

World Writer Sets and Eliminating the Redundant

By Rick Snell

W Editor's Note: *It's always a shame to see robust functionality left ignored because people find it intimidating. That's often the case with World Writer, according to Rick Snell. It's big and it's not well understood. Rick hopes to help diminish some of that trepidation by explaining how World Writer looks at data by using the mathematical concept of sets and subsets – including an in depth look at Summary Functions. Then he'll demonstrate how you can create a cleaner report by using headers and footers to remove "clutter" so that you can add more vital information onto one report.*

World Writer (WW) is an extremely powerful tool; that's a given. So, why are too many people a little bit scared of it? It's fear of the unknown because World Writer is big and it's wide open. But sometimes, all it takes is a little bit of understanding to give you the confidence to accomplish wonderful things through this reporting facility.

In this article, I hope to pass on a bit of that knowledge so that you, too, can take advantage of this robust functionality. We're going to unpack how WW looks at data—the concept of sets and subsets. Then we'll put that insight to use; specifically, we're going to look at moving columns out of the body of the report and into either the header or footer of each set. This saves space for other columns of data, thus making your report simultaneously richer in information and easier to read. And that's always a nice benefit.

Sets and Subsets – the Concept

World Writer looks at data in terms of sets. Just to clarify (not that you're in any doubt), but what exactly is a set? For our purposes, it's a grouping of rows that share some property or properties, such as the same cost center, object, or sub account. A simple example of a set would be all the rows that contain the same cost center.

Subtotals are a more familiar way of looking at it. Anytime you create a line of subtotals in a report, you've just marked off, or delineated, a set. Why do you want a subtotal at this particular place?

What is changing at this point? The answer to those questions will tell you what properties serve as criteria for the set.

You can further divide a set into subsets. For example, in your report, you may want to take a subtotal at each sub account, each object account, and at the top level cost center, to arrive at a cost center grand total. You can manage the level of detail on each set; this lets you effectively drill down to whatever level is needed.

The next question might be: What makes a set a set? It would be when that property changed. In our example above, we might have a set of rows where the cost center, object, and subsidiary (sub) were all 12.342.11. When the sub changed to, say, 14, then we would have a new set.

Defining Your Sets

Let's look at a specific report. When we find it and put a 2 on it to edit, we'll see the Selective Change Prompt, as shown in Figure 1.

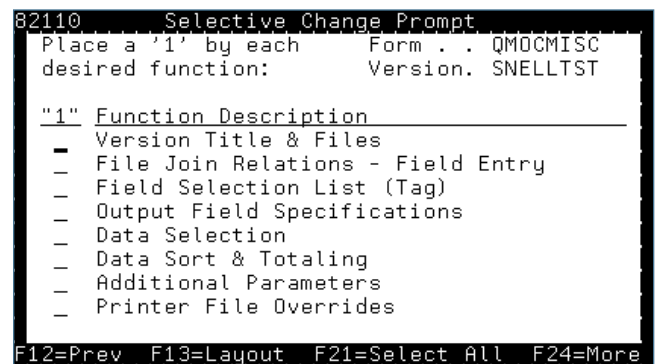


Figure 1: Selective Change Prompt

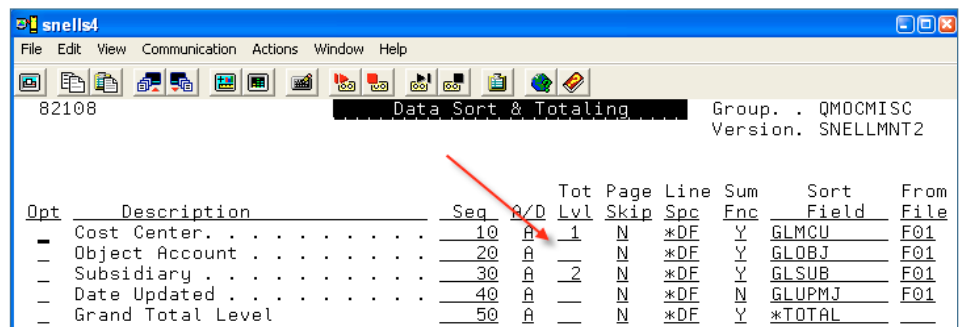


Figure 2: Data Sort and Totaling Screen

Enter a 1 on Data Sort & Totaling and press <Enter>. The Data Sort and Totaling screen shown in Figure 2 will display.

So the sets we're dealing with, in this WW, are based on Cost Center and Subsidiary. We've entered a 1 in the Tot Lvl (Total Level) for Cost Center, to indicate the top data set, and a 2 on Subsidiary, to indicate the second level. Why is Object not part of this? A quick look at the Data Selection window shown in Figure 3 reveals that only one Object, '342', is allowed; therefore, there won't be any changes occurring in that field. You could have included Object, by putting 1 by Cost Center, 2 by Object, and 3 by Sub, but in this case, it just wouldn't have made a difference. This gives you a tip that you need to think through your reports before you start defining the Data Sort and Totaling.

