

WebFOCUS Open Portal Services Enhancements

by Gil Rodriguez

With WebFOCUS 7.7.02, Information Builders introduced some enhancements to WebFOCUS Open Portal Services, such as the ability for administrators to control WebFOCUS reporting tools access for end users and for developers to administer the report component.

Controlling WebFOCUS Reporting Tools Access

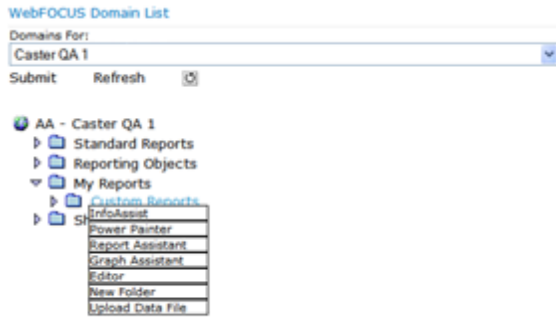
The ability to control WebFOCUS Reporting Tools access originally was introduced in our WebFOCUS Business Intelligence Dashboard. This feature, now available in Open Portal Services, gives administrators the flexibility and ability to display a subset of the available reporting tools to users until they receive proper training. It also makes it possible to make the necessary changes when the use of a tool is discontinued at a site.

By default, WebFOCUS Open Portal Services checks whether valid licenses are available for Power Painter and InfoAssist components. If valid licenses are found for these tools, the corresponding entries are included as folder menu options, and they can be selected. If you are an administrator, WebFOCUS Open Portal Services gives you the option to disable the selection of the WebFOCUS tools by removing their entries from the folder menu options.

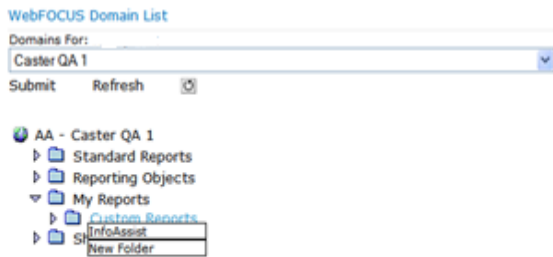
The Reporting Tools are the following:

- HTML Report Assistant
- HTML Graph Assistant
- InfoAssist
- Power Painter
- Text Editor
- Upload Data File

Screens 1 and 2 illustrate what you see when a user is logged into a SharePoint Portal configured to hide all the tools except InfoAssist. **Screen 1** displays all available tool menu options from Custom Reports. **Screen 2** displays only InfoAssist, as does the Reporting Objects menu.



Screen 1



Screen 2

Here are the steps to disable the WebFOCUS tools:

1. Navigate to the following directory on the machine where the WebFOCUS client is installed:
`\ibi\WebFOCUS77\worp\conf`
2. Open the `bid-config.xml` file in an editor.
3. Locate the variables for the WebFOCUS tools. There is an `enable` variable for each WebFOCUS tool. For example, here is the variable for the Advanced Graph Assistant tool:

```
<internal-var name="enableInfoAssist" value="true"/>
```

4. The default variable setting is set to enable the WebFOCUS tool (true). If you want to disable the tool, set the variable to false, as shown in the following example:

```
<internal-var name=" enableInfoAssist" value="false"/>
```

5. After making changes to the `bid-config.xml` file, save the file, use the WebFOCUS Console to clear the memory cache, or restart the application.

Note: These changes are global variable changes that can affect Dashboard views. Dashboard views that require a different variable setting must be set on a per-view basis in View Builder.

Developer Access

Prior to WebFOCUS 7.7.02 only Administrators were able to add or modify reports on the Report WebFOCUS component when the component was used as a fixed report. The `userrunonly` parameter specifies the mode that can be set for the WebFOCUS Report component. If the `userrunonly` parameter is set to `yes`, the Report component is used. A fixed report and any user that does not have MR Administrator privileges can only view this block, but not change it.

In 7.7.02, we introduced the `developeraccess` parameter, which when set to `yes` allows users with a developer role defined in the Managed Reporting Environment (MRE) to add or modify fixed reports when the `userrunonly` parameter also is set to `yes`. By default, the `developeraccess` parameter is set to `no`.

