JDE Tables: Going Behind the Scenes

By Andy Vanspranghe

E1 Editor's Note: If you're the type who loves to know "how things work"—this article by Andy Vanspranghe is a treat. Andy takes us on a backstage tour of JDE including the database and tables that drive what you see in front of you. From the Data Dictionary, to Table Names, to Columns and Aliases, to Oracle Metadata queries, Andy covers the basics that any new JDE client should appreciate.

Introduction

Having been a tech for most of my career (well, in the very beginning I was an accountant, but I am trying to block that part out of my memory), each time I encounter new software, I have a tendency to go straight to the database and put the forms aside for later.

This was no different when I first got in touch with JD Edwards EnterpriseOne. I remember being somewhat overwhelmed by the structure of the JDE database. At first glance, it looked like one huge pile of unstructured numbers and codes; finding my way through this bush was hardly a walk in the park. But once I discovered the logic behind it, this database became more accessible than any "description-based" database (by this I mean a database that has tables with descriptive names and columns) I had ever encountered.

Then the idea crossed my mind that others who are interested by what is going on behind the JDE screens might appreciate a structured view of this logic as well, without having to put it all together themselves, like I did. So I decided to put it in writing. The whole purpose of this article is to give you a VIP pass to the backstage area of JDE to discover the link between the screens and the tables behind them. Hopefully this will give you the necessary insight to allow you to perform detailed technical analysis.

Before we start, just a word on SQL (Structured Query Language). You can't really talk about tables and the relationships between them without turning to SQL at one point or another. If you lack this knowledge, I would advise you to read some basic courses on the SQL language. Although I only use some simple statements in the final part of the article, sooner or later you will have to build your own queries.

Data Dictionary

Before you can learn about the data in tables and the relationships between them, you should first know something about the tables themselves. I bet you are expecting me to turn to some special database-querying tool like Oracle Developer, TOAD, or SQLPLUS, now aren't you? Well, I won't; JDE can give me all the information I need! Every table definition and every column definition is stored inside a separate "metadata" database within JDE. This database is called the data dictionary. This means there are tables available containing information about all the other tables used in the software.

Oracle was even kind enough to provide us with a couple of applications that make it possible to access this information. The application you can use to query the table definitions is P98650 (just enter this in the Fast Path command line). The search screen shown in Figure 1 will allow you to browse the "object definitions".

Figure 1: Object Definitions

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