NET application written in C# (C sharp) and/or VB.NET (Visual Basic dot NET) rather than a Windows program written in Clarion.

Fenix is based on an entirely new template chain, so while the IDE is familiar, all of the template prompts are Fenix-specific. Fenix applications do not involve any ABC or Clarion code. When creating a new Fenix application, the Fenix application wizard steps you through setting up most of the basic parameters for how you connect to your data and so forth.

For something that produces results so foreign to most Clarion developers (well, at least *this* one), Fenix seems remarkably well

integrated with the IDE. Screen design in the window formatter translates directly to the ASPX page, with all positioning, fonts, and so forth preserved (unlike HTML). You also have the option to use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to apply overall presentation look and feel on anything from a single control, a particular class of controls, or to the entire application. RADventure presenter Sebastian “Hey!” Talmoni noted how virtually every .NET framework control in Fenix has been wrapped in classes to simplify their use. The embeditor and embed tree work just like you’d expect, except that you write VB.NET or C# code instead of Clarion.

To use Fenix, you need the Fenix templates (obviously), the Clarion IDE, and the .NET SDK. The SDK can be downloaded for free from Microsoft. To run Fenix ASP.NET pages, you generate in the IDE and then a .NET compiler is invoked to actually compile the procedure. Since each page (procedure) is independent of any others, pages can be quickly tested by clicking on a Run button placed on the procedure properties of every procedure.

All in all, what Sebastian demonstrated was very impressive, with a high “wow” factor in area after area. In a two hour presentation (and talking fast) Sebastian still had more things to cover when his time was up. Most of that was demonstrating depth of the Fenix templates and classes – the initial usage of Fenix seemed very straightforward.

Fenix 1.0 was released about one year ago, and it is currently up to version 1.5 as they’ve added new features (they use it actively themselves in developing .NET applications for their own clients.) A new version 2.0 with even more features is planned for later this year.

Visit the RADventure [web site](#) for more information and demonstration pages. The entire Fenix portion of this site was produced using Fenix.

BoxSoft

Mike Hanson, the coding whiz behind the BoxSoft templates did not present, but he did show me some cool new things behind the scenes. Keep an eye on his [web site](#) for new products in the near future.

A longtime Clarion user, [Tom Hebenstreit](#) is an admitted tool junkie who refuses to go straight and code without his arsenal of third party products. During those rare moments when he isn't either using or writing about Clarion, he indulges his twin passions for blues and beer by performing around Southern California in a variety of totally-obscure-but-famous-any-day-now rock and blues bands.

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etc2004 Report: Bob Foreman's Clarion 6.x Tour

by Mark Riffey

Published 2004-06-16

At etc2004 Bob Foreman gave a fast tour of the new features in Clarion 6 and 6.1 These included lots of new how-to examples (see the examples\how-to subdirectory), a new transaction manager class with transaction framing (richer than LOGOUT/COMMIT), a version resource template for real Windows versioning for your DLLs, and vastly improved EIP with better dialogs, rivaling third party VB tools.

Bob also discussed the new `PROP:ThemeActive`, which determines whether or not an XP theme is active, the new internal manifest, which bypasses MS limitations on buttons with images and transparent controls, and the ability to create drill down reports via the PDF drivers.

The new all-encompassing browse examples merit serious review; see `ABCBRWS.APP` in the C6.1 examples\how-to folder. The new breaks manager class adds embeds for breaks/groups, custom headers and footers. And no hands went up when Bob asked who had seen the new Graph Manager feature (examples\graphs\SVGExam.APP). This is definitely another indication that SV needs to work on getting new feature information out.

The Clarion 6.1 help has been greatly improved. There is an Online User's guide button on the Help contents page, and among other things, the user guide doc contains 125 annotated flash movies of Clarion 6 features. The Clarion 6.1 help includes a movie guide PDF

listing all the movies that are available.

Bob Foreman publicly thanked Bob Z and indicated he felt Z had a good vision for Clarion and was a “great boss to work for.”

[Mark Riffey](#) has worked in the software industry, primarily in development and technical support for two internationally known enterprise software vendors, the world's premier information systems services company, a Fortune 100 manufacturer, and now Granite Bear Development. His business philosophy is simple: Be fair to your customers and yourself, surround yourself with brilliant people, work hard, be a good listener and have a little fun. Mark and his wife Jacki have two boys, Alex and Jonathan. Mark's other interests include Boy/Cub Scouting, backpacking/hiking and almost anything else outdoors, classic blues guitar, golf and photography.

Reader Comments

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**Great job. I had already forgotten to go check the videos...
I totally agree with Bob F about how it is great to work...**



Date Filtering with MSSQL

by John L Griffiths

Published 2004-06-22

When writing business software I find I often need to mess with dates and date ranges in my MS-SQL queries. Sometimes I need to use a temptable to grab some data from SQL on a form or report, or I need to adjust the `FILTER` conditions for a browse.