Business Intelligence Portal: The New Face of WebFOCUS

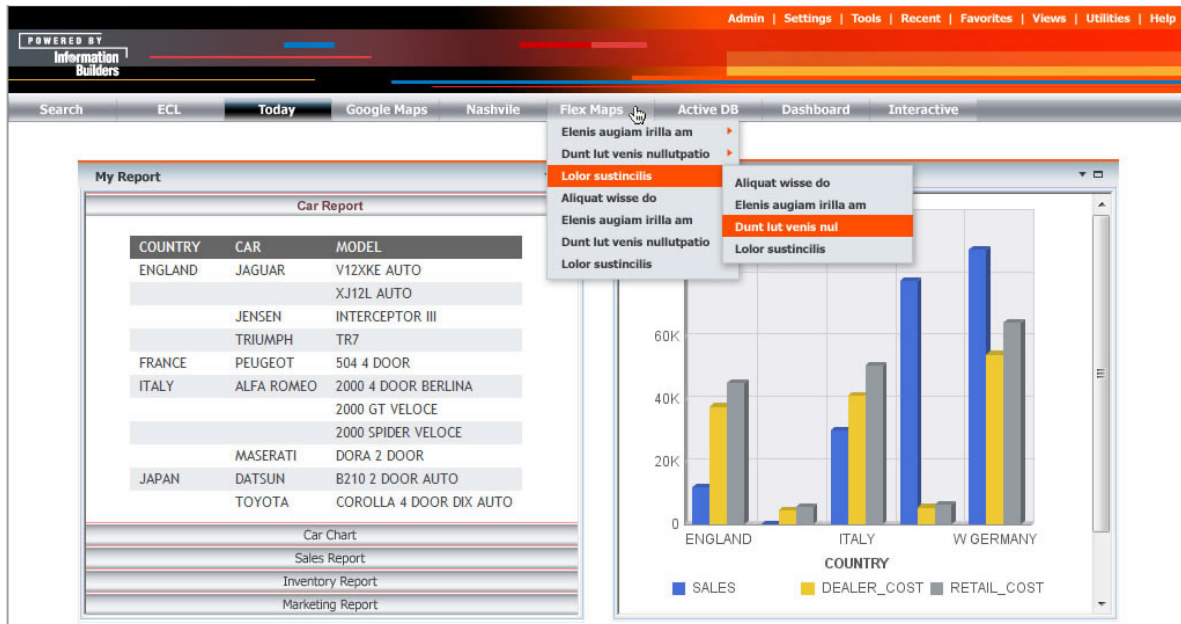
By Matthew Lerner

A lot has changed since I gave you a sneak peak in 2009 at the WebFOCUS Business Intelligence Portal ("Sneak Preview: WebFOCUS BI Portal," November/December 2009 http://www.informationbuilders.com/new/newsletter/10-5/04_lerner).

First, I want to make it clear that Information Builders will continue supporting the Business Intelligence Dashboard (BID). We highly recommend that you use the new Business Intelligence Portal (BI Portal) for any new applications to take advantage of its advanced features.

Secondly, let's cover some terminology. We call an individual site a portal now, not a view. We call an individual tab/page a page, not a tab. In addition, we call the content container a container, not a content block.

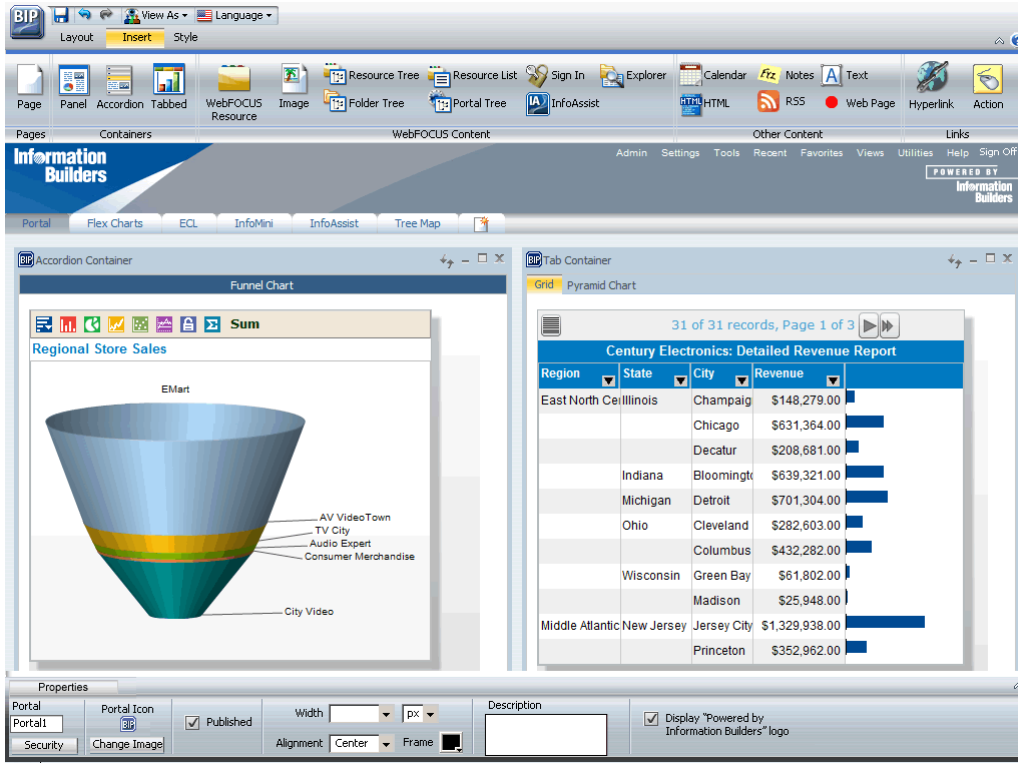
One thing you may have noticed from the terminology is that BID really was about building dashboards, which are much more limited in scope than a portal. One of the main goals in the new BI Portal is to allow you to build true portals or websites. Rather than a flat hierarchy of tabs, you can have pages as many levels deep as you want (See **Screen 1**).



