Suggested Comet Enhancements May 2004

Alternate Indices

Adding an I01 and I02 would add greatly to the ease of use of Comet applications. We now understand that database table should be organized using an arbitrary sequential number as the primary and unique record identifier. [Look at ACCESS for an example.]. Files created that way, with a sequential number as the only permanent and unique key make it possible for the user to change the item number or the customer number. Our method, using a data field as the unique record identifier is obsolete.

Improved packaging for Windows tools

The Windows graphical tools in Comet are great. Unfortunately they are complicated to use and the learning curve is long and hard. In today's economic climate customers are reluctant to pay big bucks to make old programs easier to use. If the Windows tools were as easy to use as Format statements or Enter programs I for one would make more use of them.

Graphical hyperlinks

Hyperlinks, on the other hand, are really easy to use and can be incorporated into existing programs so very easily. Finding screen real estate for a new hyperlink can be an issue. If we could use images it would make for cool modern looking screens and hyperlinks would be easier to squeeze onto very busy screens.

Faster file filter

Oracle can select 1000 records from a file of a million records in the blink of an eye. Jon Sacks is the source of this intelligence and will confirm it. And the selection need not be on field defined as an index. Speed like this creates new opportunities for applications. Why can't Comet be faster?

Simpler Edit Mask

We don't use edit masks because they are too hard. The best example of the painful absence of edit masks is the TOTAL line in the Reporter; nowhere are edit masks needed more. And there is nothing the Comet dealer can do about the embarrassing lack of properly punctuated totals on Reports. All you can do is say that you are sorry the Report going to the bank or to your client's investors looks so 1980s. Excel does such a nice job with edit masks. Can't Comet offer a similar syntax?

Mouse-over for hyperlinks

It would be helpful if we could give the user hints about what a hyperlink was for. The "mouse-over" technique in the browser is an excellent model for producing short concise help messages.

"Mouse-over" for INPUT statements

Similarly to mouse over messages for hyperlinks, it would be really terrific if we could code a string in an input statement that would appear along side the waiting cursor and then disappear after the input was completed.

Lose the QDIRs

Lose the QDIRs. We have QDIR entries without "DOS" files in the folder; we have files in the Windows folder without QDIR entries, we have corrupted QDIRs and open QDIRs mess up our backups. Can't we lose the QDIRs?

Long file names

All the other Windows applications can work with long file names. It's time Comet got with the program.

More LUNs

Believe it or not, we have Order Entry programs in our library that open more than 49 files. More LUNs would be nice.

Date data types

The Reporter and the DB Manager would be much improved if we have a date data type. Selecting on dates is something we do a lot in accounting applications. Modern software systems like Excel and Crystal Reports make working with dates a lot easier than working with dates in Comet.

Enhancements for DB Manager

The DB Mgr/Viewer has to do everything the Reporter does and more before we can convert to it completely. It has to produce printed reports and it has to deal with dates. We need to be able to code a selection statement like "Transactions with a date in last month."

Enlarge source filename field

The source file name associated with an object file is limited to 8 bytes. However, source file names today are, at the least, 12 bytes long including the dot and the IBS extension. A true long file name, with full pathname appended would be the right thing to keep.