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From the Edge:           Creating Fixed Field ASCII File using Report  
Section:                 Data Export  
Chapter:                 Running R:BASE Your Way!  
Platform:                R:BASE 6.1a/R:BASE 2000 (ver 6.5) for Windows  
Build:                   1.839xRT03 and Higher

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As you all know, it is very simple to create a Fixed Field ASCII file using File Gateway option in R:BASE 6.1a for DOS.

In R:BASE 6.1A/R:BASE 2000 (ver 6.5) for Windows, that option is not available in the File Gateway Import/Export utility. However, the reports feature in R:BASE 6.1A/R:BASE 2000 for Windows includes the ability to make a report that is as wide as a row of data.

You can make a report that is wider than the standard 14 inches, in fact, you can go as wide as 99 inches.

Simply, follow the easy steps below:

CONCOMP Database shipped with R:BASE 6.1A and R:BASE 2000 (ver 6.5) for Windows is used as an example in this case.

01.     Using Windows Object Manager, Open CONCOMP Database
02.     Click on [Reports] tab
03.     Click on [New] button
04.     Type the following for appropriate boxes:  
  
          Name:            FromTheEdge for Report Name  
          Description:    Sample Fixed Field ASCII File Report
05.     Choose Customer from the drop-down option for tables  
          Note: If a deriving table is VIEW, the view must have column aliases assigned.
06.     Click on Quick Radio Button
07.     Move the mouse cursor to select listed columns and then Press [Shift]+[[F6] key to select all columns
08.     Make sure that radio button for Column-wise is selected
09.     Click [OK] to bring up the report layout.  
          (very colorful display of all objects in R:BASE 2000)  
          Maximize the window for full visibility
10.     Delete the Page-Header Section (PH) and all text objects for column headings included in the section:

Click on the PH Section line (Black Dashes in 6.1A) and Solid Green in R:BASE 2000 (ver 6.5).

When the mouse cursor turns into vertical line with top-bottom arrows and the color of section line turns to red, press [Del] key to delete the section line.

Click on [Yes] when prompted with Designer Warning: 'Are you certain you wish to delete this section and all objects within it?'

Only Detail [D] section of the report with all objects is displayed

11. Modify report settings:  
 Click on Layout  
 Click on Report Settings...  
 Change the Lines per Page option to -1 (default is 60)  
 Check (click) for Remove Initial Carriage Return  
 Set Report Margins: Left [0.00] Right [99.00]  
 Click on [OK] button to save Report Settings...
  
12. Resize the column objects as necessary.  
 For example, a 40 character TEXT field requires approximately three inches of width. This step involves some trial and error. Most non-TEXT fields will print all the data using the default width.  
  
 CAUTION: DO NOT specify field justification through object Properties; the properties are ignored when printing a report to a file. If you need to justify fields, use the Picture Format option to specify justification (right [>] or left [<])
  
13. Place the objects right next to each other on a single horizontal line. Do not overlap any objects.  
  
 In R:BASE 6.1A for Windows:  
 When the objects are placed right next to each other, it can be difficult to see where one object ends and the next object begins. Define a different background color for each object. The color setting is ignored when the report is printed to a file, but helps when laying out the report in the Report Designer.  
  
 R:BASE 2000 (ver 6.5) provides the major enhancements like, Visual representation of text objects, column/variable names, fonts, colors and justification on every object. A MAJOR ENHANCEMENT!
  
14. Make sure that all objects are in alignment and are at the top of the report:  
  
 Click on Layout  
 Click on Select All (every object will be selected)  
 Click Right Button of the mouse on any where in that selected section  
 Click on Top Align  
 Click Right Button of the mouse on any where in that selected section  
 Click on Shrink to Smallest Width  
 Click on the mouse anywhere outside the multi-select to clear the selected objects.
  
15. Move the bottom line of the detail section [D] right up to the bottom edge of the located objects. There should be no space between the line and the objects to avoid extra line spacing between each row:  
  
 Click on [D] line  
 When the mouse cursor turns into vertical line with top-bottom arrows and the color of section line turns to red, push the cursor up.
  
16. SAVE the report.
  
17. Print FromTheEdge Report to a file:  
  
 SET NULL ' ' (use appropriate character setting for quotation)  
 SET LINES 0  
 OUTP FileName.ASC  
 PRINT FromTheEdge WHERE ..... ORDER BY .....  
 OUTP SCREEN  
 SET LINES 19

Notes:

The data is printed with approximately 19 characters per inch, i.e, an object placed one inch wide translates to 19 characters in the ASCII file.

View the output file in a character-based editor, such as DOS EDIT, to determine the actual starting and ending column location for the data.

Adjust the column/variable width for each object in report designer accordingly to avoid data truncation or data wrap.

Once all tested and aligned accordingly, this method provides you the flexibility of taking advantage of built-in functions like defining expressions and lookup variables in report.

Add this routine to your collection of Tips and Tricks Library!

Finally, enjoy the POWER of R:BASE and make sure to have fun!