Screen 1: WebFOCUS BI Portal showing multilevel navigation

Not only can you put as many pages as you want in a single portal, but you also can control who sees what. That means you no longer have to design one portal for your sales team and another for marketing when all that is different is a few pages. Now you can build one and put security on the pages to restrict access when appropriate.

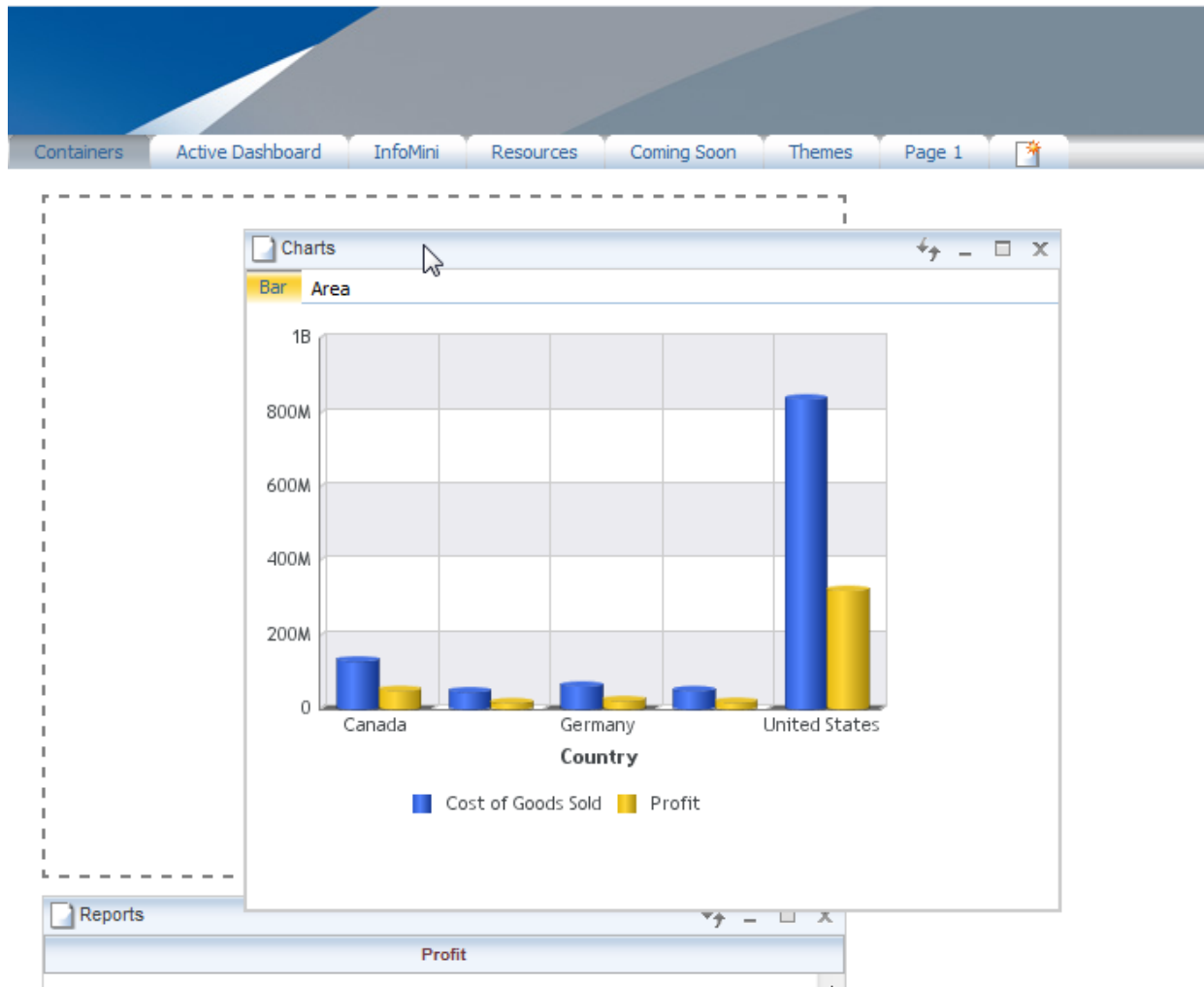
Now let's talk about some of the exciting features. As I explained in the 2009 article, portals are created using the same Ribbon interface exposed in WebFOCUS InfoAssist. You do not need to write any code and you can customize practically everything. No longer will you be jumping back and forth between View Builder and BID to see if your design works. Now you can see it right away with our live preview. Editing using the designer (**Screen 2**) is how you create the Master version of the portal.