Working within the Clarion source with Clarion language statements, and translating the `FILTER` to that needed by the SQL engine, can become more complex than is really necessary.

Here is an example of a `WHERE` clause I wrote about four years ago:

```
sqlWHERE = ' WHERE (h.dtact_date >= ' ' & format(FromDate,@D02) &' 00:00:00' ' &|
  ' AND h.dtact_date < ' ' & format((ToDate + 1),@D02) &' 00:00:00' ' &|
  ' AND h.histype = 'V' ' '
```

I know I could have used the SQL `BETWEEN` verb. I also know by looking at the execution plan that MS-SQL simply converts the `BETWEEN` verb it to a `>= AND <=` construct. I am trying to reduce the load at the server, and so I code using the expanded construct.

The above works great, but I figured MS-SQL is storing the `DATETIME` values as pure numerics, and formats the output to a `STRING` date representation of that numeric or formats an input `STRING` representation of a date to a numeric, depending on the request you are sending.

I am expending programming effort and my Clarion program is using up clock cycles converting numbers to strings, strings to numbers, and my SQL server is doing likewise.

About a year ago, I changed my approach and started adding an EQUATE into my Clarion modules:

```
DATE1900 EQUATE(36163) ! the MS-SQL date num for Jan 1 1900 = 0
```

This equate allows me to easily communicate with MS-SQL simply using numerics. I now build query strings equivalent to the SQL WHERE string above as follows:

```
sqlWHERE = ' WHERE (h.dtact_date >= '& (FromDate - DATE1900) &|
' AND h.dtact_date < ' & (ToDate-DATE1900+1) &|
' AND h.histype = 'V' ' '
```

This works very well. Why? Look at your "SQL Server Books Online." In the CAST CONVERT page you will see a datatype-to-datatype conversion matrix. Note there the implicit conversions that can take place between DATETIME and NUMERIC types.

In testing I found that I could declare a field in a new table as:

```
DtBaseDate DateTime default 37000.9999999 ,
```

or:

```
DtBaseDate DateTime default CONVERT(INT,GetDate()) , -- 00:00 time today
```

Here is a small example where I am running a query with a TEMPFILE. I am using a TEMPFILE named tfile, with the first field named t1 and seeking the MAXimum date in the dtAct_Date column:

```
1  OrigDate = 0      ! a Clarion LONG
2  open(tfile)
3  SQLstr2 = 'SELECT convert(int,MAX(h.dtddate)) from History AS h '
4  tfile{prop:sql}=SQLstr2
5  next(tfile)
6  if errorcode()
7      message(FileError())
8  else
9  OrigDate = tfile.f1 + Date1900      ! adjust to a ClarionDate LONG
10 end
11 close(tfile)
```

At line 3) I need to tell SQL to send the data back as a numeric, or it will return a date string formatted according to default settings.

Line (9) adjusts the integer field obtained from SQL by adding my EQUATE and then assigns the result to my Clarion variable (a LONG).

Had I been getting back a DATETIME field as a string using a line (3) like this:

```
SQLstr2 = 'SELECT CONVERT(DATETIME,MAX(h.dtact_date) ,112 )  
from History AS h '
```

I would have received a `STRING` formatted as `YYYYMMDD` and then would need to convert this to a numeric and store in my Clarion variable, something like:

```
OrigDate = DEFORMAT( tfile.f1 , @d12)
```

I hope this has given you the incentive to experiment with how you work between Clarion and MS-SQL. As MS-SQL is the only SQL engine I have worked with, I cannot vouch that this method will work with other SQL servers. You may have some testing to do.

I have done some investigation with the `TIME` portion of `DateTime` fields but at this stage it looks like a subject for a future article. I can tell you that `38000.5` represents 12 noon on January 16 2004.

[John Griffiths](#), an Australian, has been developing with Clarion since the DOS days. John has two summers each year, spending six months in Australia for the Southern summer and six months in Texas for the Northern summer. He works as a contractor for a Texas company and has developed several business/financial programs which he sells worldwide. John has a B.Bus degree with a major in Informations Systems.

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etc2004 Report: Jono Woodhouse on COM

by Michael Lawson

Published 2004-06-22

Jono Woodhouse from [Capesoft](#) did an excellent job filling in for Andy Ireland, who could not make the conference. Jono introduced us to COM with a demo using a combination of Flash and the Windows Media player. COM is short for the Component Object Model which is basically a standard for sharing binary objects; just like .DLLs allow us to share functions.

