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On Reporting

Current Trends Around the Use of the JD Edwards Report Writing Tool

By Penny Allen

E1 Editor's Note: *Penny Allen has been in the trenches with ERW as a consultant and as an instructor for many years; during that time, she's observed a great deal about how companies see JDE reporting. As a primer for her Collaborate presentation this April, we asked Penny to share with us what she's been seeing and hearing regarding the way this tool is used, what people tend not to know about it, and how companies could be maximizing their use of ERW to improve their reporting capabilities.*

As a consultant and trainer in JD Edwards® development and reporting tools, it seems like more and more lately I am hearing comments that drive home to me the fact that many clients are confused, uninformed, or worse yet, misinformed about the JDE® report writing tool (ERW). Add in the fact that there are so many other 3rd party report development tools out there, and it all becomes quite mind boggling.

I would like to share with you some things I've learned while training or consulting on how companies see JDE reporting

Batch Jobs ALWAYS Look Like This and Cannot be Modified – SAY IT ISN'T SO!!!!

This one kills me: I recently had a student in one of my development classes who was a very experienced JDE E8.12 user. As the client's Business Analyst, he had been on the original implementation team. The vendor that did the implementation for them (who shall remain nameless) actually told them that all of their batch jobs—those ugly, out of the box batch jobs such as purchase orders, work orders, checks etc.—“are what they are and cannot be modified.” This is so not true!!

In this example, the client was only requesting a simple font size change, nothing fancy or time consuming. They ended up purchasing a “bolt on solution” to modify the output of some of their documents. While this seems like a quick resolution, it is actually not effective at all. Instead, what often happens in this scenario is that a single, in-house developer, trained to use the new solution, soon becomes back logged, causing project delays and frustration. I have also noted that for some reason, the same developer is never trained on both the JDE report writing tool and whatever add-on solution they are using. Therefore, they don't know what can or cannot be done with JDE. To make matters worse with this particular story, the “bolt on solution” required the use of a separate server that was apparently quite fickle and would tend to hang up and crash. This student confessed to me that had he known then what he knows now, he would have

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pushed for the JDE development work, first before considering a bolt on solution to their documentation needs.

So what can you do if you're caught in the "this is the way batch jobs look, deal with it" mode? I would say that there are two sub-groups with regards to batch jobs: simple reports without a lot of event rule logic, and then what I call the "big honking batch jobs", the purchase order being a classic example. These are batch jobs that not only create output in the form of a document, but update the data base as well and contain extraordinary amounts of event rule logic. The batch jobs are generally referred to as UBEs (Universal Batch Engine). The output of the JDE UBEs has always lacked a professional look. Your company will definitely need to modify many, if not most, of the batch jobs. It's a big undertaking, and one that requires a well thought out development strategy. If your choice is to use the JDE report writing tool (and why not, you already have it and you've already paid for it), you can go one of three ways. You can create a new UBE from scratch, copy the original to make a new custom UBE that is a totally separate object, or you can make changes to the original UBE.

Let's talk first about the simple reports that don't require a lot of event rule logic. With this scenario, I would generally recommend a new UBE (either copied from existing or added as new). The JDE naming convention allows the client to use a custom system code (55-59) to prevent objects from being overwritten. Let's use report R014021 as an example. If you were to copy and create a new one instead of making changes to the original, a good naming convention for a new custom object would be R55014021. The system code 55 (immediately following the 'R') designates it as custom, and Oracle will never create a new object using that code. By including the '014021' in the object name field, you would know that this program is a copy of the JDE R01402.

Figure1 is an example of R014021 exactly as it comes "out of the box" with JDE. It is a very simple report, and certainly not very professional looking.

R014021		Worldwide Company One Line Per Address				20/01/2011 8:16:58			
Address Number	Alpha Name	Area Code	Phone Number	Mailing Name	Address Line 1	City	State	Postal Code	Country
4342	SPD Freight Company	212	555-6875	SPD Freight Company	1281 Sixteenth Avenue	New York City	NY	10032	United States
6218	Stanford Office Building			Stanford Office Building	9800 East Gateway Blvd.	Denver	CO	80207	USA
5662	Stewart, Richard			Richard Stewart	474 Russell	Thornton	CO	80231	USA
5886	Stewart, Sharon			Sharon Stewart	474 Russell	Thornton	CO	80231	USA
7554	Stewart, Kevin			Kevin Stewart	474 Russell	Thornton	CO	80231	USA
1537	Tamered Books	303	555-4949	Tamered Books	2711 E First Ave	Denver	CO	80206	USA
3005	Technology Systems	404	629-3400	Technology Systems	Peachtree Center	Atlanta	GA	30303	USA
4251	The Fuel Brokers			The Fuel Brokers	45976 Smith Avenue	Toronto	ON	M2J 5C2	Canada
4327	The Parcels Store - Chicago			Packages to Go	350 Michigan Ave.	Chicago	IL	60601	USA
4326	The Parcels Store - Denver			Packages to Go	7635 Bellevue Ave.	Denver	CO	80237	USA
3121	Thornton Engineering			Thornton Engineering	170 Dowling St	Evans	WV	23784	USA
4100	Total Solutions	303	334-9000	JD Edwards Solutions	One Technology Way	Denver	CO	80237	USA
6072	Toth, Catherine			Toth, Catherine	8055 3rd Ave. Suite 823	Denver	CO	80237	USA
6070	Toth, Stefan			Stefan Toth	165 Marigold Way	Lakewood	CO	80227	USA
4346	Travel Company, The	619	794-2331	The Travel Company	P.O. Box 44	San Diego	CA	92101	USA
4030	Treasurer of Ontario	403	269-8800	Treasurer of Ontario	3948 Blake Road	Toronto	ON	T2P 2X7	Canada
6094	U.S. Continuous Process Mfg Plant			U.S. Continuous Process Mfg Plant	5578 S. Mesa Avenue	Houston	TX	77031	United States
6092	U.S. Exchange Branch			U.S. Exchange Branch	10890 Sumner Avenue	Atlanta	GA	30303	United States
6090	U.S. Fuel Depot			U.S. Fuel Depot	5578 S. Mesa Avenue	Houston	TX	77031	United States
6091	U.S. Lube Blending Plant			U.S. Lube Blending Plant	5578 S. Mesa Avenue	Houston	TX	77031	United States
5645	Union-UAW			UAW	123 Union Dr	Denver	CO	80001	USA
4215	United Investments			United Investments	143 Cambridge Circle	Boston	MA	02982	USA
4344	Universal Incorporated			Universal Incorporated	2001 State Street	Chicago	IL	60601	USA
1531	Unlimited, The	303	735-7890	Unlimited, The	2222 Broadway	New York	NY	10019	USA
4281	US Warehouse	404	555-6389	US Warehouse	10 Highland Road	Olpe	KS	66865	United States
2006	Walters, Annette			Annette Walters	2025 West 84th Street	Denver	CO	80101	USA
Address Total -		257							

Figure 1: "Out of the Box" R014021 Report Output

Now let's look at Figure 2. This report was copied from the original and named in accordance to the JDE naming convention as described above. There are several very simple and quick

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