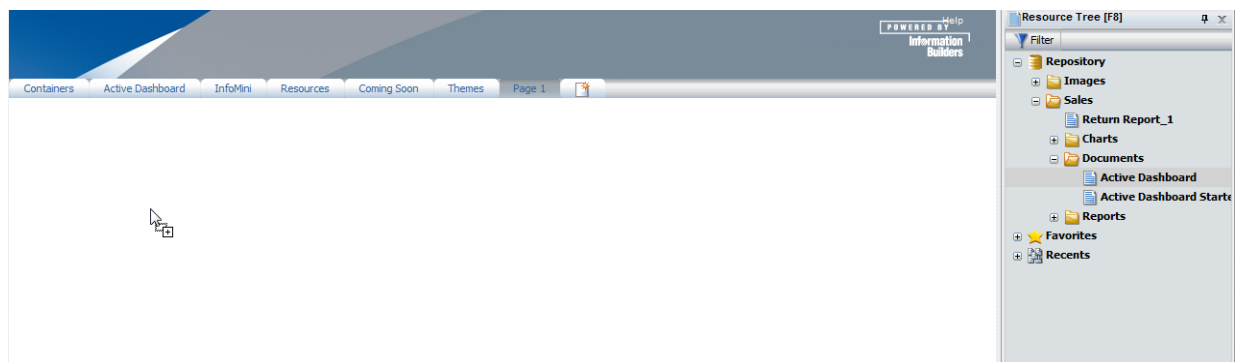
Screen 2: BI Portal Designer

Personalization is even simpler. A user can move content around (**Screen 3**), unless you lock it, hide content, etc. The user can even create a new page by clicking on the new page tab at the end of the navigation menu (**Screen 3**).

