

SPREZZATURA

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SEN

February 1997

Sprezzatura's Electronic Newsletter

For Revelation developers by Revelation developers

MAKING DATABASES HAPPEN

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Welcome

WELCOME - to the first issue of S/ENL, the Sprezzatura Electronic Newsletter. We thank you all for joining the mailing list and would just like to remind you of the "raison d'être" for this periodical. The chief intention of S/ENL is to provide an independant communications vehicle for the RevSoft community. Whilst we will be hosting the newsletter we expect others to join in with contributions from time to time, in fact we welcome such contributions!

S/ENL is not intended to be a hagiography - relentlessly praising Revelation Software for everything they do, nor is it intended to be an excuse for pouring vitriol over Revelation Software for any perceived shortcomings. Rather it is intended to be a vehicle to communicate a balanced view of developments within Revelation Software and more importantly to disseminate timely technical information to users!

Sorry that this is just a plain text newsletter but we can't guarantee what reader you'll be using so we've developed it using courier and no graphics. It makes tables and code listings a bitch but...

Ramblings

For those of you who aren't familiar with Sprezzatura - a quick gloss. We are Europe's leading RevSoft consultancy house. We were formed in 1989 (although the principal started his RevSoft career in 1983 when Release C of Revelation was being sold by Cosmos, and the IBM PC was still current (no XT until a year after!)) with the intention of providing the highest quality support for RevSoft related issues. Most of you will have heard of "REVMEDIA - The Developer's Link" - our technical journal for AREV users. Over the coming issues we will be mentioning a few of our products and services, kicking off this issue with REVMEDIA FKB.

It has been an interesting experience setting up this mailing list - not least because it helps us at Sprezz to see what people out there are actually still using. Most telling has been the amount of people who expressed a strong desire to see lots of AREV info here! We're willing to include AREV info of course and will be excerpting former REVMEDIAs. Perhaps AREV users would like to tell us what they'd most like to see updated herein?

On a separate thought - it is obvious that RevSoft have no plans for further AREV development - and as long as they continue to support it with new filing releases such as the NPP who can blame them? I have problems getting support from some manufacturers on software they stopped upgrading a year ago! So that means that AREV is AREV is AREV - which means that we can amend system routines ourselves now (or to be more accurate, add our own verbs to overwrite theirs) to make the system behave as we think it should! We can do this safely without fear of being overwritten by subsequent upgrades! So let us have your ideas of what you'd like to see in AREV! If we can get consensus who knows we might even be able to get a ball rolling!

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A web page you might find interesting to visit is Steve Smith's page at http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/state_of_the_art/ - some nice FREE utilities. For those of you who don't know Steve - he is one of those super friendly propeller heads who does stuff with assembler like you wouldn't believe! Check it out.

We're still struggling to get our web site up and running - we're getting quotes at the moment for someone to look after it for us! Life's too short... <g>.

If you know a RevSoft user who isn't yet on this mailing list (like Mike Ruane at Phoenix or anybody at RevSoft in the UK <g>) then please let them know so we can join as many people together as possible. If this newsletter becomes sufficiently active we'll probably try to create a two way discussion newsgroup!

Next issue will see a brief discussion of JA/REV (as we've decided to code-name the next major release from RevSoft) as well as more articles from you out there in the field. If you're a developer who has a trick to share then please feel free to write in - hey - you can even include a blatant plug for your company or product!

Till then...

Version 3.3 of OpenInsight For Developers

Revelation Software in the UK hosted a Developer's Roundtable on Monday 10th February 1997 with OI development guru Cameron Purdy shipped in from the 'States specially to address the assembled throngs. The weather was awful, which probably explains the lower than expected turnout but those who made it were definitely presented with plenty of food for thought.

The main features of 3.3 can be split into four areas, Data Warehousing Features, INTERNET related features, RDK related features and Reporter features. It was soon apparent that these first two were of limited interest to the UK audiences and that the latter were seen to be of more importance - to paraphrase the mood of the meeting "Stop giving us new features and make the one's we've been given already work properly". Unfortunately it is a truism that standing still is moving backwards if the rest of the world doesn't stop so this is unlikely to happen.

DATA WAREHOUSING

For those developers who've been pot-holing for the past year, the current marketing buzzword is "Data Warehouse" - the storage of all of a company's data from all sources in one location - generally in the Wintel community, in a SQL Server box. It can only be so long before some enterprising software company releases a product specialising in warehousing variable length data and calls it "The Best Little Warehouse In Texts".

