SPREZZATURA

SENL

February 1997

Sprezzatura's Electronic Newsletter

For Revelation developers by Revelation developers

MAKING DATABASES HAPPEN

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Welcome

WELCOME - to this issue of S/ENL, the Sprezzatura Electronic Newsletter. Welcome to the new subscribers who continue to join in! It seems that we've hit upon a much needed service! Thanks to you all for your encouragement.

The great thing about this newsletter for me is that, unlike with our printed publication, REVMEDIA, I'm not bound by specific publication dates so I can just release when there's something interesting to report - and luckily for us there's lots of good stuff going down at the moment.

As a purely personal aside, I'm just finalising plans to visit Australia in late August, with hopefully a visit to Sydney and Adelaide (to see the in-laws) followed by a bit of Scuba in the Barrier Reef. Hopefully we'll get to meet some of you out there!

Just in case you hadn't worked it out JA/REV is pronounced J-A-REV not JAREV.... Not that I love awful puns or anything...

Regards
Andrew McAuley
Publisher

Ramblings

I don't know what's happening to the world - neither of the companies we asked for a quote for our Web site have come back and we're still too busy to do it ourselves! Hopefully more next issue.

We heard an interesting comment back from the marketplace the other day to the effect that "the problem with Sprezzatura is that they don't try to grow the marketplace, they just use the existing base". This amused us immensely as that is EXACTLY why we were set up - to provide a premium service to RevSoft users - and to continue providing that service to users of Revelation Release C through to OIWG! Hey, evangelism is for people with Salespeople and we still refuse to employ one of those! <g>.

Revelation UK have just released an "International" newsletter. You can pick up electronic copies of this at their Web site - http://www.revsoft.demon.co.uk/. As an aside - Demon are a large UK ISP, who for some reason think it's amusing to have all their dial up numbers terminate in 666. The newsletter is definitely worth reading, although they don't give us a free plug! <g>

Development on OIWG 3.3 continues apace - delivery schedules have slipped slightly due to the resignation of one of the guys working on the project, but as ever Cameron Purdy is there to pick up

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the pieces, and long with the sterling work being done by Gene and Boris we're sure that 3.3 will deliver what it promises! Similarly the OI Works program has slipped slightly - rest assured - as soon as there is a deliverable we'll be subscribing!

In what is perhaps the clearest indication yet that OpenInsight 2.61 for LANS is finally dead (rumours have persisted but never been confirmed or denied by RevSoft), Winghigh in the UK have recently announced stunningly cheap upgrade routes for AREV and OI 2.61 developers. Developers can upgrade for the OI Works cost of 899GBP (hardly a bargain for 2.61 users, though quite a deal for AREV users given that it includes the single user RDK), but runtime sites can upgrade as follows

- 3 user site 75GP

- 5 user site 125 GBP

- 25+ 625 GBP

quite an incentive for AREV people to move we think! Naturally if you'd like to make the move we're here to help you!

In what can only be seen as a cruel irony, the Gartner Group recently put out a warning to all Borland developers that they should consider Borland's days numbered and try to move to another development platform. Personally I'm amazed that they can print this publicly, but hey, you guys have the first amendment right? <g> The irony lies in the fact that a number of AREV developers moved to Delphi instead of OI because they were concerned about the long term future of the company.... Perhaps goes to show that biggest isn't always best. Stick your head too far over the parapet and.... "Don't worry, they couldn't hit a barn from that dist...".

I've recently had the pleasure of developing in AREV again and ooooh it feels good (I knew that it would...). The results of this little adventure can be seen in the AREV section of this newsletter. I just wish that OI had the same flexibility. It comes close - and is a damn sight easier on user interface, but on sheer customisability nothing comes close.

Oh well, I'd like to mail this BEFORE going away for the week again so this seems like a good place to call it a day! Until the next issue... and remember your contributions are more than welcome!

VERSION X OF OPENINSIGHT FOR DEVELOPERS (JA/REV)

At the Developer's Roundtable mentioned in the last issue, Cameron Purdy dropped a bit of a bombshell with regards to future development of the OI product range. Whereas previously it had been stated that all new development was centred around delivery of an ActiveX product, it was now

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announced that the focus had changed and that rather than concentrating on this Microsoft technology, OpenInsight was being rewritten in JAVA.