The session was broken up into four sections, starting with a short introduction focusing on the following topics:

- Why should Clarion Developers use COM? Answer: To add functionality to your applications using existing COM classes that are readily available.
- What are the two major benefits of COM? Answer: The ability to re-use code in a language independent manner. The ability to share and re-use objects in a well defined manner.



- Is COM easy to use? Answer:
COM is not the boogeyman to run away from. Once you learn a couple of tricks you can gain the benefits of reusing COM objects in your applications.

The next session was titled Technical Theory I and started with an example using a Blowfish COM Object with two methods, Encrypt and Decrypt. The focus in this session was to go over the basics of COM and how you use a COM object in Clarion. Jono also showed us his juggling skills at this point, using some apples.

The meat of the presentation was included in the next section called Technical Theory II, which started with a discussion on using COM objects as Early Bound versus Late Bound. Jono also covered the three different COM types: InPlace, Visible and Non-Visible.

Walkthrough demonstrations went over the differences in using the Softvelocity classes, Andy's classes, and Jim Kane's COM classes within Clarion. A small amount of time was spent in demonstrating the RTLib prototype generator, written by Jim Kane.

Jono also provided practical examples of how to troubleshoot an unfamiliar or poorly documented COM object. He demonstrated a combination of techniques such as using the Macro recorder in Word and Excel to see what the program was doing. This can be revealed by using the Tools Menu|Macro|Visual Basic Editor. A little trial and error is needed at this point to get things to work correctly, but it does provide a good starting place. Two other tools, OLEView from Microsoft and OCXprp32 included with Clarion 5.5, were reviewed. Other topics covered included COM Events and using early binding in the [XP CD Burn example](#).

The optional Technical Theory III section went over COM data types, OLE parameter passing and using the .INC and .CLW files to learn what is happening behind the scenes. A chart was also presented that showed the various benefits and deficiencies that each COM class provided. Overall Jono provided an in-depth and informative presentation.

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etc2004: The Cajun and the Hillbilly

by Andrew Guidroz II

Published 2004-06-23

Photos by Leroy Schulz and Rick Dafler

Until just last year, I was a vice-president of an insurance company. My duties included running the IS department and basically keeping the entire infrastructure going of many dozens of offices over a variety of states and lines of business. I did that for 16 years.

One system that we used was on leased time on a mini in another city. Their lead developer left that company and offered to write a system for us in a PC based form. Although I had my reservations, the owners of the company agreed to hire him for this job. He chose Clarion Personal Developer as the tool. I felt that his experience was weak on the PC end and that he could never complete the project. It turned out that I was correct.

I did buy a copy of CPD in order to evaluate his progress. I wasn't terribly impressed but I hadn't put much time into it.

The project died and I didn't open CPD again ... until a TV station called asking about some software to track ad insertion and commercial rotations.



I was single, living in a small rented home with no phone or cable, and I had very little to do except wait for a cute little blonde lady to drop in on me from time to time. I was becoming very sweet on her.

I wrote the app in a few hours one Saturday morning and received a check for a few thousand on Monday morning. The check cleared and, six days later, I realized that CPD was not just a designer: it actually generated real source code.

I was confident, flush with cash, and ready to start another phase in my life. The girl I was waiting on, Sabrina, accepted my marriage proposal.

Sabrina had spent some time living in Louisiana after moving from her native Galveston, Texas. But she really didn't understand the whole concept of what it meant to be Cajun and what our cooking is all about. I grew up around cooking all of my life but had hardly touched a pot. The only way I knew how to teach her about being Cajun was to cook for her.

I wrote another app with Clarion that helped to seal my reputation as someone who understood user interfaces. The fledgling company that used it ... and still uses it ... went on to be worth many millions, and still swears by that program.

I bought CDD 3.0 as soon as it was released and it ate every dictionary I attempted to create with it. It became shelf ware in a few hours.



Time went on and the infamous card that said, "This is the lowest price you'll ever see for Clarion for Windows 1.0" arrived. I bought CW 1.0 and, within minutes of installation, it ate my dictionary.

I was fed up and called TopSpeed to complain. They offered to let me

complain for a large sum per hour or I could use something called CompuServe in order to ask questions for "free."

I subscribed and then proceeded to flame everything moving there. Ross Santos and I went tooth and nail.

Eventually, I understood the bugs and the problems with Clarion for Windows and began to produce good product with it. I loaded a few sacks of live crawfish and drove to Kerrville, TX to cook them for George Hale, Ross Santos, and Andy "Cowboy" Stapleton. I wanted to pick their brains and ask for advice. I learned a lot from them.

But there was another guy who I spent a lot of time talking to on the newsgroups. We fought, laughed, and traded code every day. One day, I really bashed him hard and he just didn't reply. It went a few days and he still didn't reply.