In the traditional stance of "Yup - we can tick that box", RevSoft are releasing tools to make it easier to block move data from Linear Hash to SQL Server on a regular basis - scheduled automatically if

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required. Future releases will see the inclusion of a new MFS to track changes so that bulk downloads become unnecessary - only changes will be exported. If the source for this MFS were included it could usefully be modified by users to perhaps export real time so that the warehouse would be concurrent. Of course, shipping source makes it difficult to ship modifications subsequently so I'm not holding my breath on that one!

Frankly we don't need this but as with other Revelation features it is being driven by user requirements so obviously someone out there want it. Presumably someone with a data warehouse ;-^)

INTERNET RELATED FEATURES

This was the highlight of the day to me, marking as it does a major step forward in the positioning of OpenInsight in an increasingly web aware world. Now not EVERYONE wants to be a Web Author but a lot of companies would love to get their database information on the net.

Whilst exact components are unclear at present it seems that the Internet enabling will be split into three areas

Static HTML publishing

Dynamic HTML publishing

Form creation

To examine these areas individually...

Static HTML publishing - the creation of web pages from database information for uploading to a server for browsing there. This will be aided by tools including a sort of RLIST HTML generator.

Dynamic HTML publishing - the creation of web pages on the fly from database information in response to a CGI (Common Gateway Interface) request from a web site. To make this possible OpenInsight will need to be able to respond to a request from a web server, create a response and return it to the web server. Whilst this sounds very exciting I am worried that the fact that OpenEngine is single threaded will make this all but unworkable in practice, unless process server type topologies are employed. This would seem like overkill when a multi-threaded architecture like SQL Server can so easily run on one box. Time will tell on this one.

Form Creation - a utility will be provided to convert OpenInsight forms into HTML based forms for uploading to a web site. Thus the web page would emulate the OpenInsight entry form. Given the currently restrictive nature of form processing on most web browsers it is unlikely that much functionality will be able to be carried across currently but at least the aesthetics of the application will be able to be preserved.

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RDK Related Features

The RDK is a sore point for most developers as it has been promised almost since day one and has attained almost mythical Holy Grail like significance in the lives of developers. Without an easy way of deploying applications developers frequently end up shooting themselves in the foot. It's as though Henry Ford had invented the production line, enabling him to steal a march on his rivals by getting product to market quicker, and then he'd neglected to develop a distribution channel and had his men and women individually push the new cars to their eagerly awaiting customers, whilst his competitors products zoomed past on flat bed trucks.

In RevSoft's defence they have dedicated a huge amount of resource to fixing the RDK problems, but the Web statement that RevSoft "were confident that the RDK in 3.2 was fully working" was nearly as large a gaffe as the old AREV "Lightspeed" debacle.

In a concerted effort to get the RDK finally finished RevSoft have asked all developers deploying apps to ship their apps to RevSoft so they can be tested on the RDK there - not until all apps have been deployed at Boston will the RDK be deemed to be working. This is an incredible offer and we strongly urge all developers to go along with this - if you ship apps, ship a copy of your development system to Boston on CD or ZIP and let them try out the RDK on it.

Reporter Bug Fixes

Associated multi-values remain the worst area of this product but RevSoft have planned to take strides in 3.3 to overcome as many problems as possible. Several long-standing header/footer problems have been quashed as have known GPFs. Does this mean that AMVs will now work to everybody's satisfaction? Frankly I doubt it so for now, we'll continue creating flat files for the Report Designer to work against - it works beautifully then!

REVMEDIA FKB FOR AREV DEVELOPERS

There's a small chance that if you're a new AREV developer you'll never have heard of an almost legendary product from Sprezzatura called "REVMEDIA - The Developer's Link". This was a technical journal devoted to documenting the undocumented about AREV, from version 1.12 upwards. Over its 4 year life, 4 volumes were produced, 40 issues in all, containing over 650 articles of interest to the serious developer.

These articles have been collated and created as softcopy in knowledgebase format so that all of this information can now be at your fingertips - keyword and free text searchable. The four volumes would have cost you \$796 in all if you were a subscriber and many have commented that it was the best investment of their development career.

The diskette is now on sale at the ludicrously low price of \$79 to existing subscribers, \$150 to new subscribers. (US)

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To order, simply email sales@sprezzatura.com, or in Oz you can contact Xltech. Give us your mailing address and in a few days you'll be holding a copy of REVMEDIA FKB and an invoice payable in US funds on a US bank. If you want to pay in another currency contact us for details.

As an example of the sort of information contained we present below a typical article (though we hasten to add that not all articles are this big!

Taken from Vol4 Issue 7.

Changed SEC for 3.0

Jens Diederichs writes "Has anybody been playing with the revised (for AREV 3.0) version of SEC() yet? I used to be able to use the SEC(6) call to encrypt passwords as per RevMedia Vol 1 Issue 6. Some calls to SEC (such as 7) still work. A '6' call still works from a window but from TCL falls over. There is obviously something very simple here that I am missing - any guesses?"