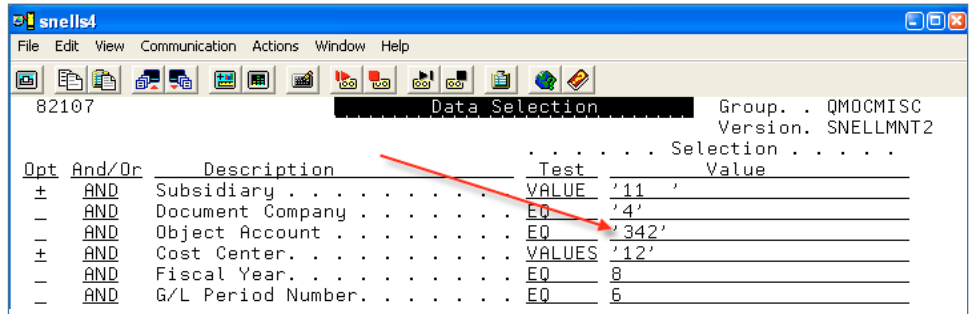


Figure 3: Selection for Only One Object Account

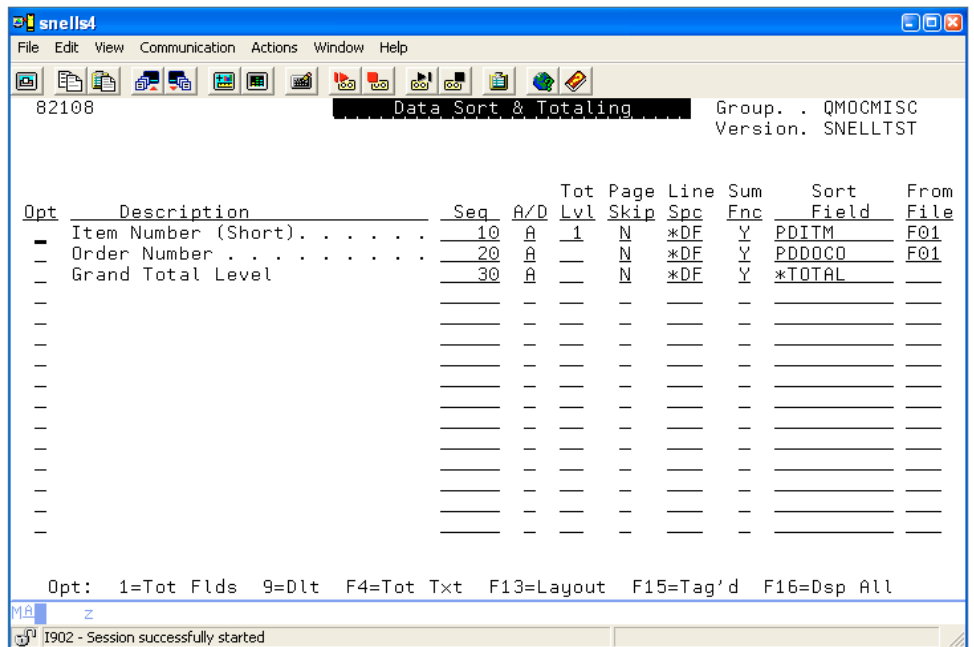


Figure 4: Data Sort and Totaling Revisited

Before we move on, let's look back at Figure 2. Three columns to the right of the Tot Lvl column, we see Sum Fnc. This stands for Summary Function, which, for WVs, consists of Sum, Average, Minimum, Maximum, and Count. Now here's a curious thing: when you add a field to the Data Sort & Totaling screen, Sum Fnc is automatically assigned a Y; it's the default, but it is only used when that line has a Tot Lvl entry. This becomes clearer when you test it. Figure 4 shows the Data Sort & Totaling screen again.

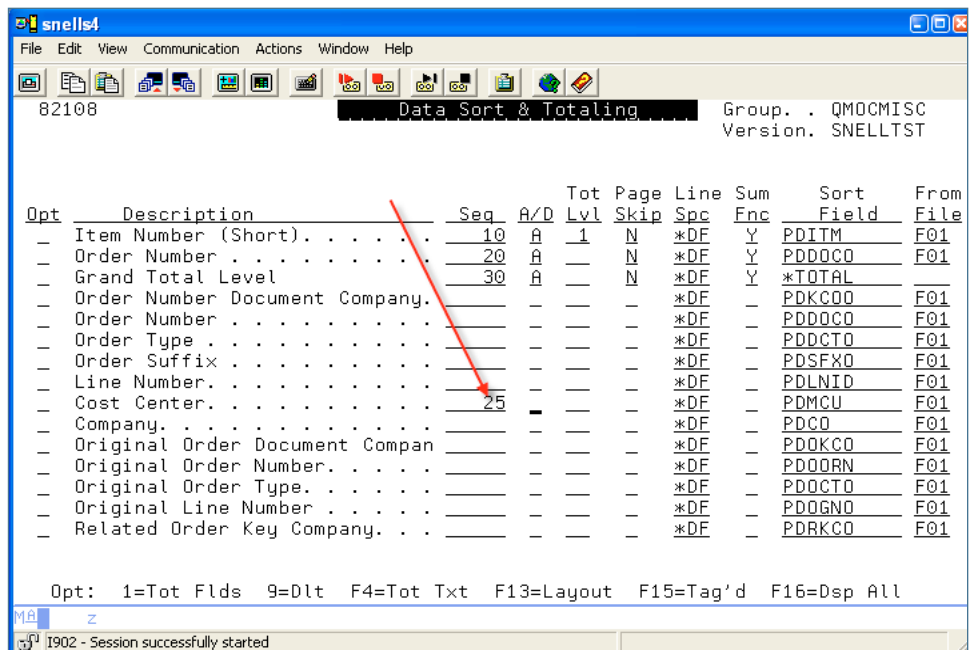


Figure 5: Adding a Field

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