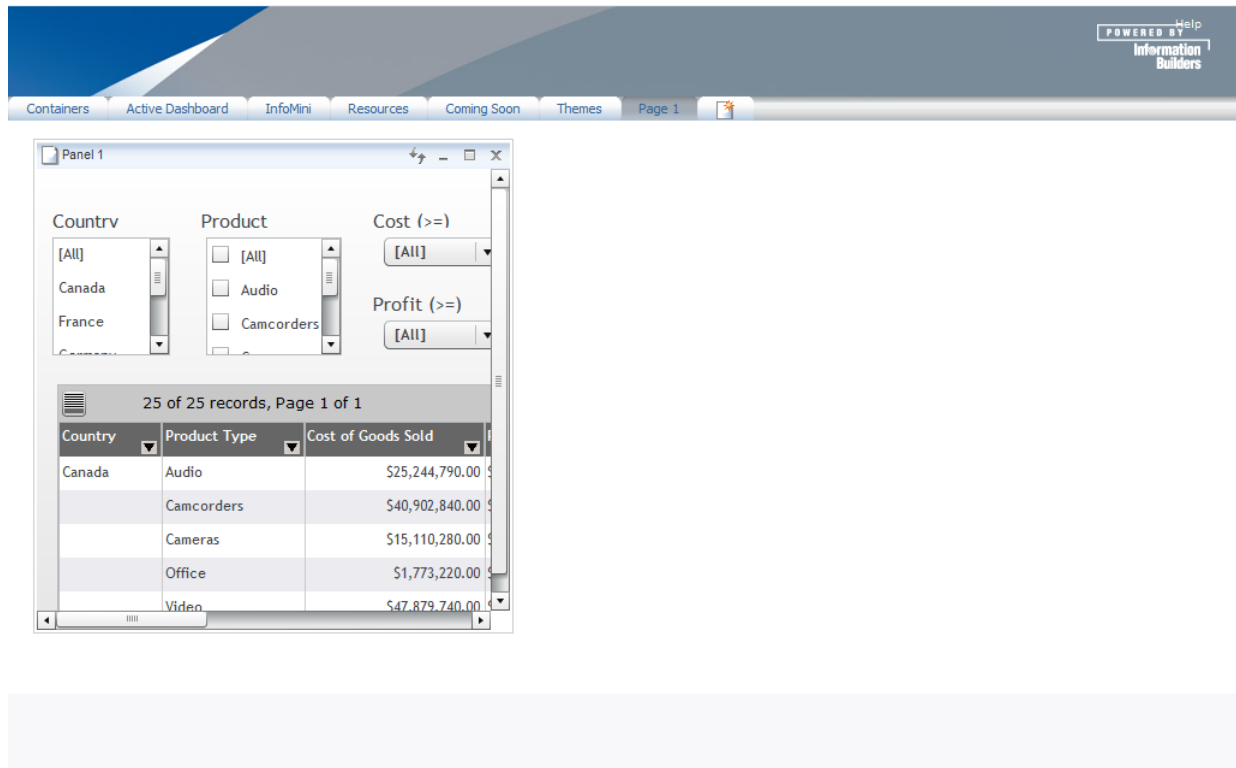
In addition, you can then drag and drop a report onto the page (**Screen 4**). The report will then appear in a new panel container (**Screen 5**). The user can position and/or resize the report as well as change the page layout.



Screen 3: Move a report in a column layout page



Screen 4: Drag and drop a report onto blank page



Screen 5: The report appears in new panel

WebFOCUS BI Portal will open a world of possibilities for you in WebFOCUS 8. To learn more, come and see us at a local user group (http://www.informationbuilders.com/support/userforum/local_event), a virtual one (recordings at : <http://www.informationbuilders.com/support/developers/webcasts>), or our annual Summit (<http://www.informationbuilders.com/events/summit>) in June.

Location Intelligence: Why Should You Care?

by Mithu Datta

Business Intelligence (BI) and Location Intelligence (LI) are pieces of the same puzzle, and it is my contention that whenever thinking about BI, we should factor in this other piece as well. However, people often miss the LI piece, and that is something I aim to change with this article – by showing how a traditional BI user can reap the benefits of Location Intelligence.

Location Intelligence is the process of using location to organize data to develop decision support systems. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) drive LI. GIS consists of hardware and software used for storage, retrieval, mapping and analysis of geographic data. These systems have been around for ages in the commonly used form of maps.

Digital conversion of maps has enabled storing their data information in databases, and as a result, now we can overlay different maps. In the old days, this would mean making maps on transparent paper and overlaying both maps. Before the advent of GIS, to answer the question, "Show me all the populated areas that are in the path of the hurricane," we would have two transparent maps and overlay a map of hurricane paths with a map of densely populated areas. This would show intersecting geographies, allowing us to query different sets of information based on location. As such, two traditionally unrelated sources of information that are often overlooked can be analyzed using a common location.

Location is a critical component of all business transactions. Although most of the data used in BI has location components (e.g., customers, stores, arrests, hurricanes), this factor is seldom used. Location Intelligence benefits Business Intelligence by adding multidimensional analysis using visually compelling analysis. Traditionally, where BI analyzes the how and when components, LI analyzes the where component. With this where component, businesses can gain valuable information and insight for decision-making and ultimately achieve a competitive edge over other businesses.

It might be worthwhile to analyze how implementing Location Intelligence could benefit Business Intelligence in different industries. Let us take in to consideration a few industries in which LI would be particularly useful – retail, insurance and public safety.