As Jens noted, SEC has fundamentally changed for version 3. This is a function of a number of things - not least of which is that security had been harmonised and centralised in the system. SEC still takes 1 parameter but instead of a range of 1 to 12, the parameters can now be from 1 to 19. In addition SEC expects to always find Window_Common% loaded. If you wish to call it from your own program (not from a window) you must load a modified version of Window_Common% in which the WC_W% array is dimmed to a number rather than WC_WCnt%, then you must ClearCommon. Note also that some of the operations only make sense from a window and that these operations will require full Window_Common%.

This table shows code followed by description.

1	Closes window if application is not SYSPROG.
2	Provides a popup of valid usernames. If WC_Register%(1) is loaded with an account name (see 18) then only users for this account will be displayed.
3	Provides a popup of valid applications
4	Provides a popup of valid environments
5	Calls the ACCOUNTLOGTO window and permits the alteration of characteristics of the logto password. Note that it expects @Record to be loaded with the Application row from SysEnv with Field 1 replaced with the Application name rather than the word "ACCOUNT". For details of how to load @Record in this fashion see the documentation on

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	SECUREACCOUNT_SUB later in this issue. Note that this call will only work in SYSPROG.
6	Encrypts contents of @Ans
7	Used as an Oconv to display "<Encrypted>" message
8	Used to load a User row into the current row from a window. Place on the post prompt process of the username prompt and @Record will be loaded from that SysEnv row. This works from any account.
9	Used to save a User row as loaded by 8. This only works from SysProg
10	Used to load an Application row into the current row from a window. Place on the post prompt process of the application name prompt and @Record will be loaded from that SysEnv row. This works from any account.
11	Used to save an application row as loaded by 10. This only works from SysProg.
12	Used to validate an entry as a valid application name. Used as an edit pattern, it will set Status() accordingly and display an error message if the entry in @Ans is not an application
13	This is used by a large number of SysWindows and is therefore probably "Kill if RunTime" but until a 3.0 RunTime is available it will not be possible to test this.
14	Calls the ACCOUNTADVANCED window and permits the alteration of characteristics of the application. Note that it expects @Record to be loaded with the Application row from SysEnv with Field 1 replaced with the Application name rather than the word "ACCOUNT". For details of how to load @Record in this fashion see the documentation on SECUREACCOUNT_SUB later in this issue. Note that this call will only work in SYSPROG.
15	Used to delete an account or user. Only works in SysProg
16	Takes the value of @Ans and ensures that it is a valid location by truncating any directory name to 8 characters. Used as an edit pattern, looks for its input in @Ans. Therefore C:\AREV\TEST123456 would be returned as C:\AREV\TEST1234

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17	Used by the Account window to warn you if you change a location that you have to move the Dos files as well. (B276)
18	Used by the AccountUser window on a post initialise when looking at the users for an application. Seems only to load WC_Register%(1) with the name of the application.
19	Used by Account window to call AccountUser window.

Tech Tip Of The Issue

This one comes from Anders Lindholt in Denmark - thanks Anders!

If you want colors in edit_table: I use the following:trick -

In an edit_table I make a column containing the the color code. Using COLSTYLE I hide the column.

On gotfocus at the table:

```
declare function send_event, send_message
  arr = .dbtable_type->array
  items = arr<1>
  ctrl = @window : ".DBTABLE_TYPE"
  for x = 1 to count(items,@vm) + (items ne "" )
    colors = arr<10>
    color = colors<1,x>
    retv = send_message(ctrl,"COLOR_BY_POS",3,x,color)
  next x
```

On dblclick on column "TP" :

```
declare function send_message
  rowd = .dbtable_type->rowdata
  selpos = .dbtable_type->selpos
  if selpos<1,1> = 3 then
    color = utility("CHOOSECOLOR", @window,"")
    ctrl = @window : ".DBTABLE_TYPE"
    msg = "COLOR_BY_POS"
    retv = send_message(ctrl,msg,selpos<1,1>,selpos<2,1>,color)
    rowd<10> = color
    .dbtable_type->rowdata= rowd
  end
```

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!)
- ☑ Book: "A White Merc With Fins" – James Hawes
- ☑ CD: "Ain't talking 'bout dub" - Apollo 440
- ☑ WEB <http://www.revelation.com> <g>

Join us :	Send Mail to Admin@Sprezzatura.com with subject SUBSCRIBE SENL or complete our online registration form .
Leave Us:	Send Mail to Admin@Sprezzatura.com with subject UNSUBSCRIBE SENL
Change of Address:	Leave at the old address & join at the new one
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S/ENL Volume 1 Issue 1, 14th February 1997.

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