This naturally came as a shock to all present but once initial incredulity had died down, we were able to get more details. At the moment this is a development project with a probable 24 month lead time although alpha versions are likely to ship in the next 9 months if not before. We know that such a goal is not impossible - Corel have already developed and delivered such a product range. In the meantime, development of the existing 16 bit product is scheduled to continue, with 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and later versions mooted. In fact there is a possibility that the product lines will separate again and that JA/Rev will be developed concurrently with OIWG. Naturally a time will come when this is no longer feasible but the future of OIWG looks secure for at least a few years!

On a side point, several people have expressed worries about the future of the RevSoft product line... at the risk of being called a RevSoft shill, I would point out that RevSoft still sell (and albeit on an incident basis) support a product that hasn't changed for about 10 years! (Rev G) - who else can make that claim? Personally I am happy to commit my customers to at least 5 years with the existing OIWG - we still have RevG and AREV clients who are perfectly happy with what they've got - its only us developers who are obsessed with "dribbleware" (as the industry has taken to calling the steady stream of patches available from Microsoft and others).

So onto the projected product itself - what can we say about it? Well so far, it is pretty much vapourware although those brave developers at RevSoft are genning up big style on Java. However released details say the following: -

The resulting product will be platform independent so discussions of a 32 bit version become irrelevant. The new product will continue to support linear hash by some access method. That method has yet to be defined. Now that's an interesting point. It has long been said that the 32 bit version will remove the 64K limit. Can there be a "bit" independent version that removes the 64K limit? I'm too untechnical to know! Perhaps others can chip in?

Of course, written in Java, we will finally have platform independence. We'll be able to run on Unix, Macintosh, OS/2 as well as Wintel. This is good news BUT no longer excites me as much as it used to. When I first started with Rev, and it was a Pick variant, in '83, we sold Pick on the grounds of cross-platform. The market was apathetic. When Unix started to take hold in the mid '80s, C was touted as a great cross platform tool. The market was apathetic. Now Java has come to save us. For now, I'm apathetic. However, you are reading the outpourings of someone who railed against Windows for years (ask Mark Hirst at ICS) before finally converting 3 years ago!

Another benefit of Java is that it supports Unicode so true international support will finally be available - ask Finnish users who need Y umlauts (char(255)) what they think of that!

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Another probably contentious issue will be that of forward compatibility. When Rev H was abandoned in favour of AREV, there were no conversion tools other than a "RevG compatibility box" which pretty much everyone ignored. When AREV went to SQL compatibility, backwards compatibility was lost. When AREV went to OI, no conversion tools were provided (although some were available in alphas of the product) and large portions of backwards compatibility were lost. However in more recent times, the record has been better, with movement from 2.01 to 2.5, 2.5 to 2.61 and more importantly OI for LANS to OI for Workgroups requiring very little in the way of conversion. This being the case, it seems that the statements

"GUI - We hope to supply a means of moving existing Windows, Popups and Reports into JAVA. We will ensure that there is at least the possibility of rebuilding them.

Routines - There will be a Basic+ to JAVA compiler. We will create a set of classes to cover any functionality that JAVA doesn't already have direct support for"

might perhaps be listened to with less disbelief than would have been the case three years ago.

The other promised major area of change is in the provision of a fully fledged repository. For all its good points, the existing repository frequently gets in the way of version control rather than helping it. In JA/Rev the repository will be implemented as a full version control/delta source code management tool. Personally I can't wait.

So, what does it all mean? Well, I'm not holding my breath, who knows what the market will be doing in two years time? The news that existing OI will continue to be developed is good, the news that there will be a conversion path available if wanted is better. The best news that I get out of this is that RevSoft are sufficiently confident in their mid-term viability to look at another major product development!

SLIST FOR OI DEVELOPERS

Those of you who have tried to develop reports in OpenInsight will doubtless have been frustrated by the difficulties put in the way of the developer by seemingly trivial tasks! Internally at Sprezzatura we have decided that the Revelation Reporter works best when used against flat files, so we create intermediate files before doing a straightforward Report Designer printout. When we came to convert our old RLIST statements into OI we hit another major snag - nothing would print beyond 80 characters!

Eventually we became so fed up with this that we wrote a replacement for R/LIST called S/LIST that completely replaces R/LIST for our everyday OI development. The product is called identically to RLIST but has a number of extensions to cope with the Windows environment, not least of which being the fact that it copes with fonts, shading, colours, grids, boxes, landscape, portrait etc. etc.