Retail



Implementing the principles of Location Intelligence is the right investment for retailers focused on improving their supply chain and operations. Location Intelligence complements Business Intelligence through adding demographics. Knowing where demand is and where products are improves decision-making for the following reasons:

- Identifying optimal store locations based on buying data and trends
- Forecasting and demand planning
- Comparing the success rate of store concepts between markets and stores
- Optimizing product placement with marketing campaigns
- Reducing damage and theft

Insurance



Bill Sinn, Strategic Industry Director, Insurance Practice, at Pitney Bowes Business Insight, lists some of the ways in which Location Intelligence can help insurers make better decisions:

- Assess portfolio risk aggregation and exposure
- View policy addresses in proximity to risk factors
- Analyze and visualize total financial exposure to events
- Manage reinsurance treaties and geographic risk

Public Safety



Crime analysis by law enforcement agencies involves identifying and analyzing crime patterns and trends. This requires utilizing a wealth of information already maintained by these agencies into systematic and visually compelling results. Law enforcement agencies use data to develop crime prevention strategies and preparedness for future criminal activities. Here are some of the ways law enforcement agencies utilize Location Intelligence:

- Improve emergency dispatching through identifying the exact location of an event
- Predictive crime analysis
- Improve emergency preparedness

To summarize, following are the reasons it makes sense to incorporate Location Intelligence in a traditional Business Intelligence solution:

1. Address matching: Allow geocoding of addresses to show visual patterns.
2. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) analysis: Location Intelligence relies on core GIS concepts. GIS is the process of acquiring, analyzing and displaying data tied with location. This allows businesses to not only analyze patterns but also analyze unrelated data with intersecting locations.
3. Demographic analysis: As it relates to a business marketing strategy, businesses can use GIS systems to analyze demographic data to find regions to sell their products or services. It can help with the establishment of businesses and the state of the potential job candidates in the area. The objective of GIS is to identify new market trends from the analyzed research to grow marketing content.
4. Utilize business models to make predictive analysis: By blending applicable location content such as zip code mapping into current business strategies and workflow, location intelligence can help businesses optimize capital investments, improve compliance, and generate more revenue.

Flat Files and FILEDEF

by Art Greenhaus

Users who create a **HOLD** file in one session sometimes have found they cannot read those same files at a later time, when used in **JOINS**. They used **FILEDEF** to point to the files, but the data still appeared incorrect.

As an example, try this:

```
TABLE FILE CAR
PRINT COUNTRY
ON TABLE HOLD AS H1
END
```

The data held was as follows:

```
COUNTRY
-----
ENGLAND
FRANCE
ITALY
JAPAN
W GERMANY
```

If we re-issue the **FILEDEF**, and issue a **JOIN**, as you see here:

```
FILEDEF H1 DISK H1.FTM
JOIN COUNTRY IN H1 TO COUNTRY IN CAR AS J1
END
```

```
TABLE FILE H1
PRINT COUNTRY CAR
END
```

What you get is this:

```
COUNTRY      CAR
-----      ---
ENGLAND      JAGUAR
ENGLAND      JENSEN
ENGLAND      TRIUMPH
```

Where did all the other countries go?

Well, to answer that question, you have to understand a few things, as to how the output file was created, and subsequently read.

When you say `HOLD`, data is written to disk in internal (`BINARY`) format by default (this may be changed by setting `HOLDDEF` to `ALPHA`). Alphas are human readable, with their length rounded up to a multiple of 4 bytes, but numerics are stored in their “internal” format (Integer = 4 bytes, Float = 4 bytes, Double = 8 bytes, etc.). Alternatively, you could say `HOLD FORMAT ALPHA`, in which case all the data is transformed into “human-readable” format.

With `HOLD FORMAT ALPHA`, each record ends in a C/R L/F. Since all values are human-readable, we read each record until we encounter the end-of-record indicator. However, with `BINARY` data, we can't look for a C/R L/F, as that could also be a data value. So, for `BINARY` data, we want to read the correct number of bytes for each record. Since we're reading bytes, we don't need the C/R L/F after each record, which is why all the data appears on a single line.

So, how do we indicate to `FOCUS` to read a number of bytes, rather than until C/R L/F? We use the `FILEDEF` command. When the `FILEDEF` has a `LRECL` (Logical RECOrd Length) with a `RECFM` (RECOrd FoRMat of 'F'), we read by number of bytes, not until C/R L/F.

You can see this by issuing a '`? FILEDEF`' after the `HOLD`. You'll see a `LRECL` and `RECFM` of 'F', when the data is `BINARY`, and an `LRECL` of 0 and a `RECFM` of 'V' for human-readable data (`HOLD FORMAT ALPHA`).

In the previous example, you'll note the `FILEDEF` we issued had no `LRECL` or `RECFM`. The default `RECFM` is 'V', with an `LRECL` of 0. Thus, we expected the line to end in C/R L/F, and we ignored any undescribed data on the record. That's why only the first country was displayed.

Thus, to issue the “correct” `FILEDEF` for the data, the `LRECL` should be 12 (`COUNTRY` is 10 bytes, rounded up to 12), with a `RECFM` of F. And, if we re-issue the `FILEDEF` as:

```
FI H1 DISK H1.FTM (LRECL 12 RECFM F
```

We retrieve all the countries.

