

2006 Meeting Notes

Installation issues

Two problems with the current installation process are:

- Knowing when it is necessary to rerun the workstation install on a workstation that loads Comet from a server
- Ensuring that the version of the file server running as a service on the server is the same as that installed with Comet for local dirs.

It was suggested that a new server installation program could install both the server files and the Comet files to the server. Then a new workstation installation program could be made that only installs what's necessary for a workstation that will be loading Comet from the server. Another suggestion was that Comet.exe could detect .dlls were missing from a workstation and install them as Comet is being loaded.

Data Express

- There was general agreement that ViewMgr should be enhanced to become a full-featured front-end to the Reporter. Currently it has limited functionality because it was intended to be used just to export data to external reporting applications.
- Several people agreed it would be nice if IB and the file system were .d00-aware. For example: open a file referencing the .d00 name and eliminate the need for a FORMAT.
- Greg requested a formatting tab be added to specify Windows printer options such as compressed print, underlining, spacing, etc when output is to a printer rather than exporting to external app.
- Steve Auerbach expressed a desire for an additional enhancement that would allow for runtime prompting of a user for selection criteria similarly to his Reporter String Replacement Tool posted on the forum.
- Jon suggested that if we are to continue to require that each data file have its own .d00 file (even files with identical layouts) that we provide an update tool that would update like .d00 files and their associated data files. So, for example, if a new field is added to a file, the administrator would make the appropriate changes to the file and its .d00. This tool would then seek out other .d00s on the system with the same name, update it to match the master .d00, and optionally make any required adjustments to its actual data file.
- Steve Auerbach suggested it would be great if the Comet32 IB proc idea could be expanded to ViewMgr.

Multi-Keyed Files

- Currently EXTRACT is not allowed on a file opened with a secondary key. This is because the key is not necessarily unique. Robert requested that we allow EXTRACT without specifying a key so he could sequentially go thru a file in secondary key order and extract each record.
- Jon suggested we implement an SQL-like solution for taking a snapshot of a record set. The record set could be "ordered by" one or more fields in the record. This could satisfy those who are not happy with the fact that records sharing the same secondary key are in no particular order.

- Steve Auerbach pointed out that the primary key really could just be a random value assigned by the system rather than some “meaningful” value. What everyone thinks of now as the primary key really should be a secondary key which happens to be unique.

DocMgr

- There was general agreement that DocMgr should have all the capability of QSPool.
- Specific requests were for “Move”, “Rename”, and “Send to” capabilities and for a “forever mode” unspool option.
- Greg requested a way to make a job read-only to prevent accidental deletion.
- Greg suggested we look at the Laserfiche® product for suggestions for document management functions.

Printing Issues

- We will back out the .370 changes made to CosH to prevent a line feed from being generated if a PRINT statement contains only special mnemonics.
- Robert reported suspected CosP performance problem when creating fonts or that perhaps fonts were being created multiple times. Brian agreed to provide him with some additional debugging tools to try to confirm this.
- Greg requested that the “?” printer selection dialog be updated to use the XP printer selector but pointed out that this might be a problem for W98 users.
- Jon asked if the print driver could be made smart enough to know the attributes of the output device selected and format the page to fit it.

Utilities

- The Comet Explorer Directory Rebuild utility needs a progress bar displayed during population of the file list box. This process can be quite lengthy for very large QDIRs.
- The Comet Explorer Create and KeyBuild utilities need to be multi-key aware.
- The Comet Explorer File Maintenance utility should be able to read by secondary keys. It was also suggested that we use color to indicate the position of the primary key in the record of extended keyed files. This could make the separate key entry area unnecessary, as the key must be in the record.
- Jeff requested a quick way to launch the Comet Explorer utilities without having to go thru Comet Explorer itself.
- The old utilities should be modified to refuse to work on multi-keyed files since they don’t support them.
- Jim would like to see the SNOVA utilities rewritten (CTMaint, etc).

IB

- Brian introduced the new file picker, folder picker, and color picker dialogs. Jim requested that they also be implemented as IB functions.
- Greg requested a font picker dialog.
- Jon and Greg requested an OnMouseOver event.
- Greg requested a demo program for context menus.
- There was a request to include the "HowTo" Windows demo programs (HTO dir) with the DLG release.
- Jeff requested a msgbox that would allow entry of one data field, similar to VB's input box.
- Jon requested a new function that would return the date and time without having to interrogate CL1.
- Many requested more options for EXCP processing of common exceptions. Jeff suggested the following:
 - EXCPIGNORE – ignore EXCP and continue to next instruction (Jon suggested NOEXCP for this syntax)
 - EXCPRETURN – ignore EXCP and do a RETURN
 - EXCPSTOP – ignore EXCP and do a STOP
 - EXCPAGAIN – ignore EXCP, do PAUSE and AGAIN if E33

Brian pointed out that we'd have to make sure EXCP was cleared before all I/O so that it could be tested following use of one of the above to determine whether an error had occurred or not.

XAP

- Jon requested the max buffer be increased from 1024 to 8000.
- Jon requested performance improvements in the case where the web server is not the same as the Comet file server. He suggested using some connection to the server other than TCP/IP.

Misc

- A request was made for an alias to the "My Documents.." folder.
- Jon requested that we centralize all our .ini files (Comet.ini, email.ini). We should only need one file to specify user-specific options.
- Jon asked if we could use the Windows login name as the Comet profile name.
- Jon requested a method for automatically removing .cfg files for obsolete/unauthorized users. Would also like the option of being able to generate a .cfg file for one user at a time rather than processing the entire .ini.
- Greg requested the ability to minimize the CosW window to the System Tray instead of the Task Bar.

- Greg requested that we issue certificates for all of his users in one license.txt file so that he can make the same installation package for everyone. CsecSrv would have to be able to scan thru it looking for the certificate appropriate for whichever plug is on the computer.
- Brian is to follow up with Marc and Jeff regarding their CopyFile problems experienced since the .370 release.

Comet 2007 and beyond

Jim proposed this order for development of next years' products:

1. Comet32/64
2. Support for files requiring more than 4.2GB (Robert exceeds this regularly)
3. Long file names
4. DocMgr enhancements
5. Data Express enhancements

It was decided that the next meeting would be held in the fall of 2007. The location is yet to be determined.