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Those of you who are familiar with the RLIST syntax will be able to rapidly work out what

LIST 10 PATIENT TITLE COLFONT 'AMHERST,18,I' SURNAME COLFONT 'CASPEROPENFACE,18,U'

does. For those of you unsure it lists 10 patients showing the title in 18pt italic Amherst and the surname in 18pt underlined CasperOpenFace.

The new or modified words are as follows

AMV - The AMV (Associated Multivalue Group) qualifier is used in conjunction with the LIMIT clause to get around the historical problem of losing information from all multivalued columns when the LIMIT clause is present e.g.

LIST STAFF NAME ADDRESS INVOICE_DATE AMOUNT LIMIT INVOICE_DATE > "1/1/96" AMV "INVOICE_DATE,AMOUNT"

will NOT omit lines from the ADDRESS column when it trims down the other multivalues to satisfy the LIMIT condition.

AVERAGE - There is no new functionality as such to report for the Average keyword, but a long standing problem with RLIST which led to figures in the Averaged column being omitted has now been corrected by SLIST

BOX - The BOX modifier is used to add lines around the columns and column titles, producing a boxed effect. It will automatically print the closing box line after the last row on the page. It may be used anywhere within the SLIST sentence.

BREAK-ON - There are two new formatting options for Break-On,

'C' substitutes a count of the total number of rows in the current break clause

'R' tells the break clause to present running totals or averages rather than resetting the values at each break.

Break-On clauses can now be combined to good effect with a JustLen 0 format override.

CENTRE /CENTER - The CENTRE modifier is used to centre the report on the output. It will centre all columns within the width of the output device. It may be used anywhere within the SLIST sentence. Note that it will not centre data or headings within columns. This is achieved be either modifying the dictionary items or overriding the dictionary items with a JUSTLEN OpenList modifier. Nor does it centre headings and footings; this is achieved by new format flags in the Heading and Footing commands themselves.

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COLFONT - The ColFont modifier is used to modify the font of the column it follows in the SLIST statement. It has the structure

FontName,Pointsize,Type

where

FontName Can be any valid font name

PointSize Can be any valid point size

Type Can be Bold or B for Bold

Italic or I for Italic

Underline or U for Underline

Any or all types can be specified in any combination. Any of these elements can be omitted and their order is irrelevant. E.g. ColFont "Arial,12,B,I" is equivalent to ColFont "B,Arial,I,12", and ColFont "14,I" will carry on using the font name specified by the master Font keyword (or Courier if no Font was specified) but it will change the pointsize to 14 and the face to italic for just this column.

The column header will default to the font of the column unless overridden using ColHdrFont.

Naturally there are a lot more features, the list that follows is almost complete, but to save space in this mailer we've omitted the details - hopefully you can work them out for yourself! If a word already exists in RLIST then SLIST extends the functionality in some way.

COLHDRFONT, COLHDRSHADE, COLHEAD, COLSHADE, FONT, FOOTING, FTRFONT, GRAND-TOTAL, GRID, HDRFONT, HEADING, JUSTLEN, KEEP-TOGETHER, PORTRAIT & LANDSCAPE, PRINTER / (P), SCREEN, SHADE, TEXT JUSTIFIED COLUMNS

SLIST comes with an end user tool for report generation (sort of an EasyWriter but easier to use) and with soft copy docs in Winword format.

It is licensed at 150 USD per developer seat and reasonably priced deployment packs are available!

User response has been VERY positive, as one user put it in a recent posting on www.revelation.com "Found my answer in SLIST. Not only an equal to RLIST but in fact a strong improvement" (Thanks Bob!).

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For a free evaluation please email us at Sales@Sprezzatura.com or fax us at 011 44 181 567 2221. Please note that there may be a delay of up to 7 days in fulfilling your request, please accept our apologies in advance for this!

Finally a major plug for Splaver's OIPI without which this product would not have been possible. Checkout his site at www.jwp.bc.ca/splaversoftware/

Tech Tip Of The Issue

This one is for AREV users and comes from in-house - all this AREV programming we've been doing recently!

I had the most unfortunate experience of losing a pile of AREV code after the system crashed when I hadn't save my program for an hour or so... I know, I know, I've just got so used to Winword autosaving that I forgot to!