Alternatively, we could `HOLD` the original data `FORMAT ALPHA`, in which case the `FILEDEF` without `LRECL` and `RECFM` (taking the defaults) would have worked.

If the extract was a single segment (no `JOIN` involved), `FOCUS` would normally read the data correctly, because single-segment processing is much simpler, and, when more data exists on a single line than is described, the rest is assumed to be another record. With multi-segment processing, because there are significantly more capabilities (`RECTYPE`, `MAPFIELD`, `OCCURS`, etc.), this assumption is not made.

In release 7.7, a new file attribute, `IOTYPE`, was added, to indicate how the data should be read. This sets the correct `LRECL` and `RECFM` for files on the `FILEDEF`.

Developer Studio 7.7.02 – Nested Applications

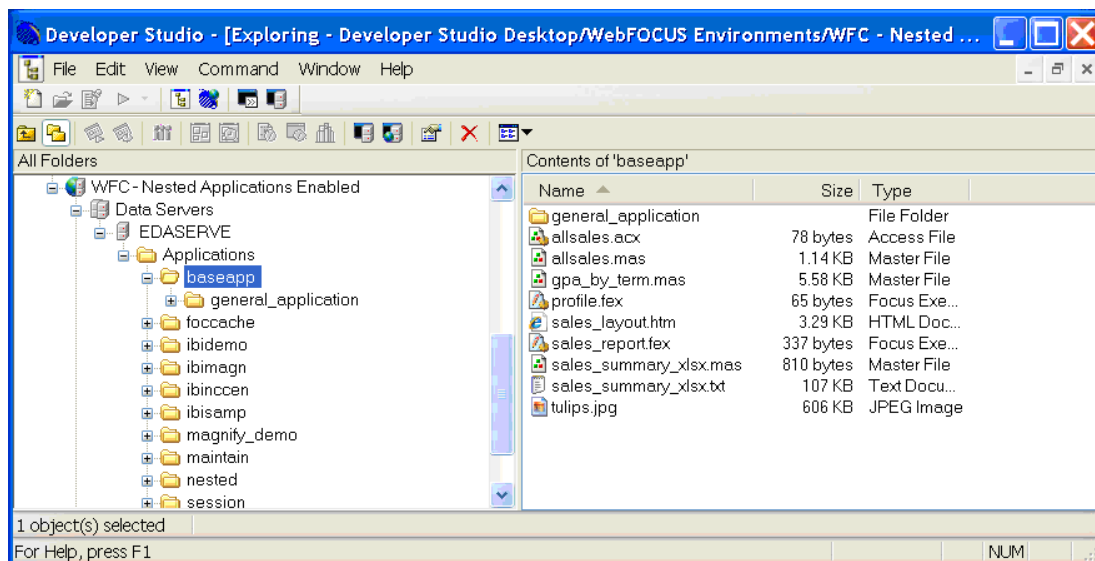
by Maria Volant

Starting with Developer Studio 7.7.02, Developer Studio provides support for Nested Applications, a feature first introduced in the Reporting Server in Release 7.7. This feature allows developers to better manage their applications and files while working in Developer Studio against a Reporting Server that has the feature enabled.

The Nested Applications feature is exposed in the Developer Studio Data Servers area. In order to use this feature while working in Developer Studio, it must be turned ON both in the Reporting Server as well as in the Developer Studio client – or in the WebFOCUS client if working against a remote WebFOCUS Environment.

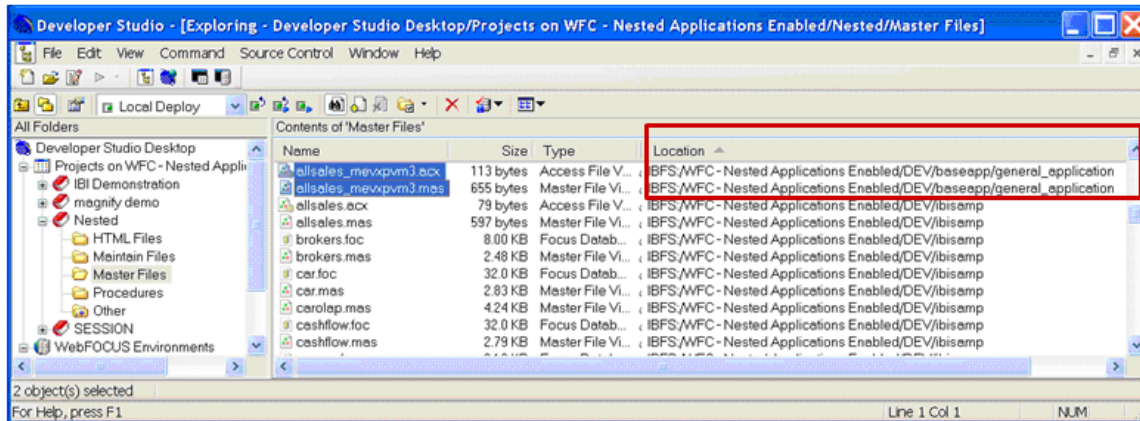
Developers working in the Data Servers area of Developer Studio, while the Nested Applications feature is enabled on both the client and the server, are presented with a physical view of the application content. See **Screen 1**.