Well, having the connections I had at the time, I did some digging and found out where he lived and his phone number. I was concerned I had really offended him and wanted to make amends.

He answered the phone and I said, "Lee? This is Andrew. How are you?"

It turns out that he had been sick in the hospital with what became diabetes. And we spoke to each other nearly every single day for years.

I finally decided we had to meet so I posted a message up on CompuServe. "Lee and I are meeting and anyone that wants to drop in to have some real Cajun cooking is welcome." And in a little while, it was a whole lot of folks.

Tennessee generated a lot of folks, including Wayne Price and Michael Neyman. And Georgia with David Griffiths. And Kerrville, Texas with Cowboy and George. Skip Williams came from South Carolina with an associate named Sharon who he is happily married to now. Nik and Cathy Johnson and Bruce Wells led the Kentucky delegation. Bob Gove came in from Plano with Ma'am (Judy) and the Ma'amettes (Meridith and Emily). Jeff Slarve came all the way from Riverside, California. Brad Noble came out of Ohio and I really had no clue who he was at all. The head count was around 50 folks.



Lee came out the night before the big cookout to a lovely cabin Sabrina and I had rented. Lee and I didn't look at all like either of us expected. We tried to talk but it just didn't work. We really didn't know each other enough to talk face to face. So we corrected the problem. The two of us stood back to back and started talking. And laughing. And teasing. And cementing a long friendship.

The night of the cookout, everyone came. Jeff was the earliest and watched every single thing that I prepared and asked a ton of questions about technique and recipes. Bob Gove and his family came next, and his wife soon found out that we weren't axe murderers at all. Lee came soon after and, from that point on, we told everyone that the big guy was the cook from Louisiana and the skinny guy was the hillbilly, and we got our kicks out of confusing everyone.

By the time everyone was there and the meal was served, everyone could feel that there was a special friendship building between all of us. And there I stood, a Cajun who had rarely left the bayou, and I was dumbstruck. I came from a small group of folks who were thought of as different, uneducated, and odd and yet all of these folks would show up to meet and eat and share in that culture. And it moved me.

Lee decided that the programming language we all used needed a conference that touched the smaller developer. But he wanted it to capture some of that

friendship and fun and love that was there at the first "pre-ETC." So he asked me to cook. It was an exciting challenge but, most of all, Lee wanted my help. There was (and is) nothing I wouldn't do for him.

And that's how it all started.

ETC IV is probably the last East Tennessee Clarion conference. Lee has had to take a lot of time and risk to make every one of them happen. I'm getting older and it is hard on us to cook a huge meal like, this let alone lean on our friends to help.

Carl Barnes, Larry Teames, Ross Santos, and Jill Hanson have all helped once or many times at the Cajun Cookout. Sue Pichotta, Wayne Price, Tom Hebenstreit, and Shawn Mason have helped with serving. Bob Campbell and Dave Harms have worked clean-up up along with this year' new comer, Marty Honea and his lovely wife. Skip Williams has worked probably every single one digging his hands deep into catfish, which isn't exactly his favorite pastime. Rick Dafler, who lived in Louisiana for a long time and has experience in food engineering, has helped me keep the technical aspects of a meal that big in place. Bob Gove has worked the grill. Brad has been the rock for me and Lee at all these conferences, but is known to most folks as the head of Team Beer. Jeff Slarve came back to Tennessee this year and worked on his feet for 16 hours. He proved that he wasn't just watching all those years ago at the first pre-ETC: he learned.



We fed 205 folks at this year's meal and served two entrees a piece. That's

410 plates, not counting appetizers, which is by far an ETC record.

Every evening during etc2004, many people came up to our room and visited. The last night at the hotel, 40 people visited.

Sabrina has been with me at every conference cooking by my side. And I owe her a lot of gratitude.

On the last morning of etc2004, I got up when the first light began and went upstairs to a friend's room before anyone else was awake. My friend was up early like he is every ETC year, on the last day I'm in Gatlinburg. We sat on the balcony and each enjoyed a cup of coffee while looking out over the Smokey Mountains. We laughed. We cried a little. We teased each other.

We sat with our two chairs shoulder to shoulder as close as we could get. But things never changed.

We talked best just hearing each other's voice, never looking at the other. Just being there together.



Andrew Guidroz II, when he isn't traveling around the countryside watching his 2004 National Champion LSU Fighting Tigers, writes software for all facets of the insurance and finance industries. His famous Cajun cookouts have become a central feature of Clarion conferences throughout the U.S. Andrew's Cajun website is www.coonass.com.

Reader Comments

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OK, those last two photos. Which one is Andrew and which...

Family and friends are the only important parts of this...

Yeah, Andrew. Yeah.

This gave me a tear or two. Thanks for a great...

Yepper. Thanks ya'll.

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