So I thought, what about an autosave for the AREV editor? Needless to say it was easier than I'd have believed possible! I just added a hook into our existing replacement indexing hook which simply says

```
If @Tutor = "EDIT" Then

  If BitAnd(Runtime(), 2048) Then

    OsWrite @Record On @Station[-8,8] : ".EDI"

  End

End
```

The first line checks that we are actually in the editor, the second checks that we're in a development version so users don't start calling up complaining about these strange files that have appeared, and the third writes out what was in the editor window.

If you'd forgotten that the editor stored its details in @Record then you weren't alone. In fact we got so excited by this that we quickly hacked together the following program which adds three new softkeys into the editor as follows

Alt-F1 if on a GoSub line, go to that GoSub, if not, show all available GoSubs and let the user choose.

Alt-F2 return to the last place gone from (allows hopping from a GoSub back to where the user was originally.

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Alt-F3 edit the subroutine/function at the current line OR show all called subroutines/functions and allow the user to choose.

Cool or what?!

Remember to change Editor Softkeys use CW EDIT_SOFTKEYS at TCL and put this program compiled in SYSOBJ. Oh yes, and you'll need a simple popup in SYSPOPUPS, and a modified Window_Common with no dimensioned variables!

```
Subroutine Custom_Edit_Softkeys(Branch)
  $Insert SysInclude, Window_Common2%
  Common /EDIT_SOFTKEYS/ CurrentLine@, Var2@, Var3@, Var4@, Var5@
  Declare Function Pop_Up_Soft
  GoneTo = 0
  Locate Branch In "CALL,GOSUB,GOBACK,LOOP" Using "," Setting Pos Then
    On Pos GoSub Call, GoSub, GoBack, Loop
  End
Return

Call:
  Prog = @Record
  Mark = 0 ; Pos = 0
  NewRow = ""
  Subroutines = ""
  Loop
    Remove NextRow From Prog At Pos Setting Mark
    NextRow = Trim(NextRow)
    FoundDec = Indexc(NextRow, "DECLARE ", 1)
    If FoundDec Then
      RestOFLine = Field(NextRow, " ", 3, 999)
      Convert ", " To @Fm In RestOfLine
      Mark2 = 0 ; Pos2 = 0
      Loop
        Remove NextWord From RestOfLine At Pos2 Setting Mark2
        Subroutines := NextWord : @Rm
      While Mark2
      Repeat
    End
    If NextRow[1, 5] _eqc "CALL " Then
      Subrout = Field(NextRow, " ", 2)[1, "("]
      Locate Subrout In Subroutines Using @Rm Setting FoundPos Else
        Subroutines := Subrout : @Rm
      End
    End
  While Mark
  Repeat
```

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```
    Call V119("S", "", "A", "L", Subroutines, Flag)
    Subroutines[-1, 1] = ""
    Convert @Rm To @Fm In Subroutines
    GoSub GoCall
    If Called Else
      ToCall = Pop_Up_Soft("SYSPOPUPS*EDIT_HEADINGS", "", "", "", "",
                            Subroutines)
      GoSub GoCall
    End
Return


GoSub:
  If GoneTo Else
    Prog = @Record
    Mark = 0 ; Pos = 0
    NewRow = ""
    Loop
      Remove NextRow From Prog At Pos Setting Mark
      If NextRow[-1,1] = ":" Then
        NewRow := NextRow : @Rm
      End
    While Mark
    Repeat
    Call V119("S", "", "A", "L", NewRow, Flag)
    NewRow[-1, 1] = ""
    Convert @Rm To @Fm In NewRow
    ToGoTo = Pop_Up_Soft("SYSPOPUPS*EDIT_HEADINGS", "", "", "", "", NewRow)