Developers are allowed to organize the application content any way they want. They can create sub-folders and files at any level under an application. For example, they would be able to create procedures, master files, HTML files, subfolders, as well as perform other operations such as rename, edit, delete, copy/paste, and so on. The application virtual folders (e.g., Master Files, HTML Files, etc.) are not displayed by default, as these may not apply to the file/directory structure being created.



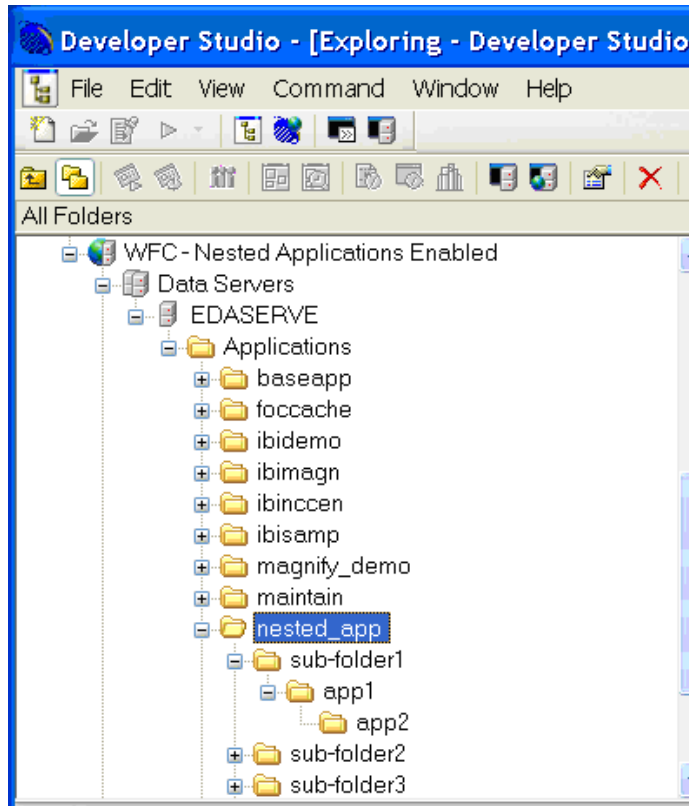
Screen 1

When working in the Local Projects area of Developer Studio and using a Reporting Server that has Nested Applications enabled, all the files available under the nested applications will be listed based on the results of an `APP PATH` command. The Location column on the right side of the Explorer window will display the location of the files, as shown by the red rectangle on **Screen 2**.



Screen 2

When adding nested applications to the `APP PATH`, only the parent application names need to be specified in the `APP PATH` command. Subfolders under nested applications are implicitly included in the `APP PATH` and do not need to be specified. For instance, say that we add the application called `nested_app` on **Screen 3** to the `APP PATH`, when accessing files while working under the `nested_app` application. The search path will first look for files under `nested_app`, followed by `sub-folder1`, followed by `app1`, then `app2`, then `sub-folder2`, and so on.



Screen 3

To enable the Nested Applications feature on the Reporting Server, follow these steps:

1. Open the Web Console.
2. Navigate to Workspace, Configuration/Monitor.
3. Double-click on Application Settings on the left.
4. Set `nested_app` to `y` on the right.
5. Restart the Reporting Server.

To enable the Nested Applications feature on WebFOCUS or Developer Studio client, follow this set of steps:

1. Open the WebFOCUS Administration Console.
2. Click on Configuration.
3. Click on Custom Settings
4. Enter `IBFS_enabled=yes` and click the Save button.
5. Restart the Web server.

Remember that to use the Nested Applications feature while working in Developer Studio, the feature needs to be turned ON on both the Reporting Server and the Developer Studio client if doing local development, or in the WebFOCUS client if doing remote development. For more information, see the *Nested Applications 7.7.02* technical memo.



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