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So You Think You Wanna Be a CNC? (or at Least Know What Yours Is Talking About?): Part II

By Gregg Larkin

Editor's Note: *We're back again in the merry ole land of CNC with Gregg Larkin, who continues his quest to help CNC newbies and others looking to better understand the key concepts that make the magic happen in EnterpriseOne®. Follow Gregg down the yellow brick Path codes, and see the truth behind Data Sources in Part II of this series. By next installment, you'll be humming, "We're out of the woods, we're out of the dark, we're out of the night…." when it comes to understanding CNC lingo.*

Introduction – Data Sources and OCM: The Man Behind the Curtain

In the classic 1939 movie, The Wizard of OZ, my favorite line is "Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain" as Toto tugs at a curtain revealing a man twisting and turning knobs and dials to power the gigantic floating head that is the face of the great and powerful Wizard of Oz. In our world, EnterpriseOne is the giant floating head, the CNC is the guy spinning the knobs and dials, and the magic behind the scenes are Data Sources and Object Configuration Management.

In Part I of this series (or as Andy calls it, Gregg's Brain Dump), we covered at a high level, Objects, OCMs, and Environments. We hope we have given you an idea of how complex a JDE® System can be. In this part, we'll take a look at Path Codes and Data Sources. Those concepts are unique to EnterpriseOne and are not something that you will find in managing a different ERP application like SAP® or PeopleSoft®. In Part III of this series, we'll follow the yellow brick road over to the Land of OCM. The screen shots in this article are all from XE, but the concepts relate to all releases of EnterpriseOne. Whether they will bear any relationship to Fusion is anyone's guess.

Pathcodes

Pathcodes and Environments are close cousins. An environment is a combination of business data and application code. A pathcode is a grouping of objects that defines the application. In the development lifecycle of EnterpriseOne, application code moves its way up and down the pathcode tree. At the base of the tree, we have the development pathcode, DVxxx. This is a set of objects that the developers use to build and modify the application. When the code is ready for testing, it is promoted up to the Prototype (PYxxx) pathcode. In the PY pathcode, users and developers test out the new or modified code to make sure that everything works as required. If there is a problem with the code, it moves back down to the development pathcode for more tweaking. If the code is OK, then it moves up to the production (PDxxx) pathcode. Off to the side, most companies also have the "pristine" pathcode JDxxx. That is the set of objects that ship with the system directly from Oracle. One of the recommended best practices is to have the pristine environment available for testing. If a company runs into a misbehaving application, the Oracle® development team may request that they try running the application in Pristine mode to determine if the bug is something that Oracle needs to take responsibility to fix, or if it is something self inflicted.

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Each pathcode consists of a central-objects data source and a directory of objects. The objects are a collection of business function code, files, object files, dynamic link libraries (DLLs), and specifications. When we move up to the most current release, 8.12, specification files disappear and become entries in the database. When we build a package, we need to specify which pathcode we are building the package for. This tells EnterpriseOne which set of central objects to recompile. When we deploy a package to an enterprise server, terminal, or Web server, E1 uses the pathcode definition to determine the right set of code to push out to the server.

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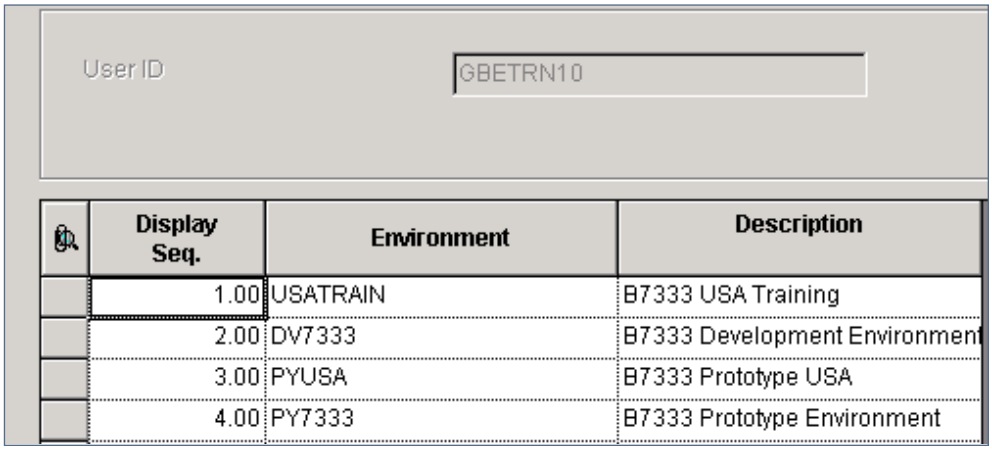
At runtime, EnterpriseOne looks at both the server that a user is logging on to, as well as the security tables, to determine which environments to display in the dropdown environment box. For example, in Figure 1 we have the environment choices presented to a user on a terminal server. Those choices were determined by the list of environments assigned to that user as shown in Figure 2 and the environments installed on the terminal servers as shown in Figure 3. If a user or his or her group is not assigned access to a specific environment, it will not show up in the available options. If a user is assigned access to a number of environments, but only a subset of environments is installed on the terminal or Web server, the full list of environments will not be displayed for the user.

Figure 1: Environment Choices



Display Seq.	Environment	Description
1.00	USATRAIN	B7333 USA Training
2.00	DV7333	B7333 Development Environment
3.00	PYUSA	B7333 Prototype USA
4.00	PY7333	B7333 Prototype Environment

Figure 2: Assigned Environments

How many environments does a company need? That's an excellent question; one that will vary from company to company and from time to time. If a company is just starting out with E1, and has not gone live, it may only have one or two environments. As the project matures, additional pathcodes and environments will develop. Most companies will have at least four pathcodes: DV (development), PY (testing), PD (production), and JD (the stuff that Oracle shipped). An environment is a combination of the pathcode and business data. As a bare minimum, there will be at least one environment for every pathcode. But can there be more? Sure. You can have multiple testing environments so that more than one project at a time can work without stepping on each other. You can have multiple production

Figure 3: Installed Environments