    GoSub GoTo
  End
Return


GoBack:
  @Data = Char(7) : CurrentLine@ : \0D\
Return


GoTo:
  NewLine = Field(WC_Scribe_State%, @Rm, 2)
  NewLine = Trim(NewLine)
  If Unassigned(ToGoTo) Then
    If Indexc(NewLine, "Gosub", 1) Then
      ToGoTo = Field(NewLine, " ", 2)
    End Else
      ToGoTo = ""
```

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```
        End
    End


    If ToGoTo Then
      Prog = @Record
      Mark = 0 ; Pos = 0
      NewRow = ""
      LineNo = 1
      Found = 0
      Loop
        Remove NextRow From Prog At Pos Setting Mark
        If NextRow[-1,1] = ":" Then
          If NextRow[1, ":"] _eqc ToGoTo[1, ":"] Then
            Found = LineNo
          End
        End

        LineNo += 1
      Until Found
      While Mark
      Repeat
      If Found Then
        CurrentLine@ = Field(WC_Scribe_State%, @Rm, 4)
        @Data = Char(7) : Found : \0D\
        GoneTo = 1
      End Else
        Call Msg("|Subroutine does not exist|Create?|", "BNY", Resp)
        If Resp Then
          @Record := @Fm : @Fm : ToGoTo[1, ":"] : ":" : @Fm : @Fm : "Return"
          CurrentLine@ = Field(WC_Scribe_State%, @Rm, 4)
          @Data = Char(7) : LineNo + 2 : \0D09\
          GoneTo = 1
        End
      End
    End
Return

GoCall:
  NewLine = Field(WC_Scribe_State%, @Rm, 2)
  NewLine = Trim(NewLine)
  If Unassigned(ToCall) Then
    ToCall = ""
    Mark3 = 0 ; Pos3 = 0
    Loop
      Remove NextSub From Subroutines At Pos3 Setting Mark3
      If Indexc(NewLine, NextSub, 1) Then ToCall = NextSub
    Until ToCall
```

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```
      While Mark3
      Repeat
   End


   If ToCall Then
      Convert @Lower.Case To @Upper.Case In ToCall
      VocRow = Xlate("VOC", ToCall, "", "X")
      If Len(VocRow) Then
         File = VocRow<3> : "_SOURCE"
         *@Data = \005418\ : File : \0D\ : ToCall : \0043\
         Execute "EDIT " : File : " " : ToCall
         Called = 1
      End Else
         Called = 0
      End
   End Else
      Called = 0
   End
Return


Expand:
Return
```

ASK SPREZZ - ASK SPREZZ - ASK SPREZZ - ASK SPREZZ

Send your Rev/AREV/OI/OIWG questions to Ask_Sprezz@Sprezzatura.Com and we'll publish answers each issue in SENL.. Please give details in your question, like the version of OI and operating system you are using. Your question is much more likely to be answered if you give full details. Remember that we usually edit the questions for publication but the original question should be a detailed and clear as possible. This is NOT for a replacement for Sprezzatura technical support but is provided as a free service to the community.

As an aside - all queries will be anonymous unless otherwise requested!

A concerned US reader asks

"What RTI resources are currently devoted to AREV and in what areas of development if any?"

Well this is always a difficult question to answer accurately as it depends upon how you define "devoted". If it is meant literally then the simple answer is none. RevSoft announced quite some time ago (March 95) that all development on AREV was shelved and that personnel were being redeployed. That being said there is still a base of AREV knowledge within the company. Whilst this base probably numbers only a few very competent AREV people it is the experience of the support lines that these

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are enough to deal with the problems that come up - especially as forums like Compuserve and the web page have improved.

By the way - don't forget that if you're after talented AREV resource (and of course OI), Aaron Kaplan - RevSoft's leading AREV person - is now freelance and can be contacted at the following

Aaron Kaplan

APpliKations, Inc.

74774.1016@compuserve.com

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/apkaplan

A UK reader asks

"What has become of Quickdex/Rightdex in OI? I can see no sign of them?"

Well, the good news is, they're both still there - the bad news is that you have to add them manually by using Set_Mfs in the system editor or system monitor. Simply type

Run Set_Mfs "TableName", "QUICKDEX.MFS", 3

or whichever parameters you deem appropriate. See the online help for Set_MFS for details.

A Sprezz employee <blush> asks Cameron Purdy

"Why is it so difficult to implement cut and paste in OI? Why do I have to get the selected text and copy it and put it onto the clipboard?"

"Simple" says Cameron, "RTFM"

And much to my chagrin, the online help refers explicitly to Send_Message functions "COPY, CUT and PASTE". Hmmmm, my excuse is they're not mentioned in the list under Send_Message except as branches!

Well worth checking out if you haven't done so already!

Peripheral Trivia

As this issue of S/ENL was put to bed we fed the inner man with:

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- TV: The Simpsons (this is unlikely to change issue on issue although the Simpsons/XFiles crossover will rate a special mention!!)

- Book: "We can remember it for you wholesale" - collected stories Volume 5 - Philip K Dick.

- CD: "Galore" - Greatest Hits of Kirsty MacColl

- WEB: www.unloaded.com

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